

NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

# College of Health and Human Sciences

# GRADUATE NURSING HANDBOOK

2025-2026

**NDSU**

School of Nursing  
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Fargo ND

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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to graduate nursing study at North Dakota State University! We trust that time spent in scholarly pursuits will not only prepare you well for the next step in your nursing career but also enhance the breadth and depth of your understanding of nursing as a discipline.

The information and policies presented in this handbook complement and supplement information and policies pertinent to the North Dakota State University, the Graduate School [Homepage - Graduate School](#), and the College of Health and Human Sciences [College of Health and Human Sciences](#).

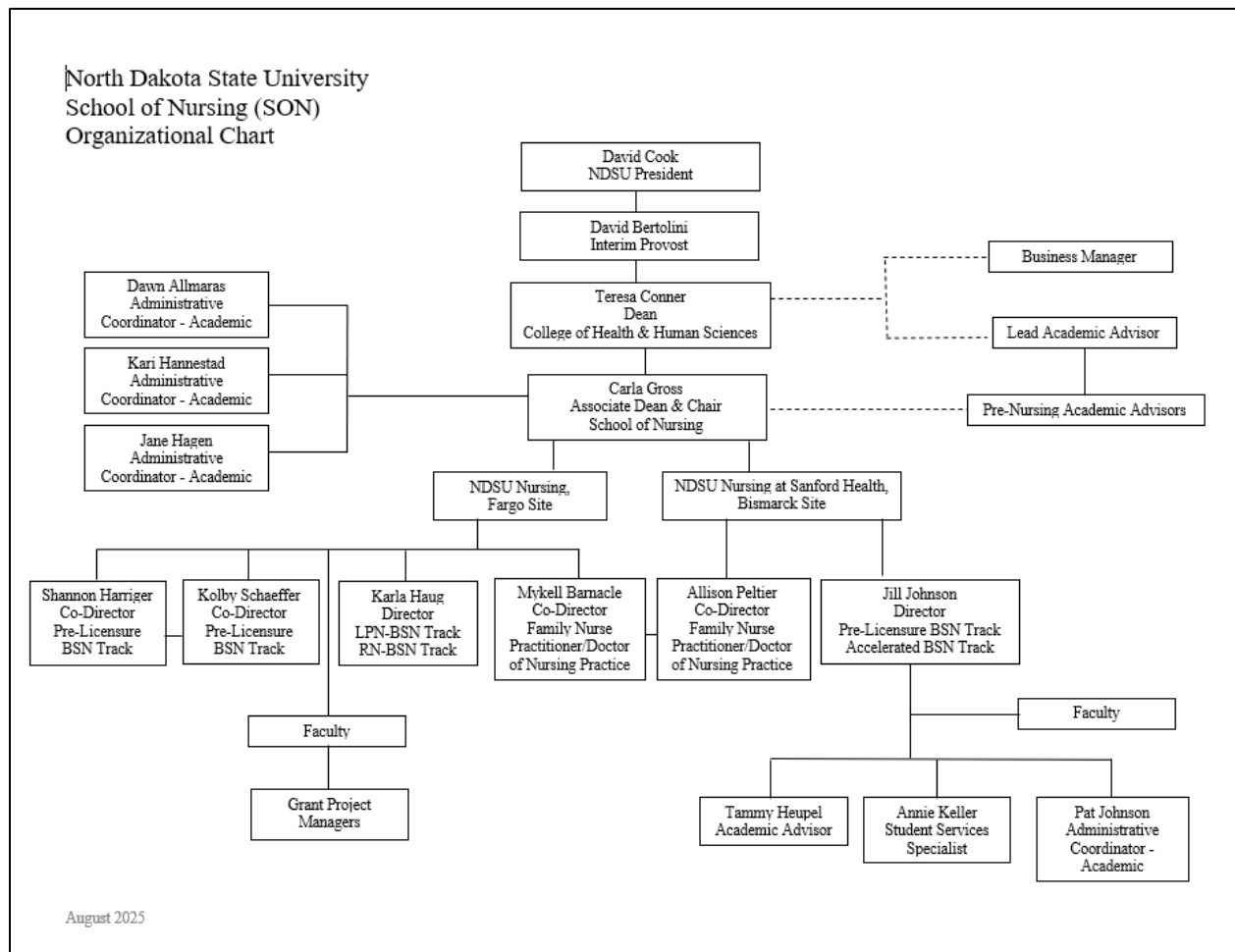
**NDSU E-mail Address:** The student's official NDSU e-mail address will be used for conveying and receiving information related to nursing courses. Students are responsible for monitoring their email for information.

## NURSING PROGRAM HISTORY

The history of nursing education in Fargo dates back to the early 20th century when St. John's Hospital and St. Luke's Hospital each established a diploma school of nursing. The School of Nursing at St. John's closed and North Dakota State University (NDSU) began an associate degree nursing program in 1969. In 1986, NDSU and Concordia College (CC) began a collaborative baccalaureate nursing program. St. Luke's Hospital School of Nursing and the associate degree program at NDSU were discontinued. The collaborative program was the Tri-College University Nursing Consortium (TCU). Students took nursing courses on the CC campus and on the NDSU campus. In 1994 nursing faculty who had been employed by TCU became employees of either CC or NDSU but continued to teach on either or both campuses irrespective of faculty appointment. In 2001 Minnesota State University Moorhead (MSUM), which operated a baccalaureate program for registered nurses, joined the nursing consortium and a collaborative master's degree program in nursing was initiated. In 2005, the three undergraduate programs disassociated from the consortium and became independent of one another. NDSU initiated a Doctor of Nursing Practice program in 2005. In 2007 graduate programs at the three institutions became independent of one another. Nursing programs in the area cooperate with one another in utilization of clinical sites, in addressing regional needs and through the sharing of teaching/learning resources.

In June 2014, NDSU acquired the Sanford College of Nursing (SCON) located in Bismarck, North Dakota. SCON has been a well-respected, successful, free-standing nursing program affiliated with the Bismarck Hospital for over 100 years. The Bismarck program became known as *NDSU Nursing at Sanford Health*. Fall semester, 2014 the pre-licensure BSN program on the Fargo campus expanded from admitting students each fall semester to admitting students each semester. In the fall semester of 2015, the DNP program expanded to the Bismarck site.

# ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



## **APPROVAL**

The family nurse practitioner (DNP) program is approved by the North Dakota Board of Nursing. The DNP Program has been fully accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) until June 30, 2026.

## **MISSION**

**NDSU SON Mission:** The School of Nursing provides transformational education to advance nursing knowledge and develop innovative leaders who improve the health of all people, including underserved, rural, diverse and global populations.

## **VISION**

**NDSU SON Vision:** To be a dynamic leader, positively impacting the health of society through excellence and innovation in nursing education, research, practice, and service.

(Approved September 2024)

## **CORE VALUES**

### **NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY**

### **SCHOOL OF NURSING**

Through commitment to the following Core Values, we promote excellence in nursing education, research, practice, and service.

**Professionalism:** Cultivate professionalism in nursing practice by emphasizing accountability, collegiality, collaboration, ethical behavior, integrity, respect, and resilience.

**Person Centered Care:** Committed to caring for all people in a holistic, compassionate, and sensitive manner.

**Commitment to Community:** Provide nursing expertise and service that extends across the University, state, national, and global populations to promote health and well-being.

**Scholarship:** Discover and disseminate new knowledge using evidence-based practice to guide nursing care, recognizing that nursing, as both a practice profession and an academic discipline, embodies both art and science.

**Quality and Safety:** Improve healthcare through excellence in education, research, and practice.

**Advocacy and Equity:** Promote equity and inclusivity, advance health policy, and honor the dignity and diversity of all people.

**Transformative Learning:** Facilitate an environment of continuous growth and exploration by encouraging critical thinking, creativity, and the pursuit of knowledge.

**Resilience:** Embrace challenges as opportunities for growth and adapt to change with a positive mindset, learning, evolving, and emerging stronger.

The School of Nursing fosters the achievement of outcomes necessary to develop dynamic nurse leaders who improve the health of all people. Undergraduate outcome categories are critical thinking, communication, professional values, clinical competence, and leadership. Graduate outcome categories are clinically expert practice, quality improvement, organizational systems, technology, interprofessional collaboration, and translational knowledge.

(Adopted by SON 9-24)

## **PROGRAM OUTCOMES**

### **DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE**

The curriculum of the North Dakota State University Doctor of Nursing Practice program prepares graduates to:

1. Translate knowledge and ways of knowing from nursing science, ethics, social, biological, and other sciences to benefit practice effectiveness and the health of individuals, families, communities, organizations, and populations.
2. Demonstrate clinically expert, evidence-based practice that focuses on person-centered, holistic, and individualized care to improve the health of individuals, families, communities, and populations.
3. Collaborate with stakeholders to influence population health through prevention, health promotion, and disease management.
4. Understand, apply, and evaluate scholarship and evidence-based best practices and methodologies.
5. Design, manage, and evaluate systems for quality and safety to improve delivery of healthcare.
6. Collaborate with other health disciplines and stakeholders to increase accessibility to healthcare, work toward elimination of health disparities, and optimize health outcomes.
7. Appraise complex systems and healthcare resources to influence innovation, equity, and effectiveness.
8. Use technology and informatics (information and patient care) to enhance nursing practice for improvement of quality and efficiency of care.
9. Cultivate students' professional and ethical identity that accounts for diversity, equity, and inclusion that supports and reflects nursing's characteristics and values.
10. Integrate strategies to foster personal and professional resilience, capacity for leadership, and lifelong learning.

(September 7, 2022)

## **PROFESSIONAL GUIDELINES FOR DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE PROGRAM IN NURSING**

The outcomes of the Doctor of Nursing Practice program are derived from the mission, vision and core values of the School of Nursing and the following professional guidelines:

1. The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education (AACN, 2021)
2. Criteria for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs (NTF, 2022)
3. The Code of Ethics with Interpretive Statements (American Nurses Association, 2015)
4. Scope and Standards of Advanced Practice Registered Nursing (2015)
5. The North Dakota Board of Nursing Rules and Regulations
6. Nurse Practitioner Core Competencies (NONPF, 2022)



## INFORMATION AND POLICIES

Copies of a map of the campus may be obtained at the following web site: [NDSU Campus Map](#)

Please see the following websites for information on graduate student policies.

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON GRADUATE STUDENT POLICIES

Admission, re-admission, progression, retention, graduation, dismissal, and withdrawal	<p>College Policy Manual: College Policy 107  <a href="https://workspaces.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/hhs/policy/NDSU_CHHS_Policies_FINAL.pdf">https://workspaces.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/hhs/policy/NDSU_CHHS_Policies_FINAL.pdf</a></p> <p>School of Nursing Policy Manual: Policies: 2.51, 2.52, 3.63, 3.64  <a href="https://workspaces.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/nursing/documents/policy/2024-2025_SON_Policies.pdf">https://workspaces.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/nursing/documents/policy/2024-2025_SON_Policies.pdf</a></p> <p>Graduate School Policies: General Policies; Doctoral Degree Policies;  <a href="https://catalog.ndsu.edu/graduate/policies/">https://catalog.ndsu.edu/graduate/policies/</a></p>
Health requirement policies	<p>College Policy Manual: College Policy 104  <a href="https://workspaces.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/hhs/policy/NDSU_CHHS_Policies_FINAL.pdf">https://workspaces.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/hhs/policy/NDSU_CHHS_Policies_FINAL.pdf</a></p> <p>School of Nursing Policy Manual: Policies 3.60, 3.61  <a href="https://workspaces.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/nursing/documents/policy/2024-2025_SON_Policies.pdf">https://workspaces.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/nursing/documents/policy/2024-2025_SON_Policies.pdf</a></p>
Student rights, grievance procedure, and responsibilities	<p>College Policy Manual: 107  <a href="https://workspaces.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/hhs/policy/NDSU_CHHS_Policies_FINAL.pdf">https://workspaces.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/hhs/policy/NDSU_CHHS_Policies_FINAL.pdf</a></p> <p>Graduate School Policies: Graduate Student Appeals;  <a href="https://catalog.ndsu.edu/graduate/policies/">https://catalog.ndsu.edu/graduate/policies/</a></p> <p>University Policy: <a href="#">Section 6: Student Affairs</a></p>
Refund of fees and tuition policies	<p>Graduate School Policies: Graduate Assistantship Policy;  <a href="#">Graduate Assistantship and Fellowship Policies &lt; North Dakota State University</a></p> <p>University Policy:  <a href="#">Direct Deposit and Refunds   North Dakota State University (ndsu.edu)</a></p>
Student opportunity to participate in program governance and evaluation	<p>SON Bylaws: Policy 1.42: Article III, Section 1.3; Article V, Section 1.5, and Article V, Section 3.</p>
Academic integrity policy, grading policy, programmatic fees	<p>College Policy Manual: College Policy 107  <a href="https://workspaces.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/hhs/policy/NDSU_CHHS_Policies_FINAL.pdf">https://workspaces.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/hhs/policy/NDSU_CHHS_Policies_FINAL.pdf</a></p> <p>School of Nursing Policy Manual: Policy 3.64  <a href="https://workspaces.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/nursing/documents/policy/2024-2025_SON_Policies.pdf">https://workspaces.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/nursing/documents/policy/2024-2025_SON_Policies.pdf</a></p> <p>University Policy: <a href="https://www.ndsu.edu/onestop/accounts/tuition/">https://www.ndsu.edu/onestop/accounts/tuition/</a></p>

## **STANDARD ADMISSION TO THE DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE PROGRAM ADMISSION CRITERIA AND ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES**

See the NDSU graduate school website for policies and requirements for admission to and progression in graduate school [Homepage - Graduate School](#)

**Acceptance Deposit:** Applicants who are offered a position into the DNP nursing program are required to submit a non-refundable deposit fee to the College to assure a place in the cohort. This deposit is due in accordance with the admission letter. This fee will be applied to the differential tuition for the first semester of the professional program.

**DNP Requirement:** see [Doctor of Nursing Practice](#)

1. Completed application to graduate school. Application and directions are at [Homepage - Graduate School](#). Two of the required references are to be from professional colleagues and address clinical competence and ability to succeed in graduate study. The application essay should include a narrative of professional experience and a statement of professional goals.
2. Unencumbered licensure in a US State as a registered nurse.
3. Baccalaureate degree in nursing from a nationally accredited nursing program with a minimum GPA of 3.0 in Nursing.
4. Interview with nursing faculty

**Documents to Submit:** soon after admission the following must be submitted.

1. Documentation of health status.
2. Criminal background check.
3. Documentation of health insurance.
4. Documentation of ACLS certification (prior to first clinical rotation).
5. Statistics required before nursing research course.

### **Licensure and Certification Records**

The Program requires that students provide current evidence of the following:

- Certification in cardio-pulmonary resuscitation for health care provider or professional level (BLS)
- ACLS certification
- Unencumbered professional nursing license (RN)

### **Criminal Background Checks**

Criminal background checks are required. An FBI check is required for admission into the program. Multi-state background checks are required annually. Students sign the consent form providing residential addresses for the past seven years. A student who is disqualified from having patient contact based on results of a background check will be dismissed from the program. Minnesota clinical sites require the Minnesota DHS background check, which all Fargo students complete. All background check costs are the responsibility of the student.

### **Professional Liability Insurance**

Professional liability insurance for students is provided by the NDSU program. The insurance is

effective for all clinical learning situations in which the student is engaged as part of the NDSU graduate nursing program.

## **DIRECT ADMISSION TO THE DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE PROGRAM ADMISSION CRITERIA AND ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES**

The School of Nursing (SON) offers a streamlined Direct Admission Pathway (DAP) to the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program, enabling highly qualified NDSU undergraduate students to transition directly from a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) into doctoral studies. Designed for those demonstrating exceptional academic and clinical potential, this pathway allows students to begin DNP coursework after completing their BSN, without the need for prior independent licensed/RN clinical experience. It promotes continuous progression from undergraduate to advanced practice, accelerating their nursing education and professional development.

The SON faculty members evaluate applicants for admission to the DNP program and determine which applicants will be accepted for enrollment in the program. In order that all applicants are treated fairly and equally, SON has written guidelines for the admission process to the School's Graduate Program: Doctor of Nursing Practice degree. The following admission requirements are used as criteria in the selection process:

1. Applicants must be currently enrolled in a NDSU BSN program.
2. Successful completion of a BSN degree from NDSU, including supervised clinical practice across various nursing settings.
3. A minimum cumulative undergraduate GPA of 3.7 in nursing coursework.
4. Computer proficiency skills and access to a computer with high-speed Internet capabilities.
5. Proof of current, unencumbered RN licensure is required before starting core DNP coursework.
6. Three professional references must be provided, including one outside professional reference. Two references must come from NDSU undergraduate nursing faculty that highlight clinical competence and potential for success in graduate studies.
7. Satisfactory performance on a sample of writing. The application essay includes a narrative of professional experience or transferable skills and a statement of professional goals.
8. TOEFL PBT minimum score of 580 or TOEFL IBT minimum score of 92, IELTS of a minimum of 7, or PTE Academic of a minimum of 68. There may be additional requirements for international students educated in another country.
9. Admission is based on the recommendation of the admissions committee following a comprehensive review of application materials and an interview. The number of undergraduate students admitted through the DAP will be limited to a select number of admissions.
10. Upon acceptance, a non-refundable deposit is required to hold the student's spot in the program. This deposit will be applied toward tuition once the student begins coursework.

11. Upon successful admission, applicants will have two options for program start.
  1. Immediate Post-Graduate Pathway track:
    1. Applicants would enroll full-time after a December or May graduation date. Coursework is as follows:
      1. Summer: (choose one) SOC 670 or STAT 725 81
      2. Fall: Full-time enrollment in the DNP program
  2. Deferred Post-Graduate Pathway track:
    1. Applicants would begin taking one class per semester after a December or May graduation date. Coursework is as follows:
      1. Summer: No classes or (choose one) SOC 670 or STAT 725
      2. Fall: Patho 1 (NURS 814)
      3. Spring: Patho II (NURS 816)
      4. Summer: No classes or (choose one) SOC 670 or STAT 725 (if not taken previous summer)
      5. Fall: Full-time enrollment in the DNP program

### **Progression Criteria**

DAP applicants are provisionally admitted to the DNP program. Requirements to maintain direct admission standing and eligibility for full admission to the professional program include:

1. Documentation of health status.
2. Successful completion of criminal background checks.
3. Documentation of ACLS certification prior to first clinical (NURS 812P).
4. Degree plan completed in collaboration with faculty by the end of the second semester.
5. A cumulative GPA of 3.0 in graduate coursework must be maintained. A minimum grade of B must be earned in courses taken before starting full time in the DNP program.
6. In courses required for the degree, no more than two grades of less than a B may be earned.

Approved: 11-06-2024 (Policy 2.52)

### **PROGRESSION FOR ALL GRADUATE STUDENTS**

1. A cumulative GPA of 3.0 is required to progress in and graduate from the program. If the GPA falls below 3.0, the student is placed on warning by the Graduate School for the next semester in which courses are taken. If the GPA remains below 3.0 at the end of that semester, the student is placed on probation by the Graduate School.
2. No course with a grade of less than C may be applied to the program of study.
3. No more than two courses with a grade of C may be applied to the program of study.
4. A course with a grade of C (or less) may be repeated once. If a student receives a grade of less than C a second time for a repeated course, program enrollment will be terminated. No more than three courses may be retaken or substituted. In the event that a course that needs to be retaken is no longer available or advised, course substitution may be considered at the sole discretion of the DNP program directors. DNP program directors may choose not to allow course substitution.
5. Program of study must be kept current.

6. Degree requirements must be completed within seven years after admission.

### **Program of Study**

Forms to establish your dissertation committee can be found on the graduate school website at [Forms for Graduate Students | North Dakota State University](#) under the “Plan of Study and Supervisory Committee” section. Click the down arrow and you will find the form there - titled “Form Supervisory Committee.” Students should consult with their faculty advisor concerning the procedures for filing this plan, which is completed in advance of project proposal.

### **Course Registration**

Registration is done electronically.

### **Full-time and Part-time Status**

Full-time status is nine graduate credits in fall and spring sessions and six graduate credits in summer sessions. Teaching/research assistants engaged for 20 hours/week are considered full-time at four semester hours. Teaching/research assistants engaged for 10 hours/week are considered full-time if enrolled in a minimum of six graduate credits. Students who are not a teaching/research assistant and who are enrolled for less than nine graduate credits are part-time.

### **Advisement**

The graduate student is responsible for initiating each step in progression toward the degree. Each student is assigned an advisor on admission. At the point of submission of the Supervisory Committee to the graduate office, the chair of the supervisory committee becomes the advisor. This may or may not be the same faculty member who was assigned as advisor for the student on admission to the nursing program. The *student* will notify the graduate nursing program academic assistant if there is a change in advisor.

### **Scholarship**

Doctor of Nursing Practice students complete a Scholarly Project that demonstrates synthesis of knowledge acquired through the program of study.

### **DNP Clinical Dissertation/Scholarly Project**

The Doctor of Nursing Practice student selects a committee to supervise the development and completion of the committee and the scholarly project. The chair and committee member will be assigned to the student based upon topic and availability. All DNP students will propose on the same dates(s), predetermined by NDP faculty unless extenuating circumstances. The committee will provide input on the subject area, literature review, and methodology. At least three committee members must hold graduate faculty status at NDSU and at least two must be members of the nursing faculty.

The Scholarly Project of the DNP degree candidate is a quality or practice improvement project designed and implemented by the student. Scholarly project guidelines are available at: [Clinical Dissertation](#)

### **Research Involving Human Subjects**

Research projects involving human subjects require **advance approval** by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The approval or permission to conduct proposed activities must also be obtained from the site where research data or participants will be found. Quality improvement projects may be waived from the NDSU IRB process if the IRB determines that the project does not involve Human Subjects Research. The proposal may be exempt from review, may qualify for an expedited review, or may require a review by the full board. Your committee chair will assist you in making this determination. IRB application information and material can be obtained from the Office of Research, Creative Activity and Technology Transfer or online: [Research and Creative Activity \(RCA\)](#). All students complete a tutorial or class regarding the protection of human subjects. The tutorial may be found at: [IRB Training and Requirements](#). Documentation of completion of the tutorial must be submitted to IRB with the research proposal. The application must be approved by the academic advisor (supervisory committee chair) and IRB prior to any data collection. The committee chair will be designated as the principal investigator.

## **COMMUNICATION**

### **Computer Requirements**

Some courses are delivered on-line and components of other courses require on-line access. Personal Computer System Requirements for students enrolled in nursing courses can be accessed at: [Microsoft Word - NDSU CoE Computer Recommendations 2023-2.docx](#)

### **NDSU Email Address**

The student's official NDSU email address will be used for conveying and receiving information related to nursing courses. Students are responsible for monitoring their email for information.

### **ListServ**

A ListServ is used for communication between and among graduate nursing students and faculty. This is the primary mode of information dissemination for the graduate nursing program. It is very important that every student read ListServ messages to receive up-to-date information. Inform the Academic Assistant for the graduate program at (701) 231-5692 if you have any problems with the ListServ.

***The Academic Assistant for the graduate program will add you to the relevant DNP ListServes. You will receive notification when you have been added to a ListServ list.***

## **GOVERNANCE AND OTHER POLICIES**

### **Student Governance**

Graduate students participate in the governance of the program through attendance at the graduate student forum meetings or through membership on SON committees. In addition, students are encouraged to discuss aspects of courses or of the program with faculty whenever questions or concerns arise.

### **Academic Conduct**

Academic conduct policies of the University and of the College apply to students in the

program. Students are required to know policies on academic conduct and responsibility as well as institutional academic requirements and procedures. College policies are at [NDSU CHHS Policies FINAL.pdf](#) and institutional policies are at [Graduate College Policies < North Dakota State University](#). A signed agreement to this policy is maintained in the student's file and must be signed yearly.

Students are expected to display the attributes of respect, autonomy, integrity, caring, justice, and professionalism in every academic and clinical setting.

### **Alcohol and Illegal Substances**

In accordance with state laws, the unlawful or unauthorized use, possession, storage, manufacture, distribution, or sale of alcoholic beverages and any illicit drugs or drug paraphernalia is prohibited in university/college buildings, any public campus area, housing units, university/college vehicles, or any university/college sponsored events either on or off campus.

Students who fail to comply with this policy will be subject to disciplinary and/or legal action. Additionally, students who attend class or clinical activities under the influence of or suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be asked by the instructor to leave the classroom or clinical setting immediately. Further sanctions may be applied.

### **Student Appeals Procedure**

Students are encouraged to seek resolution of a problem at the lowest appropriate level, that is, the student should first discuss the problem with the person(s) directly involved. If this does not satisfactorily resolve the problem, the student should seek resolution with faculty, DNP Director, Associate Dean for the College, and College Dean. In the event of an unsatisfactory resolution a formal grievance process may be initiated. The appeals process can be found at [337.pdf](#) for grades and at [156.pdf](#) for grievances of another nature.

### **Infectious Diseases**

Student contact with clients in the health care setting is accompanied by risk of exposure to communicable disease, as well as responsibility to avoid spreading communicable disease.

If you are exposed to body fluids while caring for a client:

1. Wash the exposed area (not eyes) immediately and thoroughly with soap and water. Cover with a dry sterile dressing if an open wound is present.
2. Notify nursing faculty immediately.
3. Complete an incident report (available from the clinical agency); submit one copy to the agency supervisor and one to your clinical faculty.
4. Seek medical advice immediately from your choice of provider. Students are not covered under workers' compensation; costs of care are the responsibility of the student.

## **COVID**

COVID vaccine is not required currently. The NDSU SON will continue to comply with the regulations set by our affiliating clinical agencies, so the requirement can change at any time. Unvaccinated students may need to wear personal protective equipment during patient care per agency policy.

Acceptable forms of proof of vaccination include one of the following:

- CDC COVID-19 vaccination record card (legible photo of the card)
- Documentation of vaccination from a health care provider or electronic health record
- State immunization information system record

## **Clinical Assignments**

Students will be assigned to clinical sites according to learning objectives of the course. Client characteristics such as age, race, religion, socio-economic level, or health status will not be a factor in clinical assignment unless there is an identified need for clinical experience related to one or more of these characteristics.

A student who has a weakened immune status or who is pregnant is advised to inform the program director in writing whenever the condition becomes known. The director and/or the student will discuss the student's altered physical status with clinical faculty so that appropriate modifications of clinical assignments can be made. Such modification will be based on evidence-based practice guidelines and/or written recommendations of the student's health care provider and will be designed to protect all parties at potential risk.

## **Records**

The transcript which lists credits and grades for all courses taken is the permanent record of each student's progression. This record is confidential and is not released except at the request of the student. Transcripts are maintained by the Office of Registration and Records. An official transcript may be requested on-line from the Office of the Registrar to be sent to whomever the student designates. [Student Records](#)

An advisory folder for each student is kept on file in the School of Nursing while s/he is attending NDSU. The record contains admission papers, correspondence, evaluation forms, and other materials pertaining to the student. All advising/progression information is destroyed after the student's graduation.

Records of health status and criminal background checks are maintained in a separate file during the student's enrollment in the program. These documents are destroyed on program completion. A reference folder containing final transcript, final evaluation, and requests for references is maintained in the School of Nursing for each graduate and for students dismissed from the program.



## CLINICAL INFORMATION

### CLINICAL COMPETENCY EXAMS

All DNP students will need to take and pass a clinical competency exam at the end of each practicum course (excluding 850P). Students who do not pass the exam will have one opportunity to repeat the exam. Students cannot progress to the next semester's courses without passing the clinical competency exam.

### CLINICAL PRACTICE REQUIREMENTS

Direct patient/client care in a variety of clinical practice sites form an essential part of the NDSU nurse practitioner program. Clinical placements are an extension of classroom activities. Students are expected to perform in a professional manner and demonstrate growth towards professional practice. Students are expected to approach each clinical rotation with a willingness and desire to learn new clinical skills.

All students are expected to be familiar with the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics and the American Association of Nurse Practitioner Scope and Standards of Practice for nurse practitioners and to always abide by them.

- ANA Code of Ethics  
<https://www.nursingworld.org/coe-view-only>
- AANP Scope of Practice  
<http://www.aanp.org/images/documents/publications/scopeofpractice.pdf>
- AANP Standards of Practice  
<http://www.aanp.org/images/documents/publications/standardsofpractice.pdf>

NDSU DNP faculty determine whether a student has demonstrated reasonable competence in clinical practice. If faculty evaluation of student performance or health status indicates that safe clinical care is unlikely, the faculty has the legal responsibility to deny, and will deny the student, access to further clinical learning experiences.

The coursework and clinical practice requirements of the DNP program are significant. Students need time to contemplate, comprehend, and synthesize new knowledge. Faculty strongly encourage DNP students to consider their coursework and clinical time as equivalent to a full-time job. It is recommended that you work minimally.

### CLINICAL PLACEMENTS AND PRECEPTORS

DNP students may have several practice sites and preceptors throughout the program and must be familiar with NDSU's policies regarding professional standards, physical requirements, and academic requirements. In addition, DNP students are required to be familiar with their clinical organization's policies. Clinical placements involve the collaboration of many APRNs, physicians, physician associates, and health care organizations. Numerous health care organizations have made available to NDSU the use of their facilities, as well as their other agency personnel for the

purpose of instructional experience. We appreciate the cooperation of many health care professionals. You play a major role in the determination of these relationships.

The preceptor is ultimately accountable for the FNP student's patient care and performance in their clinical site. Consequently, the preceptor must approve student patient/client assessments and treatment plans and must be available on-site for consultation and approval. Patient communication, assessment, treatment plan, and all other aspects of patient care must be discussed with the preceptor before proceeding with care. When preceptor and student discuss patient/client management, the patient/client must not be placed in the position of responding to competing and contradictory messages.

Clinical placements are arranged and coordinated by DNP faculty and staff. Several variables are considered, such as where the student lives, the course objectives, and available clinical sites. Most clinical placements will be in North Dakota and Western Minnesota. All clinical placements must be approved by the course coordinator(s). Faculty site visits, professional recommendations, and student feedback are important sources of information as faculty determine the appropriateness of establishing or maintaining clinical sites. Students are not to arrange their own clinical placements or preceptors without faculty involvement or approval. Prior approval from the DNP program coordinator is required before students can be placed with preceptors or in clinical sites where a strong personal relationship exists. Again, students are not to arrange clinical placements without the knowledge and involvement of the DNP faculty.

Clinicians can serve as preceptors for NDSU DNP students if they meet the following criteria:

1. The preceptor is licensed by the state and certified by a professional organization as required by the state to practice as an advance practice nurse, a physician assistant, or physician.
  - a. Nurses: Master's degree or higher in nursing from an accredited university or must have demonstrated competencies that are appropriate for the student's learning experience; current license in the state where the student will engage in clinical experiences; authorization to practice as an advanced practice nurse in the state in which they practice; and practicing in the advanced nursing role.
  - b. Physicians: Doctor of Medicine, Podiatry, or Osteopathy from an accredited university and currently licensed and practicing.
  - c. Physician Associates from an accredited university and currently licensed and practicing; authorization to practice in the state in which they practice; and practicing in the physician associate role.
2. The preceptor has the educational preparation appropriate to their area(s) of practice and has at least one year of clinical experience in that area of practice, and area of practice must be relevant to the educational clinical practice component.
3. The preceptor serves as a role model incorporating evidence-based education best practices ensuring safe and effective patient outcomes.
4. Another healthcare provider can offer an enhanced understanding of a specialty topic through an observational experience (ie. Diabetes Educator, Physical Therapy, etc.) for up to

a total of 20 hours of the total 1020 hours and with faculty approval.

5. The preceptor's practice site has sufficient space available for the student to see patients, document, and discuss patient care with the preceptor.
6. The preceptor has adequate time available for joint student/preceptor patient visits, to actively engage students in the experience, to discuss patient care, and to evaluate the student.
7. The preceptor provides care for appropriate patients consistent with the student learning needs.
8. The preceptor agrees to confer with faculty via phone, email and/or on-site visits. (Travel to clinical sites and living arrangements (if needed) are the student's responsibility.)
9. The preceptor is able to provide adequate supervision, teaching, and feedback to students regarding their achievement of clinical objectives and learning needs and demonstrate commitment to the concept of advanced practice nursing.

Occasionally, DNP students will also be required to spend time (1-2 days) each semester with a DNP faculty at the faculty's practice site. The DNP faculty will evaluate student clinical progress through preceptor communication, mock clinics, direct observation, and through other learning activities. If students have concerns related to a preceptor or clinical site, the student is responsible for discussing the concern with the clinical coordinator(s).

Students are encouraged to contact their preceptor at least two (2) weeks before the clinical experience is scheduled to begin. Students should plan to provide the clinical site with a current resume, skills record, and proof of immunizations. Students should ask the preceptor to recommend the "Top 5-10 diagnoses" seen in the preceptor's practice. Knowing the common diagnoses allows the student to research and prepare for the clinical rotation. Students are required to post their proposed clinical schedule and the hours at the clinical site to the Typhon tracking system. The preceptor and faculty coordinator should also receive a written copy of the schedule.

A signed, current clinical contract between the agency/preceptor and the NDSU School of Nursing must be in place prior to starting a clinical rotation. A current, active, unencumbered RN license is also required and a copy must be on file at the School of Nursing prior to clinical participation. Students are required to have proof of current immunization, and annual TB test results on file at the School of Nursing prior to clinical practice.

In the assigned clinical site, the student will provide preceptor supervised patient health care. The student's clinical experiences should build on learned advanced assessment skills, diagnostic reasoning, and evidence-based practice, while providing holistic care to patients of a variety of age, gender, race, culture, economic status, and state of health. The individual student is accountable for incorporating and building upon information learned in previous courses and clinical experiences.

Providing health care is an interdisciplinary process, and students are encouraged to communicate and consult with other disciplines including ancillary staff, nurses, pharmacists, specialists, and others involved in patient care inside and outside of the clinical site. Students should take the initiative in this process in a manner consistent with professional courtesy, demonstrating respect in all communications. Professional courtesy requires the use of professional titles in formal and patient care settings.

### ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance at clinical is required. No missed hours of clinical will be accrued in students' clinical placements. Students are required to be at the clinical site during their scheduled clinical hours. The student must accrue the required number of clinical hours per semester or they will not progress. All hours will be made up before students may progress. If the student has an unforeseen absence from clinical because of illness, family emergency, or weather, it is the student's responsibility to contact the preceptor and the course coordinator(s) as soon as possible. On a scheduled clinical day requiring travel away from home, the student is accountable for assessing the safety of road travel considering climactic conditions. The student is required to make up time lost and is responsible to reschedule the clinical day another time during the semester. If the student is unable to reschedule the hours at the clinical site, arrangements are to be made with the course coordinator(s) to find an alternate clinical site.

### VALID CLINICAL ACTIVITIES

There are many educational activities that can occur in a clinical setting; however, the only activities that count toward required clinical hours for each DNP course include those that involve or are related to direct patient care. Examples of direct patient assessment activities include: seeing a patient (alone or with the preceptor); performing a patient-related procedure (e.g., microscopy, suturing); reviewing a chart or a clinical reference regarding a patient scheduled to see or have seen; discussing a patient's plan of care with the preceptor or another member of the patient's care team; reviewing a patient's lab, cardiology, or radiology results; and documenting the patient's care. Examples of non-patient related activities that do not count toward the required clinical hours include: simulated or mock patients, educational conferences or presentations, etc. Questions regarding the activities that count or do not count as a direct patient care should be discussed with the course coordinator(s). If the clinical site is experiencing a particularly slow day and a student is asked to go home, they may not count the scheduled hours; only the direct patient care hours can be counted. If the student's assigned clinical site consistently has a limited number of direct patient experiences, the student is responsible to contact the course coordinator(s) to find additional clinical hours at that clinical site or to locate an alternate placement.

### MAXIMUM WEEKLY HOURS

Reflection is a critical aspect of clinical education. After each clinical day, students are expected to reflect upon and review the literature related to the patient's encounters during the clinical experience. Spending too many hours in clinical at once takes away from this critical reflection

and development time and undermines the learning process. Thus, students should limit clinical hours to 32 or less per week so that there is time for reflection and to absorb information.

## ATTIRE/DRESS CODE

**Personal Appearance/Professional Dress General Guidelines** Professional appearance instills confidence in others, sends a clear message that the student is credible and reflects self-confidence and good health. The following are minimal expectations for professional appearance for a School of Nursing (SON) DNP Student:

- The Agency's guidelines will be followed. Students are required to follow facilities' policies regarding appearance and dress.
- The overall appearance will convey an image of professionalism.
- Fingernails will be well maintained.
- Hair and facial hair must be well groomed.
- Jewelry may be worn per facility policy.
- Strong odors including, but not limited to, perfumes, colognes, aftershaves, or cigarette smoke, are not permitted (this includes strongly scented lotions).
- Tattoos may need to be covered per facility policy.

**Sanctions.** The student who does not adhere to the personal appearance/professional dress guidelines in a clinical area will receive a warning for the first violation. A second offense may warrant dismissal from the clinical area for the day with the published corresponding effect on his/her course grade.

## PREPARATION

In addition to appropriate attire, students must be prepared to engage in clinical care. Students should bring a stethoscope, a laptop computer and/or mobile device, and pertinent clinical resources.

## CLINICAL LOG

Students are required to maintain a clinical/time log using Typhon Tracking System. No identifying data should be included on the log (see Confidentiality section). Students are expected to enter log data into the Typhon system immediately after completing each clinical day. The Typhon system has been set so that students cannot add or edit clinical data 14 days after the clinical date has passed.

## PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

A variety of mechanisms will be used to evaluate student clinical performance including clinical competency exams, preceptor evaluations, mock clinics, and case studies. Additionally, clinical faculty will maintain regular contact with preceptors via phone, email, zoom, and/or site visits.

## IMMUNIZATION/HEALTH POLICY

The NDSU graduate nursing program requires that students provide evidence of the following:

1. General health status.
2. Tuberculin test (PPD) annually. A two-step skin tuberculosis testing or blood test for tuberculosis is required prior to the second semester in the program. A one-step skin test is required annually thereafter; provided; however, the test is administered no later than exactly one year after the last TB test was administered.
3. MMR immunization or proof of immunity through serum rubella screening for antibodies. (MMR not necessary if student's birth year is prior to 1957).
4. Completion of Hepatitis B series, documented immunity through serum Hepatitis B screening for antibodies or declination.
5. Tetanus diphtheria (acellular) pertussis immunization (Tdap) within the last ten (10) years.
6. Varicella. Proof of immunity is preferred. Student may also show proof of the series of vaccinations.
7. Current Influenza vaccination by October 29th annually.

The purpose for requiring evidence of health status and current immunization is to provide a safe environment and protect fellow students, faculty, health care agencies, and patients from communicable diseases. Proof of health status and immunization is also required by health care agencies accepting students for clinical experiences.

### **Procedure:**

1. The student is responsible to have his or her health care provider complete the Health Record and return the completed form to the Academic Assistant prior to beginning the Graduate nursing program.
2. The student must resubmit a health care status report as necessary during their program of study if any changes in health status should occur that could affect performance as a student.
3. The student is required to submit proof of current: tuberculosis status (PPD or blood test); Hepatitis B immunity or Hepatitis B immunization; measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) immunity or immunization; Tdap immunization; varicella immunity; and influenza immunization.
4. When health requirements of a clinical agency exceed NDSU graduate nursing requirements, the student will be advised of additional information or immunization requirements prior to the start of clinical experience in that agency. The student will be responsible for providing the required additional information to the Academic Assistant prior to starting clinical experience at that agency. The Academic Assistant will ensure that the agency has the required information prior to student placement in that agency.
5. The student is responsible for informing the Program Director of any changes in health status while they are a student at NDSU.

Any student not meeting health status reporting requirements will not be permitted to begin classes, attend clinical, and/or continue in the program until proof of health care status is received.

## SERVICES AND ORGANIZATIONS

### STUDENT SERVICES

Students have access to general student services such as the wellness center, counseling, lactation lounge, meeting areas, food service, and opportunity to participate in cultural, intellectual, and sporting events. Information about graduate student housing may be obtained from the Office of Residence Life. NDSU Wi-Fi access is available on campus.

### FINANCIAL AID

Students are advised to seek information from the Financial Aid Office regarding available loans and grants including the Nurse Educator Federal Loans. Federal traineeships for FNP students are administered by the School of Nursing. Information about the North Dakota Board of Nursing scholarship/loans can be obtained from [ND Board of Nursing](#). Information about other scholarships is disseminated over the graduate student ListServ.

### GRADUATE NURSING STUDENT ORGANIZATION

The Graduate Nursing Student Organization (GNSO) is an organization open to all NDSU graduate nursing students. It was created in 2014 for the purposes of promoting educational and professional interests of the graduate student nurse population; to act as a liaison for graduate student-faculty communication; to provide mentor support between fellow graduate student nurses; to advocate for graduate student nurses to further the quality of nursing graduate education; to plan/provide funding to attend continuing education conferences; and to represent the graduate nursing students at NDSU.

### SIGMA THETA TAU INTERNATIONAL

Sigma Theta Tau International, Honor Society of Nursing, is dedicated to improving the health of people worldwide through increasing the scientific base of nursing practice. Its members are nursing scholars committed to the pursuit of excellence in clinical practice, education, research, and leadership. Sigma Theta Tau International's philosophy of membership eligibility is based upon the purposes of the Society. Awarding membership recognizes, encourages and actively supports nursing excellence and scholarship by advancing professional development, scholarly pursuit, leadership, creativity and commitment to nursing. Graduate nursing students who have completed one-fourth of their curriculum, have achieved at least a 3.5 GPA, and meet the expectation of academic integrity may qualify for membership. Xi Kappa-at- Large is the local chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International. NDSU, Jamestown College, Concordia College and Minnesota State University, sponsor Xi Kappa Chapter.

### AANP

The American Association of Nurse Practitioners is the largest full-service national professional membership organization for NPs of all specialties. AANP's mission is to lead NPs in transforming patient-centered health care. For more information, visit the AANP website: [AANP | The American Association of Nurse Practitioners](#).

## ANA

The American Nurses Association (ANA) advances the nursing profession by fostering high standards of nursing practice, promoting the rights of nurses in the workplace, projecting a positive and realistic view of nursing, and by lobbying the Congress and regulatory agencies on health care issues affecting nurses and the public. As a member, one belongs to both the National as well as the State Organization. For more information, visit the ANA website: [American Nurses Enterprise | American Nurses Association](#).



## BSN-DNP FACT SHEET

### NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY | DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE

NDSU offers a program to prepare students for eligibility for certification as a family nurse practitioner. The full-time eight-semester course of study leads to a Doctor of Nursing Practice Degree (DNP). The curriculum is comprised of three components: 1) Graduate core courses; 2) Practice core courses; and 3) Specialty curriculum content. A minimum of 1,020 hours clinical practice is required.

#### 3-Year (8 Semesters) Sample Curriculum Plan (86 Credits)

Summer – Prior to Program Start		Credits			Credits
SOC 670	Social Data Analysis	3			
		3			
YEAR 1 – Fall Semester			YEAR 1 – Spring Semester 2		
NURS 806	Healthcare Delivery Systems and Financing	2	NURS 804	Nursing Research/Evidence-Based Practice	3
NURS 808	Informatics and Advanced Nursing Practice	2	NURS 812	Advanced Health Assessment (includes lab)	3
NURS 810	Health Promotion & Disease Prevention	2	NURS 816	Advanced Pathophysiology II	2
NURS 814	Advanced Pathophysiology I	2	NURS 831	Advanced Pharmacology I	3
NURS 815	Population Health/Epidemiology for Advanced Practice Nursing	3			
NURS 828	An Introduction to Primary Care	2			
STAT 725	Applied Statistics (if SOC 670 not taken prior to program start)	3			
Total	(Depending on when the Statistics course is taken)	13 or 16	Total		11
YEAR 1 – Summer Semester 3					
NURS 812P	Assessment Practicum	6			
Total		6			
YEAR 2 – Fall Semester 4			YEAR 2 – Spring Semester 5		
NURS 832	Advanced Pharmacology II	2	NURS 802	Ethics/Policy	2
NURS 833	Family Primary Care I: Assess & Mgmt	3	NURS 834	Family Primary Care II: Assess & Mgmt	3
NURS 833P	Family Primary Care: Residency I	6	NURS 834P	Family Primary Care: Residency II	6
NURS 899S-1	Clinical Dissertation I: Development of an evidence-based practice study	2	NURS 899S-2	Clinical Dissertation II: Implementation of an evidence-based practice study	2
Total		13	Total		13
YEAR 2 – Summer Semester 6					
NURS 835	Family Primary Care III: Assess & Mgmt	2			
NURS 850P	Family Primary Care: Specialty Practicum	3			
Total		5			
YEAR 3 – Fall Semester 7			YEAR 3 – Spring Semester 8		
NURS 835P	Practicum IV: FNP Role Integration	6	NURS 836P	Practicum V: FNP Role Integration	7
NURS 820	Advanced Practice Roles	3	NURS 830	Clinical Applications	3
NURS 899S-3	Clinical Dissertation III: Evaluation of an evidence-based practice study	2	NURS 880	Interprofessional Education	2
Total		11	Total		12

#### CURRICULUM

Core Graduate Courses	Core Practice Courses	Specialty Curriculum
N802 Ethics/Policy	N810 Health Pro/Dis Prevention	N812P Assessment Practicum
N804 Nursing Research/Evidence-Based Practice	N812 Adv Health Assessment	N820 Advanced Practice Roles
N806 Health Care Delivery Systems and Financing	N814 Adv Pathophysiology I	N830 Clinical Applications
N808 Informatics and Advanced Nursing Practice	N815 Population Health/Epidemiology for Advanced Practice Nursing	N833 Family Primary Care I: Assess & Mgmt
SOC 670 Social Data Analysis (preferred)	N816 Adv Pathophysiology II	N833P Family Primary Care: Residency I
or	N828 An Introduction to Primary Care	N834 Family Primary Care II: Assess & Mgmt
STAT 725 Applied Statistics	N831 Adv Pharmacology I	N834P Family Primary Care: Residency II
	N832 Adv Pharmacology II	N835 Family Primary Care III: Assess & Mgmt
	N880 Interprofessional Education	N835P Practicum IV: FNP Role Integration
		N836P Practicum V: FNP Role Integration
		N850P Family Primary Care: Specialty Practicum
		N899S-1 Clinical Dissertation I
		N899S-2 Clinical Dissertation II
		N899S-3 Clinical Dissertation III

## CLINICAL DISSERTATION DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE

Clinical Dissertation 899S-1 (2 credits); 899S-2 (2 credits); 899S-3 (2 credits)

1. Total credits are 6. Credits are distributed over three semesters.
2. Students must maintain continuous enrollment with at least 1 credit each semester until completion of the study and final defense. After completing 6 credits, students must register for one credit each semester until finished.

The Clinical Dissertation is a scholarly documentation of an undertaking focused on quality or practice improvement to enhance practice.

Scholarly project information can be accessed at [Clinical Dissertation](#).

**Important Forms:** The following are links to the documents you will need to complete and file with the Graduate School at various times during your program. Forms are in the DocuSign program which allows you to complete the form on line. The document is then forwarded to each person for signature and is sent to the Graduate School upon completion.

- Form Supervisory Committee: Form to establish your dissertation committee. [PowerForm Signer Information | DocuSign](#)
- Advisor or Supervisory Committee Change: Form to change your dissertation committee. [PowerForm Signer Information | DocuSign](#)
- Notification of Scheduled Examination. Informs the Graduate School of your final dissertation meeting. Must be filed no later than two weeks before your scheduled meeting. [PowerForm Signer Information | DocuSign](#)
- Report of Final Examination. Prepared after your final dissertation defense. Must be completed no later than two weeks after your examination date. [PowerForm Signer Information | DocuSign](#)
- Approval Pages. This document must be completed after the defense when all your changes have been made, you have approval from the Associate Dean of the School of Nursing, and you are ready to submit your dissertation to the Graduate School. [PowerForm Signer Information | DocuSign](#)
- IRB Compliance Form. This document needs to be completed and your IRB Compliance letter needs to be attached. [PowerForm Signer Information | DocuSign](#)

If you have any questions on any of the above documentation, please contact your advisor/committee chair or the Academic Assistant for the DNP program at 701-231-5692 or [karen.hannestad@ndsu.edu](mailto:karen.hannestad@ndsu.edu).