

(Excerpt from 2024 DNP Handbook)

SECTION IV

Policies

Core Performance Standards

As a practice discipline, nursing requires cognitive, sensory, affective, and psychomotor performance. Students must meet both academic and performance requirements to remain in the nursing program. Academic requirements can be found in this handbook, the university catalog, and the university student handbook. In accordance with the practice of nursing, a student must additionally, with or without reasonable accommodations, satisfy these performance standards. The examples noted demonstrate some necessary activities but are not all-inclusive.

1. Critical/Analytical Thinking – Critical thinking ability sufficient for clinical judgment. Examples – Identify cause-effect relationships in clinical situations, develop nursing care plans, prioritize tasks, process information, and problem solve.
2. Interpersonal Skills – Interpersonal abilities sufficient to interact professionally with individuals, families, and groups from a variety of social, psychological, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds. Examples – Establish rapport with clients and colleagues.
3. Communication Skills – Communication abilities sufficient for interaction with others in both verbal and written English. Examples – Explain treatment procedures, initiate health teaching, document and interpret nursing actions and client responses.
4. Mobility, Physical Strength, and Endurance – Physical abilities sufficient to move from room to room and maneuver in small spaces. Physical stamina to perform client care activities for entire length of work role. Physical strength to perform full range of client care activities. Examples – move about in patient rooms, workspaces and treatment areas, administer CPR, and stand for periods of time.
5. Motor Skills – Gross and fine motor abilities sufficient to provide safe and effective nursing care. Examples – calibrate and use equipment, position clients, and reach above shoulders.
6. Hearing – Auditory ability sufficient for observation and assessment necessary in nursing care. Examples – Auscultatory sounds, faint body sounds (B/P), cries for help, and able to hear without seeing lips (masked).
7. Smell – Olfactory ability sufficient to detect environmental and client odors. Examples – detect odors from clients, smoke, gases, or noxious smells.
8. Visual – Visual ability sufficient for observation and assessment necessary in nursing care. Examples – observe client responses, see markings on IV bottles, and distinguish color.
9. Tactile – Tactile ability sufficient for physical assessment. Examples – perform palpation, functions of physical examination and/or those related to therapeutic intervention (insertion of a catheter, administration of medication).
10. Emotional Stability – Emotional stability sufficient to assume responsibility and accountability for actions. Examples – provide client with emotional support, adapt to changing environment (stress), deal with unexpected (crisis), and monitor own emotions.

11. Reading and Arithmetic – Reading ability sufficient to comprehend the written word adequately for appropriate nursing practice. Arithmetic ability sufficient to do computations. Examples – read and understand documents, read graphic printouts and digital displays, count rates, compute fractions (medication doses), and use a calculator.

Students who perceive they will have difficulty with any of the above performance standards are encouraged to consult with their advisor and the Office of Disability Services, regarding possible accommodations that may be available to assist the student. Reasonable accommodations can be made for an individual, providing they do not compromise the essential functions required by the nursing program or necessitate a modification of an academic standard.

Students With Disabilities

Governors State University and the Department of Nursing comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992 and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and other federal and state legislation. Inquiries about assistance to meet special needs should be directed to the Division of Student Affairs and Support Services, Director of Disability Services through which appropriate academic and service areas will be notified. Provision of such assistance will be based upon the individual student's need to have equal access to the learning environment. Contact Disability Services by telephone (708-235-3968) or in person (B1215). The Department of Nursing maintains core performance standards and has a functional abilities worksheet to assist the student and advisor in determining if accommodations are appropriate. If requests for auxiliary aids, academic adjustments, or other special services necessitate a modification of academic standards or create undue hardship on the university or the Department of Nursing, the requests may be denied.

Student Requirements

In order to be enrolled in the nursing program, students must fulfill the requirements of the university, the nursing program and the agencies used for DNP Residency within the nursing program. Appendix A is a timetable for submitting documentation of nursing program requirements.

All students must have current requirements on file in order to register for any course in the nursing program. Documentation of requirements should be submitted in a packet to the nursing office. Students should submit only copies and keep originals in a file for their own reference. Students may be asked to submit copies for faculty and preceptors while in a clinical course. Students are required to keep CPR-BLS Certification, Tuberculosis Skin Testing, Personal Professional Liability Insurance, Health Insurance and RN License coverage active. Students **MUST** submit a photocopy of renewed coverage on the anniversary of the date that coverage expires, showing inclusive dates. Failure to have all requirements on file may impact the student's ability to continue in the program. Students are responsible for all costs related to these requirements.

Immunizations/Health Form Policy

An integral part of nursing education is practice in clinical areas. Visits to clinical sites may increase exposure to communicable disease, therefore up-to-date immunization is required to protect both students and clients. Prior to the onset of any nursing program course work, students must complete all clinical immunization and health requirements with concomitant paperwork on file in the nursing office. A Student Health form along with all other required forms are available in the file unit outside the Department of Nursing. Students may not be allowed to continue in the program without satisfying clinical health requirements. Students are also to provide documentation of yearly follow-up on TB requirements.

The following information must be provided:

Immunity to Rubeola, Rubella, Mumps, and Varicella

Immunity may be demonstrated by:

Measles (Rubeola)	Positive antibody titer (copy of lab report) or evidence of vaccine.
Rubella	Positive antibody titer (copy of lab report) or evidence of vaccine.
Varicella (Chicken Pox)	Positive antibody titer (copy of lab report) or evidence of vaccine.
Mumps	Positive antibody titer (copy of lab report) or evidence of vaccine.
Tetanus	Record of administration within last 10 years

Hepatitis B Vaccination

There must be a complete series of three injections over a six-month period. Dates of each injection and identification of the agency or health care professional administering the vaccination must be noted. Documentation of a positive antibody titer (copy of lab report) will also be accepted. If the student declines to receive the HBV vaccine, a Statement of Refusal of Hepatitis B Vaccine form must be signed.

Tuberculosis Screening

A Non-Reactive Two-Step Tuberculin Skin Test must be dated and contain identifying information on the agency administering the test. This test requires that the student receive two separate Mantoux skin tests. The first test must be read within 72 hours and, if negative, the second test is done from 1-3 weeks later and also must be read within 72 hours. Newly positive skin test reactors must submit documentation of a positive skin test and results of a chest film done within the past year, which shows no evidence of disease. Chronic positive TB skin test reactors must provide medical verification of no evidence of disease.

Annual Follow-up

Following an initial negative 2-step tuberculin skin test, a single tuberculin skin test (PPD) must be obtained, and documentation must be provided in order to remain enrolled. After a positive skin test, a chest x-ray is not required after an initial chest x-ray if no symptoms are present. A yearly symptom assessment from a private health care provider must be provided that indicates that a student has been assessed for symptoms of tuberculosis and that a chest x-ray is not currently warranted.

Insurance Coverage

Student Health Insurance Coverage

The Department of Nursing supports health promotion and as such, believes that all students must have personal access to health care. All students enrolled in the nursing program must carry health insurance, either through employment, spouse, or personal purchase throughout enrollment in the nursing program. Evidence of current health insurance (copy of insurance card), must be presented to the Department of Nursing Office prior to the beginning of each fall semester and upon request for less than full year contracts. Failure to have health insurance on file in the Department of Nursing Office may impact the student's ability to continue in the program

Personal Professional Liability Insurance

All nursing students must acquire and maintain personal professional liability insurance in the amount of at least **\$1,000,000**. Coverage obtained through a place of employment will not satisfy this requirement. Evidence of personal professional liability insurance (copy of policy) showing **dates of coverage** must be presented to the Department of Nursing Office upon admission and at renewal and kept current. Failure to have personal professional liability insurance on file in the Department of Nursing Office may impact a student's ability to continue in the program.

Universal Precautions Training

To eliminate or minimize occupational exposure to all blood borne pathogens, all nursing students are required to follow universal precautions by Federal Law: Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Part 1910:1030. All students enrolled in the nursing program are required to complete an educational program on blood borne pathogens and universal precautions yearly. Documentation on completion of this requirement must be on file in the nursing office, on **admission and annually**.

A computer-assisted instruction program titled Standard Precautions is available to meet this requirement. The student must complete a fifteen-question test at the end of the instruction program. At the end of the quiz, if the student has achieved an acceptable score, the test score is printed and taken to the nursing office to update the requirements file. The form must be given to the Department of Nursing Academic Advisor, and the student must then sign the acknowledgement provided. Passing score on this quiz is 100%. Universal Precautions tests will not be accepted if left in mailboxes, on desks, or in door slots. The completed test and signed acknowledgement are stored in the student file. Failure to complete this requirement may impact the student's ability to continue in the program.

Communicable Disease Policy

The Department of Nursing seeks to minimize the risk of occupational exposure to communicable diseases, including Hepatitis (HBV) and the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), for its students, faculty, and patients/clients. The Department of Nursing provides the following information regarding the possibility of occupational exposure to communicable diseases, including HBV and HIV, to students enrolled in the program.

The Department of Nursing will not request an individual's HIV status during the admissions process. If a student informs the program that he/she is HIV positive, reasonable academic adjustments will be made if needed. A student who knows that he/she is HIV positive or believes he/she is a "high risk" for HIV transmission is ethically responsible to consider the risk of transmitting HIV to the patient/client during invasive procedures.

Upon admission, the student will be required to sign a form acknowledging that he/she has been informed of, and understands, the risk of exposure to communicable diseases in the clinical setting. Any student who refuses to sign the acknowledgement form may be terminated from the nursing program. All students are expected to care for any patient/client regardless of HBV and/or HIV status. A student who refuses to care for a patient/client who is known to be HIV positive and/or HBV positive may be terminated from the nursing program.

Students who have a diagnosed immunosuppressed condition, open wounds, or who are pregnant, will be exempted from caring for patients who are known to be HIV positive and/or HBV positive. Some vaccinations are contraindicated or have decreased effectiveness in immunosuppressed conditions.

Student Exposure To Blood-Borne Pathogens

While needlestick is the most obvious incident, any specific eye, mouth, other mucous membrane, non-intact skin, or parenteral contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials is considered an exposure incident and should be reported. When an exposure incident occurs, students must follow specific Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards. In the clinical setting, all students will practice Universal Precautions in accordance with the current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines and will adhere to the policies of the clinical site as well. If a student is exposed to blood or other body fluids of a patient/client, an incident report for both the clinical site and Governors State University Department of Nursing must be completed.

The student must immediately notify the faculty supervising the clinical experience and the clinical site. Faculty members shall notify the chair of the Department of Nursing and follow-up with the Infection Control nurse at the clinical site, in any incidents involving a student.

The policies of the institution where the exposure occurred and/or the CDC Guidelines and OSHA Standards shall be consulted and followed. The student is strongly encouraged to immediately obtain HIV and HBV testing to establish zero-negativity. Testing should be repeated at six weeks, three months, six months, and one-year post-exposure. The nursing program or the institution will suggest follow-up counseling referrals for students exposed to blood or body fluids of a patient/client.

Residency Policies

Agency Drug Testing

Some clinical agencies used by the Department of Nursing have policies regarding drug testing which allow these agencies to request drug testing of employees, volunteers, and students. In addition, the Department of Nursing fully supports the Governors State University Student Code of Conduct, which “prohibits the use, possession, and distribution of, or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol, except as permitted by law.” [[GovState Student Handbook](#)]

In an effort to protect patients/clients and other students, the nursing program will request drug testing to meet agency requirements. These drug screens will be at the student’s own expense. If a student has a positive drug test, there will be an immediate referral to the Dean of Student Services. The student will be unable to continue within the nursing program (clinical or course work) and criminal charges may be filed, as described in the [GovState Student Handbook](#). If a student refuses to participate in required agency drug screening, the student may be dismissed from the nursing program. Forms to obtain drug screening are available in the Department of Nursing Office.

Agency Background Checks

All students are required to have criminal background checks prior to the start of their clinical practicum. Criminal background checks are done by a professional company. Information may be obtained from practicum faculty. Students are required to pay the charge for the background check.

Influenza Immunizations

Some clinical sites may also require proof of influenza immunization.

Transportation

The nursing program seeks to provide optimal clinical practicum experiences. In providing clinical practicum/residency experiences, it may be necessary to acquire residency sites that are outside of the GovState immediate geographic area. Every attempt will be made to ensure fairness in distribution of travel time and distance for all students. Each student is responsible for providing reliable, personal transportation to and from clinical practicum experiences.

Student Attire

Student attire will be governed by the residency setting. Faculty will inform students of any special requirements concerning attire, security badges, etc. In some situations students will wear a full-length white laboratory coat, bearing the GovState nursing patch on the left shoulder sleeve. The laboratory coat is worn over appropriate street clothes. No blue jeans, sweat pants, sweatshirts, scrub suits, sneakers, jogging shoes, or boots are allowed.

Nursing Patch

The Governors State University nursing patch is purchased by the student at the university bookstore. The patch is to be securely sewn to left shoulder sleeve of a full-length laboratory coat worn for clinical practicum.

Residency Site Safety Issues

The students may be required to visit clients or institutions in a variety of areas, and it is the responsibility of the student to review issues of street safety. All nursing students are required to follow the procedures and guidelines listed below when making community visits:

- Clinical hours are generally listed as 8:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.; however, some agencies may open later or may require clinical activities that extend into the early evening. Be aware of this need for flexibility in your clinical schedule and make adjustments as needed.
- Never take a client/patient anywhere in your personal car.
- Do not visit the client/patient on personal time.
- Visit during daylight hours whenever possible.
- Let your instructor or another person know where you are going and when you will return.
- Be sure you know where you are going before setting out; obtain a detailed map of the area and plan the route.
- Let the client know when to expect your visit, if appropriate.
- Put your purse in your trunk before leaving for your site and keep it locked in the trunk during your visit, take only keys and a small change purse.
- Do not wear expensive clothes or jewelry.
- Park near your destination, and be aware of your surroundings.
- If the situation appears unsafe, do not make the visit. Leave immediately, and call the instructor.
- Additional issues and/or guidelines may be provided by the instructor.

Residency Faculty

GovState Faculty Member/Professor

The GovState nursing faculty member carries the responsibility for overall leadership, coordination, and supervision, and evaluation of the designated practicum. The primary functions of the professor along with the Clinical Site Supervisor are as follows:

- Select or assist the student to select the sites for doctoral student residency.
- Select or assist the student to select the adjunct clinical/residency faculty who will cooperate with the university.
- Interpret the residency experience to the health care agency and/or the prospective preceptor/clinical faculty.
- Coordinate and communicate schedules, deadlines, and other information in fulfilling the residency goals.
- Supervise and evaluate the doctoral student's development, progress, and overall performance.

- Arrange for periodic conferences with the graduate student and the residency faculty (if applicable), as needed.
- Prepare evaluation criteria, and provide the criteria to the students in writing.
- Provide feedback after observation of the student's performance of an assignment.
- Serve as liaison during the residency experience that involve clinical faculty.
- Assist students to obtain affiliation agreements between agency and GovState.
- Obtain copy of adjunct faculty CV and nursing license.

In addition to university faculty, two categories of clinical agency personnel may be involved in student clinical learning experiences. These roles are preceptor/residency supervisor and clinical resource person. Following are the requirements, roles, and responsibilities ascribed to these positions.

Preceptor/Residency Supervisor

Requirements:

- Registered Nurse – depending upon program/degree of the student, the preceptor/residency supervisor must have a Clinical Nursing Master's Degree, a Family Nurse Practitioner Master's Degree, a DNP, Ph.D., or related doctorate
- DNP students consult with the faculty for requirements for the residency supervisor
- Excellence in specialty area chosen by student

Roles/Responsibilities:

- Meet with the DNP student prior to the beginning of the practicum.
- Discuss the doctoral student's residency objectives for the practicum.
- Plan the activities needed to meet the clinical objectives with the student.
- Orient the nursing staff to the doctoral student's purpose and objectives for the residency experience.
- Provide the student with the opportunities to design his/her own teaching strategies and evaluation tools.
- Review appropriate materials with the student.
- Assist the student in developing and using self-evaluation techniques.
- Participate in three-way evaluative conference(s) attended by student, professor, and the residency faculty regarding the student's progress.
- Notify course professor immediately of any concerns.

Clinical Resource Persons

Requirements:

- Registered Nurse, preferably with a B.S. or M.S. in nursing
- Competency in specialty area or leadership role at clinical site.

Roles/Responsibilities:

- Meet with the student prior to the beginning of the residency

- Discuss the student's objectives for the residency experience.
- Orient the nursing staff to the student's purpose and objectives for the experience.
- Participate in conferences with the student and the course professor as needed regarding student progress.
- Facilitate contacts with other appropriate resource people.

Termination of Graduate Student Assignment

In a student residency, each student must comply in a professional manner with the policies, procedures, and standards of the health care facility or institution. Failure to do so may result in the termination of the student's assignment and an inability to complete the course.

The nursing program is not obligated to make alternative assignments in the event a student placement is terminated. A student who disagrees with the final decision may refer to the university grievance committee procedure found in the Governors State University Community Standards Student Handbook.

Student Reflective Statement

At the end of each course the student is expected to write a concise, but thorough, reflective self-evaluation that relates the student's learning in the course to the expected outcomes. The self-reflection should begin with an honest self-assessment and include those strategies, skill building activities, and other processes the student used to enhance his/her own learning in the class. This is graded on a "Pass-Fail" basis. A "Pass" is required to complete the course successfully.

Admission To Candidacy

Application for candidacy should be made with the approval of the academic advisor at the completion of all core nursing courses. As part of the candidacy process, the student's learning portfolio will also be evaluated. Admission to candidacy is required in order to enroll in 8000-level nursing courses.

DNP Capstone Proposal And Project Policies

Capstone Proposal/Project Policies

An expected outcome of the DNP program is a capstone project which is the culmination of a proposal developed specifically for the project.

Proposal

A requirement of the DNP synthesis process is a doctoral level proposal for the development, implementation and /or dissemination in the final capstone course DNP 9961. It is understood that students may progress at a different pace toward their capstone proposal. Therefore, progress will be evaluated in terms of Pass (P) or continuing on (CO) and students will continue to enroll in DNP9601, DNP 9602, Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Capstone Proposal Development until the proposal is completed and accepted by the academic committee composed of three members of the DNP faculty.

DNP Proposal Committee

The student will work with the DNP Program Coordinator and the assigned DNP mentor to choose the required three members of the DNP faculty for guidance in the proposal development and the capstone project implementation. One of those committee members will assume the responsibility of chairperson of the committee. The chairperson should be someone who has expertise in the specialty area of the topic that the student has chosen. The committee chairperson and members and the GovState Institutional Review Board (IRB) must approve the project proposal prior to the project implementation. If there is a requirement for an external IRB review, approval must be obtained from that board also.

Doctorate of Nursing Practice Project

Although the nature of the projects will vary, depending upon student interest and focus, the expected outcome is the implementation of the doctoral level proposal generated in the DNP Capstone Proposal Development courses. It is understood that students may progress at a different pace toward this goal. Therefore, progress will be evaluated in terms of Pass/No Credit and students will continue to enroll in DNP 9999 (Directed Scholarship). Students will receive a grade of No Credit until the project is complete than the grade of "Pass" will be issued.

Committee Makeup:

1. The committee chair and members should be identified by the student (with faculty input) during DNP 9600.
2. The committee members will include two faculty, of which one will be the chairperson, the third person can either be a faculty member or an outside member. This is an option, however outside members should have expertise in the proposed topic area. Outside members should not be the student's direct supervisor. The outside member must hold a terminal degree (i.e. Ph.D., Ed.D, or DNP).

Topic Selection for Capstone Proposal/Project:

1. Objectives and a review of literature are required along with a timeline for completion of proposed project.
2. Project may include nursing administrative projects, clinical research, educational interventions, grant proposals, etc.

Capstone Project Format/Documentation

1. The policies and procedures for the graduate capstone experiences are contained in the GovState document: "Guidelines for Preparing and Submitting Documentation of Graduate Capstone Experiences"
2. DNP students will follow the "Department of Nursing DNP Capstone Project Guidelines" document for writing the DNP capstone proposal and project.

Proposal Review/Defense:

1. The DNP Proposal/Project Committee will review and approve the proposed topic. The student may then begin writing under the supervision of the DNP Committee. Once the proposal is defended successfully and the GovState IRB has approved the project, the project may be implemented.

Meetings with the Project Chairperson

The student will meet regularly with the proposal/project chairperson and two other proposal/ project committee members to determine strategies for implementing the project. The Project Committee will evaluate whether or not the project has been successfully implemented with a grade of pass or Continuing On.

Project Defense

The student will defend their project to the peers and nursing professionals within a timeframe agreed upon between the student, the project chairperson and the committee.

Log of Project Progress

The student will regularly document activities (in writing) that are done for project implementation

Dissemination Activities

The student will present evidence of:

- Work toward publication/scholarly paper
- Submission (query letters, submitted abstracts, etc.)

GRADING SCALE

Pass=Acceptable progress

CO=Continuing On