

2016-2017

DNP Program Student Handbook



VCU

VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

School of Nursing

Creating collaboration. Advancing science. Impacting lives.

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www.nursing.vcu.edu**

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About this Handbook

This handbook is designed to be a ready resource for currently enrolled Doctorate of Nursing Practice (DNP) students at Virginia Commonwealth University's School of Nursing (SON) as well as faculty of the DNP Program in Nursing, and for prospective applicants to the program. This handbook supplements the VCU Graduate Bulletin located at: <http://bulletin.vcu.edu/>. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with the policies and information contained in each of these resources.

Welcome from the Dean



It is my pleasure and privilege to welcome you to the VCU School of Nursing. You have made a great investment in your future by selecting a school that is ranked among the top schools of nursing in the nation. We offer a supportive, collaborative environment to ensure your success as you progress through our program.

This handbook is a very important resource designed to provide you with information on life as a student at the VCU School of Nursing. Our highly trained faculty and staff will support you every step of the way and help you get the most out of your experience here. Graduates of our school represent the future of nursing and are well-prepared to improve the care of the patients we serve.

On behalf of the faculty and staff, I extend our best wishes for a dynamic and rewarding educational experience. Thank you for being a part of our tradition of nursing excellence.

Jean Giddens, Ph.D., RN, FAAN
Dean, School of Nursing

Welcome from the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs



Congratulations on beginning or continuing your nursing education at the VCU School of Nursing. As the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs (“chief academic officer”), I and the team of expert educators and professional staff are committed to assuring that you have a world class educational experience at VCU. In light of an ever changing and complex health care environment, we are constantly employing principals of continuous quality improvement, evolving pedagogical principal and best practices to assure that your academic program is cutting edge. We have much to learn from each other. Please let me know if I can ever be of service to you. A career in nursing is the gift that keeps on giving.

Debra J. Barksdale, PhD, RN, FNP-BC, ANP-BC, CNE, FAANP, FAAN
Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, School of Nursing

Welcome from the Program Director



Congratulations!

I would like to take this opportunity to officially welcome you to Virginia Commonwealth University's School of Nursing. We are excited that you have chosen to take the next step in your educational journey with us!

We hope that you find our Doctorate of Nursing Practice program both challenging and rewarding. In anticipation of potential questions, we have created this DNP Handbook. The Handbook in conjunction with the Graduate Bulletin will act as resources for you as you move through your doctoral program.

Thank you again for choosing us for this exciting chapter in your nursing career. We are looking forward to helping you achieve your academic and advanced nursing practice goals.

Sincerely:

Shelly Smith, DNP, APRN-BC
Director, DNP Program

Program Roles & Faculty Information

1. Associate Dean for Academic Affairs: The Associated Dean for Academic Affairs (ADAA) provides organizational oversight to both the Doctorate of Nursing Practice (DNP) Curriculum Committee and the DNP Program Director (PD).
2. Doctorate of Nursing Practice Curriculum Committee: The DNP Program Curricular Committee (DCC) manages the DNP program curriculum, which in turn is voted on by all nursing faculty.
3. DNP Program Director: The DNP Program Director (DNP PD) serves as a liaison between the DNP program faculty, the DCC and the ADAA.
4. DNP Program Faculty: Doctorally-prepared faculty that possess advanced knowledge, skills and abilities associated with those critical elements recognized in the DNP Essentials.
5. DNP Student Advisor: Doctorally-prepared faculty assigned to DNP students responsible for fostering the best possible learning environment to achieve DNP student learning outcomes.
6. DNP Project Team: A group of 3 or more professionals chosen by the DNP student advisor and student whose goal is to provide oversight and guidance for individual student DNP projects.
7. DNP Program Coordinator: Assists the ADAA in meeting the objectives of the Office of Academic Programs, supports the DNP Program Director and the DNP students.
8. Office of Academic Programs: The Office of Academic Programs (OAP) provides guidance to all School of Nursing Students in matters relating to academic programs, university procedures, administrative requirements, and student orientation.

Responsibilities:

1. Non-academic Administrative Issues: Are to be directed to OESS.
2. Academic Administrative Issues: Are to be directed to the following in order of precedence:
 - a. DNP Program Faculty
 - b. DNP Student Advisor
 - c. DNP Program Director
 - d. Associate Dean of Academic Affairs
3. DNP Project Administrative Issues: Are to be directed to the following in order of precedence:
 - a. DNP Student Advisor
 - b. DNP Project Team
 - c. DNP Program Director
 - d. Associate Dean of Academic Affairs

Mission and Goals of the School of Nursing

The mission of the School of Nursing is to improve health and the human condition through leadership in nursing research, education and service. Therefore we will:

- Sustain our tradition of leadership in educational excellence by preparing future scholars and leaders for nursing and health care.
- Be a nationally influential center in the development, translation and dissemination of science in biobehavioral clinical research.
- Be a national model for collaboration and partnerships between nursing education and nursing service in academic medical centers.
- Be a national model for clinical scholarship (development and dissemination) in the use of simulation, technology and innovation for best practices in education and practice.
- Provide services that benefit the profession and promote the health and wellbeing of diverse individuals, families, and communities.

Core Values of the School of Nursing

The VCU School of Nursing subscribes to the core values and vision as expressed in the [VCU Quest for Distinction](#) as well as the [VCU Code of Ethics](#).

Program Overview

A. Outcomes of Graduates

1. Program Goals

Students will achieve D.N.P.-level competencies by demonstrating:

- I. Use of quality and safety outcomes to evaluate practice improvement initiatives
- II. Skills in using evidence-based practice to achieve sustainable practice change
- III. Advanced decision-making skills founded in ethics and the highest level of nursing practice
- IV. Leadership strategies to influence health policies
- V. Interprofessional collaboration in health care systems

2. Student Learning Outcomes

At the completion of the D.N.P. program, students will have the knowledge and skills to:

1. Demonstrate strategic management skills in systems-based care delivery models and approaches designed to promote quality, safety and excellence in nursing practice
2. Assume a leadership role in the development, implementation and evaluation of health policies that improve quality and safety in health care systems
3. Translate and disseminate evidence-based practices to improve health care outcomes and reduce disparities
4. Integrate professional intra- and interdisciplinary best practices to create collaborative sustainable practice change
5. Integrate knowledge of specialized nursing practice with knowledge from other sciences as the basis for the highest level of nursing practice
6. Lead efforts to preserve, promote and improve the health of specialty populations
7. Use health information technology to promote best practices in health care systems
8. Ensure fiscal accountability when planning practice initiatives that will improve the quality of care delivery
9. Demonstrate advanced levels of ethical and moral judgment and decision-making

B. Admission Requirements

Nursing Practice, Doctor of (DNP)			
Degree: DNP	Semester(s) of entry: Fall	Deadline dates: February 1	Test requirements: GRE scores are not required
Special requirements: A personal interview will be required			

In addition to the [general admission requirements of the VCU Graduate School](#), applicants must:

- Be a graduate of an accredited (ACEN or CCNE) master's degree nursing program.
- Have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale in graduate study.
- Have a current unrestricted RN license or authorization to practice as an RN in the U.S.
- Have a current certification in an advanced practice specialty (NP, CNS or nursing administration certification) by the time of entry into the program.
- Our international and non-native English-speaking students bring different perspectives and new thinking to our nursing programs. To ensure that all incoming students are prepared for VCU School of Nursing's academic rigor, all international applicants and non-native English speaking applicants without a degree from a US high school, college, or university, must provide additional information with their applications according to the

English language proficiency guidelines in the VCU bulletin.
<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/admission-graduate-study/international-students/>

C. Technical Standards

The VCU School of Nursing is responsible for providing education without regard to disability while assuring that academic and technical standards are met. This document defines the non-academic criteria for advancement through graduation from the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program at the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Nursing.

The following technical standards describe the essential functions that a student is expected to demonstrate in order to fulfill the requirement of the nursing education program, and thus, are required for advancement through and graduation from the program. The technical standards for each category identified below are consistent with the expectations of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, including the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. The technical skill areas include motor, sensory/observation, communication, cognitive and behavioral.

Students must read and sign this document before matriculation into the VCU School of Nursing. It is incumbent upon the student to review these technical standards on a regular basis to ensure continued compliance. If a student finds that they are unable to be in compliance with technical standards for an acute or chronic condition, they should speak with their academic advisor and pertinent course faculty immediately.

Motor Skills

- A student must be able to coordinate gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium and the functional use of the senses of touch and vision reasonably to operate a computer keyboard and to read a computer screen or have appropriate accommodation.
- A student must be able to maneuver in the research setting

Sensory/Observation

- A student must be able to hear with or without devices of assistance to elicit information from patients, faculty and professionals.
- A student must be able to listen and send clear messages

Communications

- A student must possess written and verbal fluency in the English language to elicit information from and provide information to patients, faculty and health care professionals.
- A student must be able to comprehend written communications such as the ability to read, understand and follow directions in the English language to fulfill the required tasks and duties of a doctoral student.
- A student must be able to network with other professionals and demonstrate the ability to engage with appropriate non-verbal and verbal communication.

Cognitive

- A student must be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze and synthesize complex information to solve problems.
- A student must be able to integrate didactic and experiential learning to solve problems with critical judgment and analysis.

Behavioral

- A student must possess the mental health required for full use of his/her intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment and the prompt completion of all responsibilities.

- A student must be able to develop and sustain mature, sensitive and effective relationships with a web of faculty, colleagues and other health care professionals
- A student must be able to tolerate and function effectively under stress
- A student must be able to concentrate in the presence of distracting conditions
- A student must be able to concentrate for prolonged periods of time
- A student must be able to relate in a professional manner to patients, families, faculty and other health care professionals
- A student must be able to accept constructive feedback and demonstrate a willingness to respond appropriately
- A student must be able to read and regulate emotions as well as to recognize their impact on work performance and relationships, especially in the face of angry or emotionally-charged people
- A student must be able to adapt to and be flexible with changing environments, uncertainty and ambiguity
- A student must be able to display compassion, empathy, honesty, integrity, interpersonal skills and motivation consistently
- A student must be able to acquire transportation for on and off-campus classes or meetings outside Virginia Commonwealth University

Pre-Enrollment

A. Student Verification Form

Prior to beginning their programs, students will read and sign the Student Verification Form that will remain in each student's file in the Office of Enrollment and Student Services. A copy of this form can be found in **Appendix A**.

B. Health and Certification Requirements

Students will comply with the immunization requirements outlined in the **VCU Health Science Certificate of Immunization**. Students are also required to present annual documentation of TB screening and flu vaccine to University Student Health Services by the published deadlines.

Students enrolled in online programs will comply with the immunization requirements outlined in the **VCU Certificate of Immunization**. Students may be required to present documentation of additional immunizations for practicum and research experiences.

See University Student Health Services/Immunizations for additional information (<http://www.students.vcu.edu/health/immunizations/>). All requirements apply to full- and part-time students and must be submitted to the University prior to enrollment.

C. Criminal Background Check and Drug Screening

The VCU School of Nursing requires criminal background and drug screenings for all students following conditional acceptance and prior to enrollment. Background checks and drug screening are conducted in order to ensure that nursing students are competent, safe, and trustworthy to engage in clinical rotations and other critical aspects of the programs, the activities of which can pose particular risks to other students, health workers and the public. VCU School of Nursing also conducts the screenings to:

- Respond to regulatory mandates and the requirements of the School of Nursing's affiliated clinical facilities

- Bolster the continuing trust of the public in the nursing profession
- Ascertain the ability of accepted applicants and enrolled nursing students to eventually become licensed as nurses and/or advanced practice nurses

An offer of acceptance to the VCU School of Nursing is conditioned upon the successful completion of a criminal background check (CBC) and drug screening. Students are also required to complete this process upon program re-entry subsequent to a leave of absence, program withdrawal or program separation greater than thirty consecutive days.

The criminal background and drug screenings are a mandatory component of the pre-matriculation process. The final decision regarding matriculation of an applicant will be based on the information in the CBC/drug screening reports.

Factors involved in the final decision may include, but are not limited to:

1. The nature, circumstances, and frequency of any reported offense(s).
2. The length of time since the offense(s).
3. Available information that addresses efforts at rehabilitation.
4. The accuracy of the information provided by the applicant.

Individuals who do not give permission to the conduct of the criminal background check/drug screening or who fail to provide the reports as required will not be allowed to matriculate in the School of Nursing.

An independent vendor (Castle Branch) has been identified by the VCU School of Nursing to provide the criminal background and drug screenings, and individuals will be responsible for requesting the report and submitting payment for the report. The vendor sends the reports electronically to the Office of Enrollment and Student Services in any decision that may adversely affect the individual.

The information obtained through a criminal background and drug screenings will not become part of a student's academic file and will remain confidential unless the findings result in an institutional action by the School of Nursing. The background check/drug screening document will be destroyed upon the student's graduation/separation from the institution. The criminal background report shall span the prior seven year period, and shall include all convictions at a felony or misdemeanor level.

Validated background reports found to be in conflict with responses in the application may be grounds for withdrawal of an offer of enrollment based upon submission of false or misleading information on the application.

All students must also report any felony or misdemeanor charges and convictions, which occur during their enrollment within 10 business days of occurrence to the Assistant Dean of Enrollment & Student Services.¹

With the exception of disqualifying criminal offenses (see below), the existence of a conviction or a positive drug screen will not necessarily result in a denial of enrollment to the School of Nursing.

¹ The review committee described below will consider convictions in the same manner as admissions determinations. For criminal charges, the committee will consider the nature of the underlying conduct resulting in the charge and make a determination on whether to suspend the student pending resolution of the criminal proceeding. Criminal charges, by themselves, will not warrant denial of continued enrollment.

Instead each case will be reviewed by a committee other than the admissions committee and evaluated on its facts.

This review committee shall include but is not limited to the: Assistant Dean for Enrollment and Student Services (ADESS), the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (ADAA) (or other administrative dean), two faculty members, and, the university attorney as needed to clarify legal processes. The review committee is responsible for making determinations regarding denial of enrollment and communicating the determination to the student.

Any determination to deny enrollment will be communicated to the student in writing, giving the reason for the denial and allowing the student five business days from the date the communication was sent to respond to the determination before it becomes final. The student's response should be sent to the Assistant Dean of Enrollment and Student Services and should include any relevant information concerning the drug screen/criminal background that should be considered by the committee, including any challenge to the accuracy of the report. The committee shall consider the response, and should issue a final determination within 72 hours of receiving the student's response.

VCU School of Nursing Disqualifying Criminal Offenses

Felonies

1. A crime of violence.
2. Any felony offense involving unlawful sexual behavior.
3. Any felony, the underlying basis of which has been found by the court on the record to include an act of domestic violence.
4. Any felony of child abuse.
5. Any felony offense in another state, the elements which are substantially similar to the elements of any of the above offenses.

Misdemeanors

- C. Third degree assault.
- D. Any misdemeanor, the underlying factual basis of which has been found by the court on the record to include an act of domestic violence.
- E. A misdemeanor offense of child abuse.
- F. Any misdemeanor offense of sexual assault on a client by a psychotherapist.
- G. Any misdemeanor offense in another state, the elements of which are substantially similar to the elements of any of the misdemeanor offenses listed above.

Criminal Histories

1. Convictions/deferred adjudications involving crimes against persons (physical or sexual abuse, neglect, assault, murder, etc.).
2. Convictions related to moral turpitude (prostitution, public lewdness/exposure, etc.).
3. Convictions/deferred adjudications related to the sale, possession, distribution, or transfer of narcotics or controlled substances.
4. Registered sex offenders.

D. School of Nursing Scholarships

1. Application Process

Students applying for School of Nursing scholarships must complete a School Scholarship Application. Students must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to be eligible for need based scholarship funds.

2. Enrollment Credit Hours for Scholarship Eligibility

For school-based scholarship purposes, full-time students must be enrolled for a minimum of nine credit hours plus meet any additional requirements specific to the scholarship for which they are applying.

Enrollment

A. Academic Advising

Upon admission, an academic advisor is assigned by the DNP Curriculum Committee in consultation with the Program Director. A student may request a change in advisor at any time. The student must obtain approval from both the current advisor and the new advisor using the Doctoral Student Advisor Change Form. This form will need the signature of the current advisor acknowledging change of status and signature of the new advisor signifying agreement to mentor the student. The form will need to be submitted to the DNP Program Coordinator.

1. Responsibility and Role of the Advisor

The purpose of this advisor/advisee relationship is to provide a mechanism for maintaining faculty/student communication and provide advisement on professional, academic and other matters. The advisor should meet with their advisee at a minimum of once a semester and as often as necessary during the semester to guide the student's progress. After the initial meeting, most faculty meet with students on an as needed basis. All advising sessions can be done via phone, e-mail or in person unless faculty request otherwise. The academic advisor in the SON will work closely with the student to define plans that target both the academic and nonacademic activities that will support their progress through the program.

2. Responsibility of the Student

During their time in the program students are expected to be proactive and confer with their nursing faculty advisor about academic planning, progress or program related issues. Students should schedule appointments with their advisor about any program of study changes and if they have questions about electives or as the need arises. Students will begin meeting with their advisor at the beginning of the first semester of school. The student's advisor should be kept informed about the academic and clinical progress by the student with the goal being to avoid academic and clinical problems. In the case of specific course/instructor problems, the student should first discuss the problem with the instructor responsible or their advisor. If the problem cannot be resolved, the student should discuss the matter with the DNP Program Director.

B. Degree Requirements

A minimum of 39 graduate credit hours are required for the Doctor of Nursing Practice program.

In addition to general VCU Graduate School graduation requirements, a candidate for the degree of Master of Science in Nursing must be recommended by the faculty and must

1. Meet all academic requirements of the Graduate School;

2. Complete all requirements for the prescribed curriculum within five calendar years of the first registration for coursework to be credited toward the degree;
3. Earn a minimum grade of B or pass grade in all nursing courses;
4. Earn a minimum cumulative grade-point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale in all work presented for graduation;
5. Conform to School of Nursing policies in respect to pass/fail grading for coursework or DNP Project study.

The degree will be granted only after all requirements have been fulfilled and all fees to the university have been paid. Degrees are not granted in absentia unless written request is made to the dean and permission is granted.

Please see **Appendix B** for plans of study for students admitted in Fall 2016

C. [Course registration](#)

Students should be aware of registration dates set by the university. Students in coursework must be registered for courses prior to the first day of on campus sessions. Full-time students in coursework must be registered for at least nine credit hours each fall and spring semesters and at least three credit hours in the summer semester. More information regarding course registration and minimum/maximum credit hours for graduate students can be found at: <http://www.pubapps.vcu.edu/bulletins/graduate/?uid=10045&iid=30076>.

Students will receive an Advising and Registration checklist (copy located in appendices) each semester that includes deadline dates for course registration.

D. [On-campus Schedule](#)

All DNP students in coursework are required to attend the on-campus experience which occurs at the beginning of each semester. These dates are posted on the SON's website at least one year in advance to allow students to plan their schedules accordingly. This experience is a critical part of the doctoral program and extremely valuable for success in the program. The first day of each semester's courses will be held during the on-campus sessions. These sessions also provide a networking opportunity during which expert speakers and faculty are available to students. The initial on-campus session allows students to obtain their VCU ID card, receive an orientation to library resources, and take a tour of the VCU School of Nursing building. Staff members from the Information Technology department are onsite at each session to provide technical support and to answer questions about online learning, such as managing blackboard.

The on-campus experiences are mandatory. Case by case allowances will be considered for United State Military and Public Health Service personnel who are under deployment.

See Appendix D On-campus agreement.

E. [Non-Degree Seeking Students](#)

Students who have not been admitted to the School of Nursing may enroll in nursing courses. Permission to enroll in courses is granted by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Only six credits earned as a non-degree seeking student can be used for the DNP degree.

Decisions for enrollment are based on permission of the instructor, space availability and designation of the course as open to non-degree seeking students

Academic Policies

A. Paper Format

Unless otherwise stated by instructor, the most recent *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA)* is to be used for all papers written in the School of Nursing.

B. Grading Scale

A ten-point grading scale will be used in all graduate courses. DNP courses will be graded as follows:

The following courses are graded (A, B, C, D, F):

NURS 605
NURS 606
NURS 607
NURS 608
NURS 610
NURS 621
NURS 638

The following courses are graded Pass (P), or Fail (F):

NURS 664
NURS 665
NURS 667

C. Course Grades of "C"

A student who receives a first grade of "C" or below in any graduate course required for graduation must repeat the course. The course must be repeated before taking any courses for which the course in question is a prerequisite. A student who receives a second course grade of "C" in any graduate course is terminated from the graduate program.

Students should be aware that following any failure to meet progression standards, placement in clinical courses is not guaranteed and is made on a space-available basis.

Students will receive official communication from the school related to course grades of "C" or below. The DNP Program Coordinator will request a meeting with students who earn a grade of "C" or below to help them make plans for continuing in the program.

D. Unsatisfactory DNP Project Progression

A student who receives a grade of "U" in NURS 665 or NURS 667, DNP Project courses, will receive a warning letter from the DNP Program Coordinator, copied to the DNP Project Advisor. The student must expeditiously meet with the DNP Project Advisor to develop and document a written plan for academic progress and improvement. A student who earns a second "U" in NURS 665 or NURS 667 will be terminated from the program.

E. Grade Appeals

The School of Nursing follows the university guidelines with the exception of spring grades. For grades awarded in the Spring semester, the written appeal must be submitted no later than 14 days after the beginning of the Summer semester. Refer to the VCU Grade Review Procedure for additional information.

F. Separation from the School of Nursing

Before separating from the School of Nursing, the student must drop/withdraw all nursing courses. The student should contact the University registrar for any additional guidance and requirements for separation from the school.

G. Readmission after Dismissal from the Graduate Program

Following dismissal from the doctoral program, students are not eligible for readmission.

H. Timeline from Admissions to Graduation

The time limit for completion of the DNP program is **five years**.

I. Withdrawal from courses

Please refer to university policy (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/>). Students should consult with course faculty and DNP Program Coordinator prior to withdrawing from a course.

J. Leave of Absence

Once enrolled in the Doctor of Nursing Practice program, students are required to follow their plan of study. In the event that a student needs a period of time away from the program, the student must submit a written request for a leave of absence by completing the *Request for Leave of Absence (LOA)* form. The form should be submitted to the DNP Program Coordinator. LOAs will be considered on an individual basis.

Students are expected to complete their degree within 5 years from the time they begin the program, as this is the official policy of the University. A LOA does not extend the 5 year requirement for program completion

(<http://www.pubapps.vcu.edu/bulletins/graduate/?uid=10045&iid=31071>). Students must be aware that if an extended leave is taken, program changes may occur that influence progression. Students must also be aware that a leave of absence will necessitate the completion of a revised curriculum plan based on how the LOA impacts the curriculum plan of study at the time of the request because the student will no longer be able to follow the exact curriculum plan that was in place prior to the leave. Per School of Nursing policy, students are required to complete a criminal background check and drug screen upon program re-entry subsequent to a leave of absence, program withdrawal or program separation greater than thirty consecutive days.

Additional Information for Those Requesting a Leave of Absence for Health-related

Reasons: If a student needs to request a leave of absence for health reasons, the student must provide a physician's note to the DNP Program Coordinator prior to the start of the LOA. The student will also need to provide a physician's note upon their return to the program, stating that the student is fit to return to school.

See Appendix C – Leave of Absence form.

K. Communicating Issues and Concerns

The School of Nursing strives to create an atmosphere that facilitates communication between students and faculty and maximizes student learning and achievement. If students have issues/concerns regarding their courses, clinical experiences or any aspect of their academic program, they are expected to demonstrate professionalism in addressing their issues/concerns to the appropriate person(s). The academic advisor (for undergraduate students) or appropriate Program Director can assist students in navigating the appropriate steps.

The following steps will aid in effectively communicating issues and concerns.

1. The student should first meet with and discuss the issue/concern with the faculty member directly related to the issue/concern. (If the student feels uncomfortable addressing the issue/concern directly with that individual, the student may proceed to step 2. However, faculty have a right to be informed of student issues/concerns that involve them.)
2. If the issue/concern remains unresolved after step 1, the student should meet with the Program Director to discuss the issue/concern. The Program Director will review the issue/concern and a) facilitate a resolution with course faculty for course-related issues/concerns and/or b) refer the issue/concern to the appropriate Department Chair.
3. If the issue/concern remains unresolved after step 2, the student should meet with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs to discuss the issue/concern.
4. If additional actions are indicated, the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs will direct the student to the Dean and other university-level processes, if appropriate.

L. Unprofessional Conduct

In addition to those standards of conduct described in the Rules and Procedures of Virginia Commonwealth University and the VCU Medical Center Code of Conduct, a student may be suspended or dismissed from the school for failure to meet academic requirements or failure to exhibit the attitudes and skills deemed necessary to function as a professional nurse. The School of Nursing recognizes its responsibility to the nursing profession and to the health care consumer. Therefore, any action by a nursing student considered to be unprofessional conduct shall be deemed cause for disciplinary action.

Unprofessional conduct may be defined as, but is not limited to:

- Fraud or deceit in filing application for admission to school such as false representation on the application.
- An act that violates the accepted social norms regarding conduct of one person towards another.
- Social norms refer to the laws, written or unwritten, that protects the individual and/or his/her property from unwanted acts of another such as stealing, lying, cheating and slander.
- Conviction of a felony.

M. Portfolio Expectations

Students are strongly encouraged to keep a portfolio of course and clinical materials from each course throughout their program of study. Information from such a portfolio may be valuable in seeking certification, licensure, and employment after graduation. Some states require detailed information about course and clinical work including course outlines for licensure. Information that may be useful to keep includes course syllabi, evaluations from instructors and preceptors, logs, major papers, and case studies.

Clinical Practicum Policies

A. Enrollment Restrictions for DNP Residency

Enrollment in clinical courses is restricted to students admitted to the School of Nursing or those enrolled in an international exchange program with VCU School of Nursing. Enrollment in all clinical courses is based on availability of space in these courses.

B. Residency Placements

Residency Placements assignments are based on course objectives, faculty/student assessment of individual learning needs, preceptor availability, resources, and availability of sites with established affiliation agreements. To ensure quality residency experiences, an Affiliation Agreement between the school and the site must be established. Therefore, students should refrain from contacting potential content experts directly, but rather discuss residency opportunities with their advisor.

Furthermore, there are conditions set forth in affiliation agreements including onboarding paperwork, compliance documentation, and/or applications set by the facility. **It is the student's responsibility to ensure all clinical requirements are met and to provide the proper documentation by the posted due dates.** If the student fails to comply with these conditions then the student will not be allowed to participate in the practicum; the student will not successfully complete the course.

C. Professional Appearance and Attire in Clinical Settings

The Faculty of the School of Nursing believes that an image of professional competence, self-respect and respect for others is conveyed, in part, by one's appearance and attire. In addition, certain aspects of one's appearance and attire have implications for patient safety and the ability to perform one's duties effectively. To address these professional concerns, the School of Nursing has adopted the following policy which outlines requirements and expectations with respect to professional appearance and attire of both graduate and undergraduate students while in clinical settings.

General guidelines

The School of Nursing expects students in any of its programs to consistently present, through appearance and attire, a positive public image of both nursing and the VCU School of Nursing.

General appearance should contribute to effective educational and patient care environments and reflect a high standard of personal cleanliness and hygiene at all times.

Clothing (including uniforms, lab coat and street clothes) must be clean, neat, free of wrinkles and well-fitted.

Regardless of attire, a VCU ID badge must be worn in all clinical or clinically related situations (including but not limited to pre-clinical assessment, patient care situations, observational experiences and simulation settings such as the VCU SON Clinical Learning Center).

Students are expected to adhere to this policy. Failure to do so will result in dismissal from the clinical agency and is evidence of unprofessional behavior.

Professional attire

Professional attire consists of clothes that are consistent with “business casual”.

- For men, trousers worn at or near the waist and shirts with sleeves and collars which are buttoned so that the chest is covered.
- For women, slacks or moderately cut dresses or skirts around knee length. Modestly constructed tops that have sleeves and do not reveal cleavage should be worn with slacks or skirts.
- For all, shoes should be low-heeled with closed toes, and of non-porous material. Socks or stockings must be worn as appropriate.

Professional judgment and discretion should be exercised in selecting street clothing for wear in clinical situations when a uniform is not required. To assist in the development of a professional wardrobe, the following list is provided to describe types of clothes and shoes that do not convey a professional image:

- Any item of clothing constructed of see-through fabrics
- Jeans and other items constructed of denim
- Tee shirts
- Sweatshirts or sweatpants
- Tight fitting pants or tops
- Slogan imprinted items
- Shorts, skorts and Capri-length pants
- Short or slit skirts
- Clothing which exposes midriffs, back, chest or underwear
- Low rise pants or rolled-down waist band of scrub pants
- Flip-flops or slides
- Open-toed sandals
- Hats or headdresses of any sort, unless worn for medical or religious purposes

Residency

National accreditation requirements dictate completion of five hundred (500) practice hours for all post-Master’s DNP programs. These hours are structured into the curriculum via 12 academic credits of Residency courses. At the post-Master’s DNP level, practice hours focus on developing the skills needed to lead interprofessional and interdisciplinary efforts to improve care outcomes. Experiences will vary depending upon the student’s abilities in relation to the DNP Essential competencies. Practice experiences, settings, and the focus of residency hours are individualized and developed mutually by the student and faculty advisor. Qualified content experts, based on their expertise and experience, will be identified at the student’s clinical site to provide support as needed to identify and complete particular practice experiences. Each residency course has individualized objectives, assignments, and products that demonstrate student achievement of specific DNP Essential competencies.

Residency courses are graded on a pass-fail basis. Students, content experts, and faculty advisors all contribute to evaluation of student success in meeting the identified objectives developed for each residency course; final evaluation of all residency requirements is the responsibility of the faculty advisor for the course.

The residency experience is individual; however, the faculty reserves the right to make on-site visits. The following criteria will trigger an advisor’s decision to travel to the site for direct observation:

- Content expert concerns regarding student performance

- Unsatisfactory communications with student or content expert that cannot be resolved by telephone or video conference.

DNP Project

All DNP programs culminate in the successful completion of a scholarly work, the DNP Project. In collaboration with their DNP Project Team, students design, implement, and evaluate a quality/safety project. The DNP Project will be overseen by the student's advisor, who serves as the DNP Project Advisor, and a DNP Project Team comprised of the DNP Project Advisor and two doctorally-prepared content experts selected by the student in consultation with the Project Advisor. One member must be from the practice setting where the student conducts the project.

The curriculum is designed so that students begin planning their DNP Project during initial coursework, and complete the project in their final semester of study. Two DNP Project courses, NURS 665, DNP Project Proposal Development, and NURS 667, DNP Project Implementation and Evaluation, are built into the curriculum in the final two semesters of the program. Each course is graded pass-fail – the DNP Project Advisor serves as the faculty of record for each course. Students will develop a proposal and have it approved (including VCU Institutional Review Board approval, if required) during the first course, and implement the project in the second course.

The final DNP Project product is a scholarly manuscript suitable for publication in a professional journal; this manuscript will describe the findings of the DNP Project. The manuscript provides evidence of the student's critical thinking and ability to translate research and best evidence through problem identification, proposal development, implementation, and evaluation. Students defend the written project in an oral presentation to their Project Team at the end of NURS 667, and each Project Team member votes to approve or disapprove the project. In the event of two or more negative votes, the Project Team will make recommendations for revisions or additional coursework specifying a timeline for completion of the revised project. Students will be given a second opportunity to successfully complete the oral defense. In the event of two failures, the student will be dismissed from the program.

Graduation and Commencement

At the start of your final semester of the program, you will receive details via email on how to initiate the graduation check out process along with specifics for the ceremonies. The University and the School of Nursing hold ceremonies in May and December. There is no August ceremony, but August graduates are invited to participate in December's ceremonies. School of Nursing Recognition Ceremonies typically take place on the Friday evening before the university's graduation ceremony. You are also encouraged to attend the university-wide ceremony on the following Saturday morning, where the nursing graduates will be recognized as a whole.

More information regarding graduation and commencement can be found on the university's website: <http://www.commencement.vcu.edu/Graduation-Info/>

Tuition Support and Scholarship

Students applying for School of Nursing scholarships must complete the School of Nursing Scholarship Application. To be eligible for any scholarship support, the student must meet

requirements specific to the scholarship for which they are applying. The deadline for receipt of applications will be published annually by the Office of Enrollment and Student Services and the Office of Academic Programs.

VCU Honor System

The VCU Honor System policy describes the responsibilities of students, faculty and administration in upholding academic integrity, while at the same time respecting the rights of individuals to the due process offered by administrative hearings and appeals. According to this policy, "Members of the academic community are required to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity." In addition, "All members of the VCU community are presumed to have an understanding of the VCU Honor System and are required to:

- Agree to be bound by the Honor System policy and its procedures;
- Report suspicion or knowledge of possible violations of the Honor System;
- Support an environment that reflects a commitment to academic integrity;
- Answer truthfully when called upon to do so regarding Honor System cases;
- Maintain confidentiality regarding specific information in Honor System cases."

More information can be found at in the VCU policy library. The Honor System in its entirety can be reviewed on the Web at

<http://www.assurance.vcu.edu/Policy%20Library/VCU%20Honor%20System.pdf>.

More information can also be found on the Division of Student Affairs website at http://www.students.vcu.edu/studentconduct/students/student_honor_system.html.

Use of Social Media

Patient confidentiality is fundamental to professional nursing practice.

Please remember the following:

- Patient information learned by the nursing student during the course of treatment must be safeguarded by the nursing student.
- You may not take, send, or receive oral recordings, pictures, or videos of patients, family members, or colleagues in the clinical setting.
- You cannot discuss (orally or in writing) your patients, family members, health care providers, healthcare personnel, or your clinical experiences on any social media site.
- You must promptly report any breach of confidentiality or privacy to your course or clinical faculty

School of Nursing Organizations

A. Sigma Theta Tau Honor Society of Nursing

The Gamma Omega Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing was established at Virginia Commonwealth University in 1978.

Chapter membership is open to current nursing students as well as nurse clinicians and nurse researchers. Review the membership guidelines and view networking opportunities at their webpage:

<http://nursing.vcu.edu/about-us/sigma-theta-tau/>

B. Student Leadership Council

The Student Leadership Council seeks to establish a strong sense of community within the School of Nursing through student, faculty, and staff interactions.

The members of the Student Leadership Council provide advice and the student perspective to School of Nursing leadership on a variety of topics and they serve as ambassadors of the School of Nursing among their peers and in their communities

Student membership consists of class directors from each program and leaders of School of Nursing student organizations.

The council meets three times per semester during the regular academic year.

Non-Academic Policies and Information

A. Emergency Preparedness Procedures

For the university: Current operating conditions for the university are posted at the VCU Alert Website <http://alert.vcu.edu>. The website provides resources for emergency contacts and what to do in the event of an emergency. This website is where students, faculty and staff can sign up for text alerts. VCU's text message alert system is used to provide immediate information about campus emergencies, weather delays and cancellations. **When the university is closed, clinicals are closed.

Specific to the School of Nursing: In the event that there is an emergency that is specific to the School of Nursing, an email will go out to faculty, staff and students, information will be posted on the School of Nursing main webpage, and information will be posted on the SON Blackboard portal for School of Nursing students, faculty and staff. Faculty, staff and students can contact the SON emergency phone number at 804-828-1307. This message will be updated in the event that there is a situation that closes the School of Nursing building when the university remains open.

Fire: Follow the VCU "RACE" procedure.

- Remove anyone in danger.
- Activate the alarm.
- Close the doors to contain the smoke as the building is being evacuated.
- Extinguish the fire, if trained.

Earthquake

- Do not set off the fire alarm.
- Do not exit the building.
- Do shelter in place.

Tornado

- Move to the lowest level and interior space or along a corridor wall away from windows and glass in shelter.
- Close all doors, including main corridors.
- If outside, quickly move to nearest sturdy building.

Hazardous Materials

- Call 804-828-1234
- Evacuate and designate someone to talk with the Fire Department.

- Notify emergency personnel if exposed, or have details on the spill.

Assembly Areas: There are two designated assembly areas for the School of Nursing. One area is the loading zone located directly adjacent to the building. The second area is the sidewalk near the Martin Luther King Bridge.

Floor Wardens: The School of Nursing Floor Wardens are responsible for coordinating the evacuation of the floors during a fire or other evacuation emergency. Additionally, floor wardens are responsible for assisting any evacuees located in the “Areas of Rescue Assistance” or notifying emergency responders of their location.

B. Food and Beverages Policy

Food and beverages (with the exception of bottled water) can be consumed only in designated areas of the building. It is the responsibility of all members of the School of Nursing community to assist with enforcement of this policy. Designated areas in which food and beverages are allowed are the 1st floor student lounge, quiet study area and doctoral student area, third floor faculty/administrative professional lounge, Dean’s conference room, conference rooms 3038, 3001f and 4001c and private offices. Permission for use of classrooms 1013 and 2001d for functions that include consumption of food and beverages may be requested. Requests for permission for these special functions must be made to the Office of the Dean and scheduled through the room scheduling office of the School of Nursing. Scheduled classes will have priority for use of these specially designated classrooms.

When a room is used for a function that involves food and beverages, it carries with it the responsibility of the users to clean the room entirely of any food or containers and dispose of in appropriate receptacles. If it is necessary for the School of Nursing to contract professional cleaning for any debris, spills or stains that resulted from the special event, costs will be charged to the sponsor of the event.

C. Building Access

The School of Nursing building is open Monday – Friday from 7:00 am – 5:00 pm. Students must use their ID badge to access the building after hours, including weekends.

D. Student Identification Cards/Badges

All faculty and staff at the university and medical center are required to carry an identification card. ID cards are required to access the School of Nursing after business hours and are needed to obtain a discount (10%) at the campus bookstores, hospital cafeteria and various other dining locations on campus (see Places to Eat). The first ID card is provided at no charge. Replacement cards (lost or stolen) are provided for a fee which is due at the time the new card is obtained. For more information, consult the Card Office website (<http://vcucard.vcu.edu/>).

E. Student Lounge

The Student Lounge on the first floor is open to all students. If food and/or drinks are being consumed, students are responsible for cleaning up after themselves as necessary. The kitchen that is located off of the student lounge is equipped with microwaves and a refrigerator. The refrigerator is purged every Friday afternoon and all remaining items are discarded.

F. Quiet Study Room

The Quiet Study Room is open during building operating hours and can be accessed through the Student Lounge. No food or drink are allowed in the Quiet Study Room.

G. Photocopying

There is a photocopier for student use available at the top of the stairs on the second floor.

H. Technology

There are both Windows and Apple computers available for student use on the first floor in the quiet study lounge, located adjacent to the student lounge.

There are two pay for print stations located near the vending machines on the first floor and at the top of the stairs on the second floor. Students can go to: <http://go.vcu.edu/p4p> to download the drivers on their personal laptops so that they can print to the pay for print stations from their laptops. Sending a job to pay for print allows access to the print job from any pay for print printer on campus.

Pay for print requires RamBucks which also can be used for goods and services at VCU. To find out how to obtain and use RamBucks, please go to: <http://vcucard.vcu.edu/myrambucks.html>

I. Parking

<http://www.parking.vcu.edu>

J. Name and Address Changes

Students must ensure that their name and addresses (local, mailing, permanent and remit to) are up-to-date in eServices at all times. For name changes, students must submit to the Office of Records & Registration, a copy of their new Social Security card (or applicable documentation) and an updated Personal Update Form. Additional procedural information can be found in the student's eServices account, under the "Personal Information" tab.

K. Recycling and Trash Receptacles

The VCU campus is an environment of sustainability. As such, there are specially-marked containers in the School of Nursing building and around campus for specific salvageable materials. There are separate trash containers for "organic items" such as food and liquid and for all other items such paper, plastic, metal, and glass.

L. Library Services

The VCU Library has many resources to assist you in meeting your academic goals. The library has a School of Nursing liaison who can assist students with educational and research needs. The following is the link to the VCU Library: www.library.vcu.edu.

Nationally, Tompkins-McCaw Library for the Health Sciences is a top-tier health sciences library. It holds one of the largest and most extensive collections of health sciences literature in North America. The library primarily serves the MCV Campus, which houses one of the oldest medical schools in the South, founded in 1838. The library, in one form or location or another, has been a part of the medical campus since 1897. Located on 12th Street—two blocks north of the Gateway Building at the VCU Medical Center and within easy walks to the schools of Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Nursing and Allied Health Professions—the library is physically central to today's health

sciences campus. It provides access to affiliated students, faculty, clinicians and practicing health care professionals on and off campus.

M. Division for Academic Success

The Division for Academic Success provides academic support for students who need assistance with test-taking skills, study strategies and preparation for board/licensing exams. DAS also provide disability support services to students on the MCV Campus who have a documented disability. The following is a link to the DAS website: <http://das.vcu.edu>

N. VCU Writing Center

The Writing Center provides an additional set of eyes or additional perspective on student papers, before the paper is submitted for a grade. The consultants at the Center are readers and listeners. For more information, the Writing Center's website is: <http://uc.vcu.edu/learning-support/writing-center/>.

Appendix A. Student Verification Form

VCU School of Nursing: DNP Student Verification Form

By initialing each statement I accept and acknowledge that:

_____ I am responsible for knowing the requirements and the policies of the University, the Graduate School and the School of Nursing. Any exceptions to these policies are authorized by appropriate bodies and are communicated to the student in writing.

Background/Drug Screening Policy and related items –

- All students must also report any felony or misdemeanor charges and convictions, which occur during their enrollment within 10 business days of occurrence to the Assistant Dean of Enrollment & Student Services.
- Students are also required to complete Background/Drug Screening process upon program re-entry subsequent to a leave of absence, program withdrawal or program separation greater than thirty consecutive days.
- I acknowledge that some clinical agencies with which I work as a student may have policies including but not limited to additional drug testing, immunizations, criminal background checks and manner of dress or appearance and that I am responsible for knowing and following these policies and am responsible for any associated cost. I give permission to VCU to release my immunization history if required by the clinical agency.
- It is possible that I may have to withdraw from the School of Nursing if my criminal background makes me ineligible for placement at clinical sites because of contractual agreements between the School and the agency.

_____ My VCU email account is the official mode of communication for the University and I am responsible for correcting problems and reviewing messages while enrolled in the nursing program and during university semester and holiday breaks.

_____ I submitted the *VCU Certificate of Immunizations* to the Student Health Center prior to the first day of class. I acknowledge that University Student Health Services reviews my record for compliance with university requirements and will place a hold on my account if I am not in compliance.

_____ I must register for all classes by the required date. I am responsible for reviewing the VCU course schedule.

_____ I may be photographed during school activities and I consent to the use of my photograph for VCU-School of nursing purposes. Additional consent will be sought if the School wishes to use the picture for a purpose that is not directly related to VCU.

_____ I am responsible to work with my advisor to ensure I am following my plan of study. If a change is needed regarding my plan of study, I am required to review changes and obtain permission for those changes with my advisor.

_____ I acknowledge that DNP students in Project phase are to schedule a project committee meeting not less than twice a semester with committee members.

_____ I certify that my license to practice as Registered Nurse is current and unrestricted and that failure to renew my RN license will result in removal from the program.

_____ I certify that my certification to practice as an advance practice nurse is current and that failure to maintain my certification will result in removal from the program.

_____ I acknowledge that if I want to do any required field placement in a state other than Virginia, I will consult with appropriate faculty and administration about the implications of doing so with respect to the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (NC-SARA), a national reciprocity agreement among states.

_____ I acknowledge that a DNP student who has completed coursework requirements for a degree must register for a minimum of one credit at VCU each semester until the degree is awarded.

_____ I acknowledge that VCUHS policy 5206 generally prohibits posting photographs or any information about a patient or staff through any electronic or non-electronic means including, but not limited to, social networking sites, blogs, and tweeting.

_____ I am responsible for completing the SoN End of Program survey and an Exit Interview following completion of the final project, as well as completing the SoN DNP Alumni Survey at 1 and 3 years post graduation.

My signature indicates that I am in compliance with all of the conditions stated above.

Print Name: _____ Date: _____

“Honor Pledge” Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix B - Plans of Study

**Virginia Commonwealth University School of Nursing
Doctor of Nursing Practice
Full-Time Plan of Study
Effective Fall 2016**

Name: _____ Student ID: _____

Advisor: _____ Entry Semester: _____ Expected Graduation: _____

Course #	Course Title	Credits	Term Planned	Term Completed	Comments
NURS 605	Statistical Methods for Quality Improvement	3 (3d)	Fall 1		
NURS 608	Quality Improvement in Practice	3 (3d)	Fall 1		
NURS 610	Health Information and Data Management	3 (3d)	Fall 1		
		9			
NURS 606	Evaluating Evidence to Improve Health Outcomes	3 (3d)	Spring 1		
NURS 607	Epidemiology and Population Health	3 (3d)	Spring 1		
NURS 664	DNP Residency: Mentored Practicum	3 (3c)	Spring 1		
		9			
NURS 665	DNP Project I: Proposal Development	3	Summer 1		
		3			
NURS 638	Health Policy Leadership and Advocacy	3 (3d)	Fall 2		
NURS 664	DNP Residency: Mentored Practicum	6 (6c)	Fall 2		
		9			
NURS 621	Leadership and Organizational Systems	3 (3d)	Spring 2		
NURS 664	DNP Residency: Mentored Practicum	3 (3c)	Spring 2		
NURS 667	DNP Project II: Project Implementation and Evaluation	3 (3d)	Spring 2		
		9			
	TOTAL	39			

c-clinical hours (1 clinical hour = 45 clock hours) d-didactic

Courses that were transferred/substituted for a VCU course

	Transferred/Substituted Course Name	Credits	Term taken	Term Completed	OESS approver initials and date

A maximum of one third of the didactic hours required for a graduate degree or any graduate certificate program may be transferred from another VCU program or outside institution and, if not applied previously toward another degree, may be applied toward a degree. All transfer work must be at the “A” or “B” grade level from an accredited institution or university. VCU will not accept credits that do not apply to a graduate degree at the offering institution for transfer, nor will it accept credits from unaccredited institutions for transfer.

My signature acknowledges that:

1. **I accept this curriculum plan as my plan of study for the duration of my program;**
2. **I understand any change in this plan requires my advisor’s approval;**
3. **I understand that following any change in my plan of study (this includes status changes part-time or full-time, failure to meet progression standards, leave of absence or failure to enroll a semester) placement in clinical courses required to complete the program is not guaranteed and made on a space available basis.**

Student signature: _____

Advisor signature: _____

Date: _____

**Virginia Commonwealth University School of Nursing
 Doctor of Nursing Practice
 Part-Time Plan of Study
 Effective Fall 2016**

Name: _____ Student ID: _____

Advisor: _____ Entry Semester: _____ Expected Graduation: _____

Course #	Course Title	Credits	Term Planned	Term Completed	Comments
NURS 605	Statistical Methods for Quality Improvement	3 (3d)	Fall 1		
NURS 608	Quality Improvement in Practice	3 (3d)	Fall 1		
		6			
NURS 606	Evaluating Evidence to Improve Health Outcomes	3 (3d)	Spring 1		
NURS 607	Epidemiology and Population Health	3 (3d)	Spring 1		
		6			
NURS 664	DNP Residency: Mentored Practicum	3 (3c)	Summer 1		
		3			
NURS 610	Health Information and Data Management	3 (3d)	Fall 2		
NURS 665	DNP Project I: Proposal Development	3 (3d)	Fall 2		
		6			
NURS 621	Leadership and Organizational Systems	3 (3d)	Spring 2		
NURS 664	DNP Residency: Mentored Practicum	3 (3c)	Spring 2		
		6			
NURS 664	DNP Residency: Mentored Practicum	3 (3c)	Summer 2		
		3			
NURS 664	DNP Residency: Mentored Practicum	3 (3c)	Fall 3		
NURS 638	Health Policy Leadership and Advocacy	3 (3d)	Fall 3		
		6			
NURS 667	DNP Project II: Project Implementation and Evaluation	3 (3d)	Spring 3		
		3			
	TOTAL	39			

e-clinical hours (1 clinical hour = 45 clock hours) d-didactic

Courses that were transferred/substituted for a VCU course

	Transferred/Substituted Course Name	Credits	Term taken	Term Completed	Approver initials and date

A maximum of one third of the didactic hours required for a graduate degree or any graduate certificate program may be transferred from another VCU program or outside institution and, if not applied previously toward another degree, may be applied toward a degree. All transfer work must be at the “A” or “B” grade level from an accredited institution or university. VCU will not accept credits that do not apply to a graduate degree at the offering institution for transfer, nor will it accept credits from unaccredited institutions for transfer.

My signature acknowledges that:

- 1. I accept this curriculum plan as my plan of study for the duration of my program;**
- 2. I understand any change in this plan requires my advisor’s approval;**
- 3. I understand that following any change in my plan of study (this includes status changes part-time or full-time, failure to meet progression standards, leave of absence or failure to enroll a semester) placement in clinical courses required to complete the program is not guaranteed and made on a space available basis.**

Student signature: _____

Advisor signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C - Leave of Absence Form

**School of Nursing
Virginia Commonwealth University**

LEAVE OF ABSENCE FORM
(Please complete and submit to Fonda Neal)

Name: _____

Date: _____

In addition to completing this form, you need to ensure that you are withdrawn from any current course work. You can withdraw or drop classes using eServices.

You must also attach a revised curriculum plan form that is signed by your advisor.

Dates of requested LOA: From beginning of _____ semester/year through the end of _____ semester/year.

*Student will return to the program at the start of the _____ semester of _____ (year).

Reason for requested leave of absence:

Advisor's comments on the leave of absence:

***Students are expected to notify the DNP Program Coordinator of their plan to return to the program by _____ date. Otherwise, the student will be withdrawn from the DNP program.**

Student's Signature and Date

Advisor's Signature and Date

DNP Program Coordinator and Date

PLEASE NOTE, IF YOUR HOME ADDRESS CHANGES AT ANYTIME, PLEASE UPDATE IT IN ESERVICES AND INFORM THE OFFICE OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS. IF YOU ARE RECEIVING FINANCIAL AID, PLEASE CONTACT FINANCIAL AID AND/OR STUDENT ACCOUNTING ABOUT THE STATUS OF YOUR AWARD OR LOAN.

Appendix D - On-Campus Agreement



Dear DNP Nursing Students:

Re: Mandatory DNP On-Campus Sessions

It is the VCU School of Nursing's (SON) policy as stated on the SON's website that all DNP students in coursework are required to attend the on-campus immersions which occur at the beginning of each semester. These dates are posted on the SON's website at least one year in advance to allow you to plan your schedule accordingly. This experience is a critical part of your doctoral program and extremely valuable for your success in the program. In addition, you will attend the first day of courses and seminars on various research topics. These sessions are a great opportunity for you to meet faculty, staff, and other doctoral students in the program. The initial on-campus session allows you to obtain your VCU ID card, receive an orientation to library resources at VCU, and take a tour of the VCU School of Nursing building. Staff members from the Information Technology department are onsite at each session to provide technical support and to answer questions about online learning, such as managing blackboard.

Please sign and date below to acknowledge that you understand that your attendance is a required expectation of the program. Please bring this letter with you to the first day of the on-campus experience. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Ms. Fonda Neal, DNP and Ph.D. Program Coordinator, at fneal@vcu.edu or (804) 828-0836.

Sincerely,

Shelly Smith, DNP, APRN-BC
Clinical Assistant Professor
Department of Adult Health and Nursing Systems
Director, DNP Program

Printed Name

Signature

Date