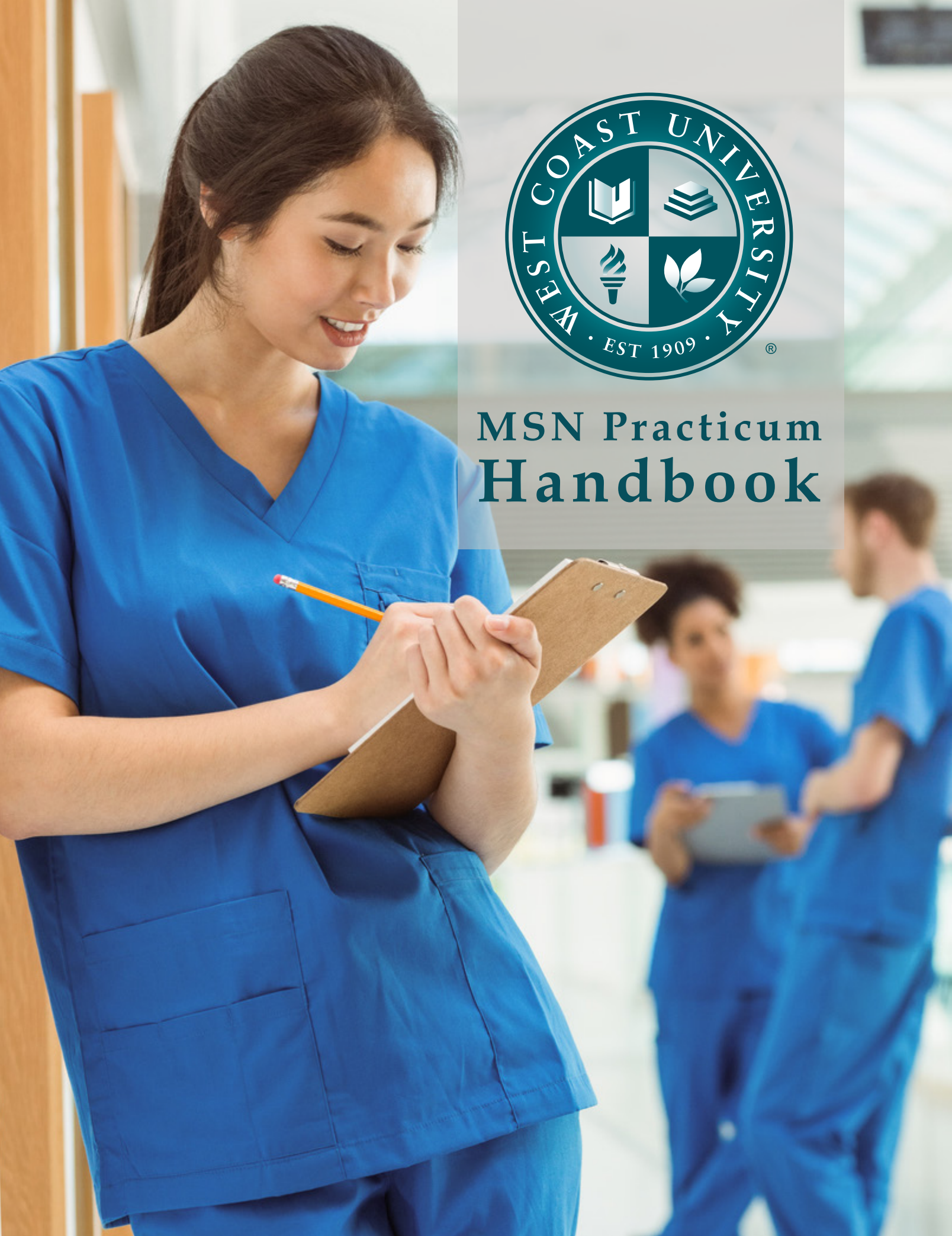




MSN Practicum Handbook



A practicum is a supervised experience that allows students to apply knowledge gained in the didactic portion of a program to both direct and indirect patient care management situations. The practicum provides the Master of Science in nursing students with the opportunity to observe, actively participate in, and influence the delivery of health care in roles that meet the needs of individuals, population-focused care, administration, informatics, education, or health policy, incorporating advanced nursing practice concepts to influence healthcare outcomes. Preceptors actively practicing in the student's program specialty setting are uniquely qualified to facilitate the development of students in advanced nursing practice. As a practice discipline, clinical care is the core business of nursing practice whether the graduate is focused on the provision of care to individuals, population-focused care, administration, informatics, education, or health policy. Master's nursing education prepares graduates to implement safe, quality care in a variety of settings and roles.

Because each student enters the practicum with a varied amount of past experience and technical competence, providing learning opportunities that support the student's individual learning needs may be challenging. Therefore, the purpose of this MSN Practicum Handbook is to provide preceptors with helpful information and effective teaching strategies to optimize learning for students.

WCU College of Nursing Mission

The mission of WCU College of Nursing is to provide evidence-based and innovative nursing education to culturally diverse learners, preparing nurses to provide quality and compassionate care that is responsive to the needs of the community and the global society.

Practicum Learning Expectations for the MSN Program

All graduates of a master's nursing program must have supervised practicum experiences, which are sufficient to demonstrate mastery of the MSN Essentials. The term "supervised" is used broadly and can include precepted experiences with faculty site visits. These learning experiences may be accomplished through diverse teaching methodologies, including face-to-face and simulated means.

Mastery in nursing practice is acquired by the student through a series of applied learning experiences designed to allow the learner to integrate cognitive learning with the affective and psychomotor domains of nursing practice. The clinical/practice experiences allow the learner to experiment and acquire competence with new knowledge and skills. These experiences provide the opportunity for delivery of services or programs

of wide diversity and focus and may occur in multiple settings including hospitals, community settings, public health departments, primary care practice offices, integrated healthcare systems, and an array of other settings.

The practicum experience is an opportunity to integrate didactic learning, promote innovative thinking, and test new potential solutions to clinical/practice or system issues. Therefore, the development of new skills and practice expectations can be facilitated through the use of creative learning opportunities in diverse settings. These learning opportunities may include experiences in business, industries, and with disciplines that are recognized as innovators in safety, quality, finance, management, or technology. Through these experiences, the student may develop an appreciation and use the wisdom from other



industries and disciplines in nursing practice that can occur through application of knowledge or evidence developed in other industries.

These learning experiences can also occur by means of simulation designed as a mechanism for verifying early mastery of new levels of practice or designed to create access to data or healthcare situations that are not readily accessible to the student. These experiences may include simulated mass casualty events, simulated database problems, simulated interpersonal communication scenarios, and other new emerging learning technologies.

The simulation is an adjunct to the learning that will occur with direct human interface or human experience learning.

Development of mastery also is facilitated through the use of focused and sustained practicum experiences, which provide the learner with the opportunity to master the patient care delivery skills, as well as the system assessment and intervention skills that require an understanding

of organizational dynamics.

These immersion experiences afford the student an opportunity to focus on a population of interest and a specific role. Most often, the immersion experience occurs toward the end of the program as a culminating synthesis experience for the program.

In some instances, the master's student may engage in a practicum experience at the student's employing agency. This arrangement requires a systematic assessment of that setting's ability to allow the student to engage in new practice activities, framed by the learning objectives of the program, and overseen or supervised by a mentor/preceptor or faculty member. This type of learning experience will be designed to assist the learner to acquire nursing knowledge and practice roles.

Supervised practicum experiences will be verified and documented. One example of such documentation is the use of a professional portfolio. This portfolio may also provide a foundation or template for the graduate's future professional career (AACN, 2011).

The primary goals of practicum learning experiences are the opportunities to:

- *Lead change to improve quality care outcomes,*
- *Advance a culture of excellence through lifelong learning,*
- *Build and lead collaborative interprofessional care teams,*
- *Navigate and integrate care services across the healthcare system,*
- *Design innovative nursing practices, and*
- *Translate evidence into practice.*

Student Responsibilities

The student is responsible for being self-directed in identifying initial and ongoing learning needs, for seeking learning opportunities to meet identified needs, and for being accountable for their performance in the advanced nursing practice role.

The student will:

- 1 Arrange to meet with the preceptor for orientation prior to the initiation of the actual practicum experience.
- 2 Complete all preceptor agreements prior to the initiation of the practicum experience.
- 3 Discuss specific clinical objectives and negotiate a schedule with the preceptor prior to the actual practicum experience.
- 4 Provide the practicum site with the necessary licensure, liability insurance, student health information, and educational information as requested.
- 5 Perform advanced nursing practice competencies under the supervision of the preceptor, recognizing the limitation of educational preparation and complying with professional standards, practicum site policies, and advanced nursing practice protocols.
- 6 Demonstrate professional role behaviors for advanced nursing practice.
- 7 Demonstrate accountability for thoroughness and timeliness in completing assigned role responsibilities.
- 8 Maintain a practicum activity/time log according to course requirements.
- 9 Demonstrate progressive independence and competency in the advanced nursing practice role.
- 10 Actively seek input into the evaluation process, and participate in self-evaluation of strengths and identified areas for professional growth with the preceptor and designated faculty.
- 11 Complete clinical preceptor evaluation at the end of the clinical experience.

It is the student's responsibility to share the course syllabi with the preceptor. Please download the syllabi from the practicum courses and give to your preceptor.

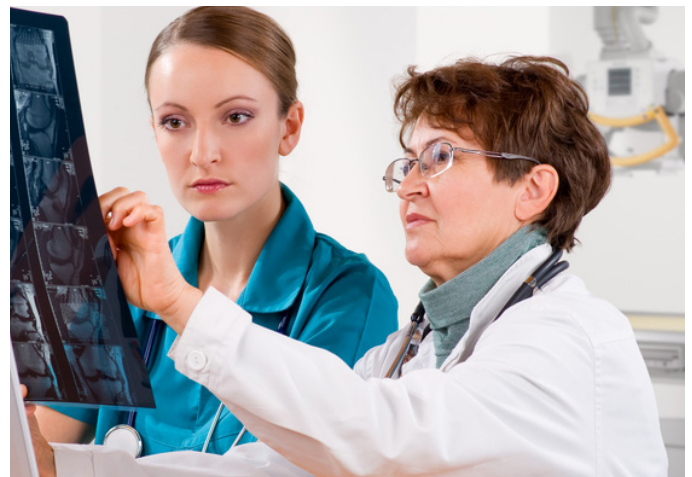


Designated Faculty Responsibilities

Faculty should review practicum learning objectives set by the student and the preceptor that are specific to the program, course, and learning needs of the students. They facilitate student achievement of these objectives through provision of didactic instruction, identification of appropriate practicum facilities and preceptors, observation and evaluation of students in their program setting, and establishment of close working relationships with preceptors.

The faculty will:

- 1 Review with the preceptor the MSN Practicum Handbook and the specific objectives of the practicum experience after the student has scheduled the orientation meeting.
- 2 Review the expectations for the students, the preceptor, and the faculty with the preceptor and pertinent personnel at the facility/agency.
- 3 Assure establishment of affiliation or preceptor agreements prior to initiation of practicum experience.
- 4 Review the policies of the agency to be followed by faculty and assigned students.
- 5 Act as counselor, consultant, and teacher.
- 6 Serve as a role model to demonstrate effective communication, leadership, and nursing practice at an advanced level.
- 7 Provide feedback on the student's practicum performance and other clinical-related activities.
- 8 Assess progress through review of practicum log entries.
- 9 Schedule virtual meetings with practicum site as needed.
- 10 Encourage student to verbalize and demonstrate the use of theoretical and conceptual frameworks for care and decision-making.
- 11 Provide an open environment to enhance the student's cultural competency.
- 12 Maintain open communication with the preceptor/facility/agency and all persons involved.
- 13 Complete a preceptor evaluation at the end of the practicum experience.



Preceptor Criteria

A qualified preceptor must supervise the student's practicum experience. West Coast University follows the ACNE and APRN guidelines by requiring the following qualifications:

- 1 Doctorate or master of Nursing from an accredited university.
 - 2 Current RN license in the state where students will engage in practicum experience.
 - 3 Practicing in an advanced nursing practice role.
 - 4 Area of practice must be relevant to the educational practice component.
 - 5 Able to provide adequate supervision, teaching, and evaluation of student for the achievement of practicum course and learning objectives.
 - 6 Able to facilitate active participation of students in the delivery of health care.
 - 7 Effective interpersonal and communication skills and positive professional attitude.
 - 8 Knowledge of adult learning theory and teaching methodologies.
 - 9 Leadership, decision-making, and critical thinking skills.
 - 10 Commitment to the role of the advanced nursing practice role and to the preceptor's role.
 - 11 Ability to provide effective, constructive feedback to students and faculty.
 - 12 Desire to be a preceptor, interested in professional growth, and sensitive to learning needs of student.
 - 13 Be accessible to students for completion of practicum goals, objectives, and projects.
 - 14 Be approved by practicum advisor.
- * Specific Program Tracks have additional Requirements. See page 9 for more information.**



Preceptor Responsibilities

Practicum Site Orientation

- Communicate general guidelines to be used for preceptor/student interactions and for review and feedback of student performance.
- Review advanced practice procedural and management protocols specific to the setting.
- Review expectations for documentation.
- Discuss overall plan for progression of student assignments in regards to number and complexity of patients.
- Review student's previous learning experiences and practicum objectives to be accomplished.
- Encourage student to identify strengths and areas for continued professional growth.
- Perform initial assessment of student's current level of proficiency through observation of skills and directed guided questioning.
- Involve student in assessment/validation/decision-making in advanced practice procedural and management protocols specific to the setting.
- Review expectations for documentation.
- Negotiate a practicum schedule with the student. If the student will be absent on a scheduled day, the student is responsible for notifying the preceptor prior to the designated time and arranging a schedule to make up any missed hours.
- Review other site specific operational issues involved in the performance of advanced nursing practice role responsibilities.

[Click here for an Orientation Checklist](#)

Practicum Supervision and Teaching

- Assess the competence of the student providing care.
- Ensure that care provided by the student is consistent with standards set forth in the practicum site policies, procedures, and advanced nursing practice protocols.
- Direct the progression of student assignments in regards to complexity of care.
- Directly supervise the student in the performance of advanced nursing practice role responsibilities. The student will require direct supervision until such time that the preceptor and the student deem it is no longer necessary.
- Review the student's documentation and make constructive suggestions for improvement. Student will sign all notations with their first name, last name, title, and school.
- Schedule regular meetings with the student to discuss specific learning objectives and experiences. The meetings should review:
 1. The student's care management and documentation.
 2. Advanced nursing practice skills attempted and completed.
 3. Intervention strategies including rationale for treatment decisions.
 4. The student's ability to communicate and collaborate effectively with preceptors, families, staff, and other healthcare professionals.
 5. Professional issues related to advanced nursing practice roles.
 6. Plans for future learning experiences based on an assessment of the student's strengths and areas for continued professional growth.

Evaluation of Student Performance

1. Assess student progress through formal, written evaluations at the midpoint and completion of both course sessions A and B.
2. Assess progress through periodic review of learning contract goals.
3. Inform the designated MSN faculty of concerns related to unsafe practice by the student or if the student is identified as having difficulties in meeting the requirements of the practicum experience.

Specific Preceptor Qualifications for MSN Program Tracks

Nurse Educator

Specific Preceptor Criteria: In addition to the MSN preceptor selection criteria, the nurse educator preceptor must also:

1. Be a registered nurse with a minimum of a master of science in nursing and competency in a specialty area preferably Certified Nurse Educator (CNE).
2. Minimum two years experience working as a nurse educator.
3. Desire to be a preceptor, interested in professional growth, and sensitive to learning needs of student.
4. Be accessible to students for completion of practicum goals, objectives, and projects.

Nursing Informatics

Specific Preceptor Criteria: In addition to the MSN preceptor selection criteria, the nursing informatics preceptor must also:

1. Be master prepared in nursing informatics or be a non-nurse master's prepared clinical informaticist with a minimum of two years of experience in health informatics or related field. This individual could be employed as a health informatics specialist, clinical informatics specialist, or a clinical informatics manager. If this individual is not a nurse, then the faculty would provide the nursing perspective overview.
2. Hold a bachelor of nursing with HIMSS or AANC Informatics Certification or a bachelor's degree in Health Informatics with a minimum of four years of experience in health informatics or related field. This individual could be employed as a health informatics specialist, clinical informatics specialist, or a clinical informatics manager. If this individual is not a nurse, then the faculty would provide the nursing perspective overview.
3. Be approved by practicum advisor.

Nurse Leader

1. Be a registered nurse with a minimum of a master of science in nursing and competency in a specialty area - Nursing Leadership/Administration.
2. Minimum two years experience working as a nurse leader/administrator.

Forms

Preceptor Forms

[Preceptor Profile](#)

[Preceptor Agreement](#)

[Evaluation of MSN Student Practicum Performance \(cover sheet\)](#)

[Midpoint and Final Review Checklist](#)

[Preceptor Evaluation of Practicum Experience](#)

Student Forms

[Student Profile](#)

[Practicum Placement Verification Form](#)

[Student-Preceptor Agreement and Practicum Compliance Verification](#)

[Learning Contract](#)

(The student and preceptor should write the Learning Contract using specific goals and objectives for the track in which the student is enrolled.)

[Student Evaluation of Preceptor Expertise](#)

[Health and Immunization Requirements](#)

[Practicum Student Self-Evaluation](#)

Practicum Time Logs

[RN/MSN/Advanced Generalist NURS 591L A Time Log](#)

[RN/MSN/Advanced Generalist NURS 591L B Time Log](#)

[Nurse Educator NURS 641L A Time Log](#)

[Nurse Educator NURS 641L B Time Log](#)

[Health Informatics NURS 675L A Time Log](#)

[Health Informatics NURS 675L B Time Log](#)

[Nurse Leader Practicum NURS 595L A Time Log](#)

[Nurse Leader Practicum NURS 595L B Time Log](#)

All forms on this page are fillable through Adobe Reader. You may also print the forms.

The WCU College of Nursing Philosophy

The philosophy of WCU College of Nursing is the education of nurses who become lifelong learners and critical thinkers. The philosophy reflects beliefs that education is a continuous process, occurring in phases throughout an individual's lifetime.

The mission of the graduate program in nursing is to promote foundational competencies that are core to all advanced nursing practice in an ever-changing and globally reaching healthcare environment. Academic, practicum, and interpersonal preparation are characterized by increased depth in organizational and systems' leadership within a culture of integrity and personal accountability in a community that values the dignity and contributions of our members. Standards of ethical behavior and decision-making are essential foundations of our graduate education programs, which guide individuals to distinguish ethical principles and understand the consequences and implications beyond personal and organizational self-interest. By pursuing more effective and innovative methodologies through which students utilize administrative expertise with the foresight to analyze problems, structure and facilitate development, and find and implement solutions, WCU graduates can and will make a positive impact on society.

For further information regarding Institutional and Programmatic Learning Outcomes, as well as the MSN Essentials, please see the student handbook or university catalog. Please visit the resources available below for additional track specific information.

Track Specific Certification Requirements and Other Resources

[Nurse Educator Certification](#)

[Informatics Certification](#)

[Nurse Executive Certification](#)

[Advanced Nurse Executive Certification](#)

[MSN Essentials](#)



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