



**Post-Master's
Doctor of Nursing Practice
Preceptor Handbook
2025-2026**

Dear Valued Preceptor,

We would like to express our gratitude for your service as a preceptor for a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) student from the American University of Health Sciences (AUHS) School of Nursing. We understand that you are fully committed to your role amidst the clinical and administrative responsibilities in your practice setting.

Your crucial role is integral to the success of the learning experience, and we sincerely value your partnership. Participating as a preceptor for the DNP Program is a vital part of the curriculum. The AUHS DNP Program, with a focus on Population Health Administration and Health Systems Leadership, aims to empower nurses to become influential leaders, agents of change, and advocates for enhancing the health and well-being of communities and populations. Graduates will be well-equipped to make a significant impact on population health, address health disparities, and promote health equity for all.

As a preceptor, you will need to complete the following forms:

Before the clinical rotation begins:

- Clinical affiliation agreement on file with the University
- Submit CV and licensure information to the University
- Sign and complete the Preceptor Information and Preceptor Commitment Form

Throughout the rotation:

- Sign clinical time logs to validate days/times the student was present at the site
- Communicate with faculty and students regarding performance or concerns
- Complete evaluation forms regarding student performance at the end of each quarter

We hope the information in this handbook will assist you in your preceptor role. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact the nursing leadership at AUHS.

Sincerely,

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Mission Statement of AUHS

American University of Health Sciences, a private Christian-based, minority-serving university of higher education, welcomes students of diverse backgrounds and prepares them to make a positive impact on society through the provision of exceptional quality patient-centered care within the context of a global perspective of the human condition. This mission is accomplished through the creation of a strong and caring academic environment where excellence, diversity, and the development of the entire person—mind, body, and spirit—is addressed and where teaching/learning, research, service, and scholarship is valued and supported. Inspired by a strong belief in God and the Christian values of love and caring for humankind, and of justice and respect, the University's core values include a holistic approach to education, promotion of the intellectual, analytical, and critical thinking abilities of its students, evidence-based knowledge, and service to our fellow man, and a commitment to life-long learning.

Preceptor Guidelines

General Information

The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program with a concentration on Population Health Administration and Health Systems Leadership is a professional-practice degree designed to prepare advanced practice nurses for leadership roles in population health. This program equips students with the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to drive sustainable improvements in health outcomes and promote health equity for diverse populations.

Students will gain a deep understanding of the social determinants of health, health disparities, and the impact of cultural, social, and economic factors on health outcomes. As part of the program, students can engage in practical experiences through an extensive population health project. This experiential learning opportunity will allow students to apply their knowledge and skills in real-world settings, working alongside experienced professionals in population health practice.

DNP Program Learning Outcomes

DNP Program Learning Outcomes aligned with AACN DNP Essentials are listed below.

1. Independently perform advanced nursing roles to enhance health outcomes in a specialty practice area. (Domain 1)

2. Facilitate the development of health outcomes and reduction of health disparities throughout the population. (Domain 2)
3. Incorporate principles of population health into the treatment of individual patients, clinical practices, and the community. (Domain 3)
4. Integrate scientific theories and data-based concepts to develop, critically appraise, and implement practice approaches that improve health care and health systems. (Domain 4)
5. Utilize organizational theories and systems thinking to enhance the quality, cost-effectiveness, and safety of practice initiatives and decisions. (Domain 5)
6. Take the initiative in guiding and collaborating with interprofessional teams to enhance the well-being of patients and communities. (Domain 6)
7. Implement effective strategies for managing the ethical dilemmas inherent to patient care, healthcare organization, and research. (Domain 7)
8. Utilize knowledge of informatics to monitor and enhance outcomes, programs, and health care delivery systems. (Domain 8)
9. Facilitate the development and improvement of health outcomes and reduction of health disparities while integrating diversity, equity, and inclusion as fundamental components of one's professional identity. (Domain 9)
10. Demonstrate a spirit of inquiry that fosters adaptability and professional maturity while assuming a leadership role in influencing healthcare regulation and delivery policies. (Domain 10)

Practicum Hour Requirements

The DNP program requires the completion of a practicum scholarly project designed to allow students to apply their research to a clinical problem. The practicum ***requires 1,000 post-baccalaureate practice hours, 500 of which will be completed at a local clinic or medical setting under the guidance of a preceptor.*** Hours reflect time engaged in experiences related to the role and responsibilities of the doctoral-prepared advanced practice nurse. Upon approval, students may use clinical hours from their MSN and/or APRN programs to meet the total hour requirement or they must continue to acquire missing hours throughout enrollment in the program. Throughout the program, students will identify activities to enhance their ability to apply and synthesize DNP course content with real-world examples, while also getting acquainted with their future roles. They are encouraged to engage with experts in nursing and other disciplines. Each student's fulfillment of the DNP hours requirement will be unique.

1,000 hours of faculty-guided practicum must be directly aligned with program learning outcomes and AACN DNP Essentials/Domains.

Acceptable DNP hours activities:

- Chair a work-related committee
- Work-related projects outside of the students' day-to-day nursing responsibilities
- Participation in a city, county, or state health department initiative
- Appraisal of literature/evidence
- Participation in professional development activities i.e.: seminars related to future practice.
- Scholarly Project-related activities (meetings with faculty, meetings with external subject area expert mentor, needs assessment, meetings with project stakeholders, data collection, data analysis)
- Students may not earn DNP hours through direct patient care, or work as a nurse educator.

Unacceptable DNP hours activities:

- Direct patient care as an RN or work as a nurse educator.
- Working on graded course assignments (e.g., reading textbooks, watching/listening to video lectures, discussions, writing papers)
- Writing or editing the Scholarly Project Executive Summary (and other Scholarly Project related work)
- Preparing the Scholarly Project Dissemination Presentation (i.e., PPT or poster)
- Writing and reading (i.e., for coursework, etc.)
- Editing (i.e., papers, Scholarly Project)
- Travel time to meetings with Faculty, Dean, External Subject Area Expert/Mentor, Scholarly Project stakeholders
- Travel time to professional meetings or conferences

DNP Practicum Hours Documentation

All practical hours will be logged using the CORE® ELMS software platform. Students will receive access during the first quarter of courses. Students must maintain a record of their DNP practical hours, which should be documented according to the AACN DNP Domains and Sub-competencies. All experiential hours and activities must accurately reflect the time spent to add up to the required number of hours. Practical hours need faculty approval. Students must work with their faculty to create a list of activities for the DNP Experience that contribute to skill development, operationalize the project, or meet the AACN DNP Domains. Hours completed for the scholarly project can count as DNP practicum hours if they are new experiences, well documented, linked to program or student learning outcomes, aligned with AACN DNP domains and Sub-competencies, mentored, and approved by the faculty.

Below are some general suggestions for potential clinical practicum activities related to the AACN DNP

Domains and Sub-competencies.

Practicum hours logs must include all the following or they will not be counted.

Description of Experience Activity

1. DNP Domain and Sub-competencies
2. Number of Hours Completed
3. Faculty approval in CORE ELMS

SAMPLE of Approved DNP Practicum Experiences and Eligible Hours

Description of Experience Activity	Maximum Hours Allocated for Activity	AACN Domains
Participation in practice activities related to the completion of the DNP Project	150	1-10
Collaboration/consultation with experts in healthcare or related fields (interprofessional partnerships)	60	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7
Participate in practice activities that address quality improvement and safety in care delivery and workplace safety	60	1, 2, 5, 7
Active participation in a global health project in a leadership role (i.e.: mission/service event)	60	2, 3, 4, 6
Application of new advanced practice skills aligned with doctoral inquiry or area of personal nursing practice expertise	100	1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10
Participation in a mentored teaching experience in the clinical or academic setting	60	4, 6, 7, 9, 10
Application of evidence-based practice guidelines into informational technology and healthcare systems	90	8, 8, 9, 10
Attendance at practice-related conferences	90	1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10
Presentation/poster at practice-related conference	60	1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10
Participation in a professional practice organization/committee with an active/leadership role	90	1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10
Participation in the development of a policy with an	90	9, 10

active/leadership role		
Participate in a committee at institutional, state, national or international level regarding nursing, healthcare policy or patient outcomes	90	7, 9, 10

DNP Scholarly Project

The DNP project provides students with the opportunity for in-depth analysis, synthesis, and application of a chosen topic that contributes to an area of scholarship in population healthcare. This is a series of four courses in which students will research, assess, address, and implement their DNP project in the practice setting with oversight provided by the DNP mentor and practice facilitator. Each course requires up to 250 faculty supervised practice hours. Documentation and confirmation of required practice hours are required for successful completion of these courses.

The final DNP Practicum course synthesizes the experience of implementing an evidence-based practice investigation, including data analysis, evaluation, and interpretation. Students will demonstrate the principles of evidence-based practice, epidemiology, and quality improvement methodologies to measure the effectiveness and impact of evidence-based changes on population health outcomes and draw meaningful conclusions. Students will reflect on their project outcomes, identify successes and challenges, and discuss the implications for future practice and research. This course serves as a capstone experience, showcasing the students' achievements and preparing them to be influential leaders in improving health outcomes and promoting health equity for diverse populations. Students will complete a comprehensive manuscript of the DNP clinical scholarly project and deliver a live oral defense presentation to faculty and peers. Dissemination of plans and development of a poster and abstract for a peer-reviewed journal are also required.

Preceptor and Site Approval

Students must meet with their faculty to select one or more preceptors who will provide guidance throughout their immersion experience and scholarly project. A wide variety of potential experts are available for DNP immersion experiences from whom the student can choose. The proposed preceptor must complete the **AUHS Preceptor Information** form, which will then be reviewed by the DNP faculty. Upon approval, the preceptor must complete the **AUHS Preceptor and Site Commitment** form which stipulates a commitment from the preceptor and organization to support the implementation of the DNP project at the planned practice setting. A statement of commitment to provide on-site

guidance for the project initiatives, including securing any needed approvals for data collection and storage per local requirements (IRB approval).

After completing both the **AUHS Preceptor and AUHS Preceptor and Site Commitment** forms, please return them directly to the student. The AUHS faculty will review preceptor and site qualifications to ensure both meet program learning objectives. Once approved, the AUHS clinical placement staff will work directly with the administrator at your facility to establish a **Clinical Affiliation Agreement**, which is a legal agreement directly with the practice site and university. This is different than the Preceptor Commitment Form. Upon final approval of the student's practicum application, you will receive an email from AUHS faculty.

Preceptor Qualifications and Responsibilities

Each student will have a DNP Project Team consisting of a Preceptor and Faculty.

Preceptor

Qualifications:

- Registered Nurse or Advanced Practice Registered Nurse with a minimum master's degree in nursing. A DNP, PhD or EdD in nursing is preferred.
- Hold an active and unencumbered nursing license in the state of California and be employed in a practice setting in California where the student practicum will take place.
- Is a permanent employee of the facility where the practicum will take place.
- Have a min of 1 yr. of post-grad experience and a current job relative to the specialization.
- The ideal preceptor should possess the expertise to provide knowledge and skills for the development of the DNP Project.
- Is NOT the student's supervisor, family member, friend, or any other relationship that would be a conflict of interest.
- A recent CV will be reviewed by AUHS Faculty to assess the candidate's experience in mentoring doctoral students, as well as their involvement in quality improvement (QI) or evidence-based practice (EBP) work.

Responsibilities:

- Complete the AUHS Preceptor Commitment Form before the start of the practicum.
- Agree to engage in an onsite preceptor-to-student ratio of 1:1 for direct supervision at any given time.

- Will complete conference meetings with AUHS faculty to assess students' performance during practicum.
- Orient the DNP student to the office/clinical environment, methods of operation of the agency, and practice protocols/guidelines.
- Provide opportunities for role analysis and application of skills and knowledge.
- Offer ongoing feedback about student performance and progress in meeting practicum goals and objectives.
- Facilitate the achievement of the DNP student's clinical learning objectives and clinical project.
- Ensure IRB compliance at site if applicable.
- Schedule quarterly conference meetings with the faculty to discuss the student's practicum experience and performance.
- Maintain communication with the faculty as necessary throughout the quarter. Any problems that could interfere with the student's learning should be brought to the faculty's attention as soon as possible.
- Complete the preceptor section of the **"AUHS DNP Quarterly Student Progress Review"** form in CORE® Elms at the end of every quarter, review the form with the student, and return the form to the AUHS School of Nursing.
- Sign off on practicum logs in CORE® Elms to verify completion of required practicum hours.

Faculty

Qualifications:

- Faculty from AUHS School of Nursing affiliated with the DNP Program must hold a terminal degree in nursing (DNP, PhD, or EdD).
- A recent CV will be reviewed to assess experience in mentoring DNP students or involvement in quality improvement (QI) or evidence-based practice (EBP) work.

Responsibilities:

- Evaluate the qualifications of the DNP Preceptor.
- Ensure compliance with AUHS IRB regulations.
- Maintain communication with the faculty and or preceptor regarding the student's performance, progress, and learning needs.

- Conduct a site visit, either virtually or onsite, to assess the student's practicum experience.
- Mentor the student through the development of the DNP Project proposal. Guide the student in developing the final written DNP Project manuscript and presentation.
- Approve the final written DNP Project manuscript and oral presentation.
- Provide timely feedback to the student on written manuscript drafts and oral presentations.
- Document the student's progress toward fulfilling DNP Project requirements.
- Work with the student to schedule Team meetings, including the final presentation.
- Confirm student completion of IRB training: *Responsible Conduct of Research and Social and Behavioral Education (SBE) Foundations*.
- Complete the faculty section of the **“AUHS DNP Quarterly Student Progress Review”** form in CORE® Elms at the end of the student’s scholarly practice, review the form with the student, and return the form to the AUHS School of Nursing.
- Validate the practicum logs in CORE® Elms to verify completion of required practicum hours and alignment of the practicum hours with learning outcomes and competencies.

Student Performance Issues

The following are some examples of unsatisfactory and unacceptable behaviors in the practicum setting. Preceptors should report any unsatisfactory behavior to the course faculty immediately.

- Failure to notify preceptor of inability to attend planned practicum experience.
- Failure to notify preceptor of late attendance to practicum experience.
- Leaving the practicum experience early without the preceptor's approval.
- Failure to be prepared for the practicum experience.
- Failure to dress appropriately for the practicum experience. The student should follow the facility dress code and wear an AUHS student identification badge and white AUHS lab coat.
- Failure to possess equipment needed for the practicum experience.
- Failure to follow practicum site policy, procedures, and guidelines.
- Failure to follow IRB practices.
- Violation of patient confidentiality.

- Failure to keep the environment and patients safe.
- Failure to meet moral and ethical standards.
- Failure to protect self from contact with the body fluids of others.
- Inappropriate use of social media.

Evaluation Forms

Preceptor: All forms related to preceptor and student progress/evaluation will be stored in CORE® ELMS. Once a preceptor is approved, they will receive a welcome email from AUHS faculty which includes this handbook and instructions on how to access CORE® ELMS. All evaluation forms and validation hours will be sent to the preceptor via email as a link that takes you directly to the task. No login or password is required in CORE® ELMS for preceptors.

Student: All forms related to preceptor and student progress/evaluation will be stored in CORE® ELMS. An orientation for students will be held before the start of the program. The orientation will cover topics such as course requirements, student expectations, experiential learning hours, examples of scholarly projects, university support services, and how to access and use CORE® ELMS.

AUHS Preceptor Information: DNP Program

(to be completed before start of practicum)

Preceptor's Name:

Preceptor's Phone Number:

Employer Issued Email:

Practicum Site:

Name of the site where the student will complete the practicum:

Physical address of site where student will complete the practicum:

Administrative contact and email for legal agreements:

Employment

Current position title:

Current employer:

Length of employment at current position:

Employment status (full/part-time/contract):

I have approval for this preceptorship through my employer (yes or no):

Education

Highest education degree:

Major/Degree concentration:

College/University:

Month and year of graduation:

Licensure: highest licensure related to this preceptorship

Type of license:

License State & license number:

License exp date (MM/YYYY):

Length of time practicing at current level of licensure:

Certifications or specialization:

Please describe your job responsibilities and primary focus of your current position:

Please include a copy of your most recent CV with this form.

AUHS Preceptor and Site Commitment Form: DNP Program

(to be completed before start of practicum)

Practicum Purpose

A practicum is a supervised onsite experience where students develop applied skills and integrate professional knowledge. It does not involve direct patient care. Students must complete practicum experiences onsite at the practice site with a preceptor. Practicum courses are project-based.

This form confirms that [Preceptor's Full Name] _____ as a representative of [Agency Name] _____ agrees to allow the following DNP Student [Student's Name] _____ access to conduct a quality improvement or evidence-based project at the agency listed above, as discussed with the DNP student. These project activities may only commence after the DNP student has received IRB and DNP Faculty approval. The agency and preceptor agree to provide on-site guidance from a site organizational sponsor for the project initiatives, including securing any needed approvals for data collection and storage per local requirements. It is understood that all DNP project-related activities must cease if directed by the IRB. It is also understood that any activities that involve Personal Private Information or Protected Health Information must comply with HIPAA Laws and Institutional Policies.

Your organization agrees to the terms and conditions stated above. If there are any concerns related to this project, you should contact the DNP student named above or the DNP Faculty.

Preceptor's Full Name/Title: _____

Preceptor Signature: _____

Date: _____

Next steps:

After completing this Preceptor Commitment form, please return it directly to the student. The clinical placement staff at AUHS will work directly with the administrator at your facility to establish a **Clinical Affiliation Agreement**, which is a legal agreement directly with the practice site and university. This is different than the Preceptor Commitment Form. Upon final approval of the student's practicum application, you will receive an email from AUHS faculty.

AUHS DNP Quarterly Student Progress Review

This progress review strengthens the relationship between the preceptor, faculty, and student and supports the student as they progress through the program. The student should start by completing the self-assessment and sending it to their preceptor, followed by the faculty. Each team member will then complete their section in that order. The faculty will review the completed assessment and use it to plan for the upcoming academic term.

Student Name:

Date of Admission:

Preceptor Name:

Faculty Name:

Student Self-Assessment:

Current term:

Total practicum hours to date:

List any training experiences in which you participated beyond your coursework:

Check any progress on your scholarly project proposal:

Have not started proposal writing Proposal under revision Proposal was approved

Describe any major accomplishments/strengths this quarter:

Describe areas where you may need additional growth or development:

To what degree has advising/mentoring with your preceptor and or faculty been congruent with your needs:

Highly congruent good/adequate not congruent with my needs

What other types of advising/mentoring/assistance would enhance your progression?

What are your goals for the coming quarter?

Student Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Preceptor Assessment of Student

Please describe the student's performance to date. Include organization, professional development, engagement, leadership, and planning for scholarly project to date.

Preceptor Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Faculty Assessment of Student

Please describe the student's performance to date. Include organization, professional development, engagement, leadership, and planning for scholarly project to date.

Faculty Signature: _____ **Date:** _____