

**Program Handbook**

**2022-2024**



**DNP and Post-Graduate  
Certificate  
Program**

# Welcome to Viterbo University

On behalf of the faculty and staff at the School of Nursing, we welcome you to Viterbo University. You are embarking on an educational experience, which will challenge you to advance your knowledge and skills. Contemporary health care is characterized by unprecedented changes in science and technology, by increasing globalization, and by socioeconomic and environmental imbalances. Advanced education in nursing will provide you with the specialized knowledge needed to address the health challenges of our global society.

Our faculty are committed to excellence in teaching and are known for their commitment to student learning. Through both face-to-face and web-enhanced courses, you will experience high quality, interactive instruction based on current nursing research and practice. You will have the opportunity for clinical practicum options to augment your learning in your chosen role preparation. We believe that graduates of our program are well prepared for demanding roles as professional nurses in advanced roles who will improve the health of the communities they serve.

Thank you for choosing Viterbo University for advancing your professional nursing career. May your journey be a rich adventure leading to both personal and professional development.

Megan Smith, PhD, RN, CNE  
Dean, College of Nursing and Health

# Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Program Handbook

This handbook does not establish a contractual relationship. Its purpose is to provide students with information regarding programs, requirements, policies, and procedures to qualify for a graduate degree in nursing from Viterbo University. A student follows the curriculum in effect at the time of formal admission as a degree-seeking student provided attendance is uninterrupted and a degree is completed within the allotted period. This handbook is normally published every two years. When substantive policy or curricular changes are made before a handbook revision, timely notification is made to students. This handbook is designed to supplement the Viterbo University Graduate Catalog, not replace it. Both documents are essential to fully understand the policies and processes of the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) and post-graduate certificate programs. In addition, the websites associated with the DNP/certificate programs are important resources to consult.



# Table of Contents

<b>Welcome .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>School of Nursing General Information.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Doctor of Nursing Practice/Certificate Programs.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Entry/Ongoing Requirements &amp; Policies.....</b>	<b>10</b>
Attendance and Time Spent in Preparation for Classes .....	10
Health Immunization Requirements (CPR / RN License) .....	11
Required Background Check.....	12
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.....	12
Policy and Guidelines Applying to Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Disabilities .....	12
Fees/Expenses .....	13
Scholarships .....	13
<b>Academic Support Services/Policies/Grading .....</b>	<b>14</b>
School of Nursing Honor code.....	17
<b>Student Support Services/Resources .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Miscellaneous.....</b>	<b>25</b>
Laptop Use .....	25
Email .....	25
Health Insurance.....	26
Printing .....	26
Personal Copying .....	26
ATM .....	26
Class Cancellations Due to Severe Weather.....	26
Overnight Accommodations .....	27
Sigma Theta Tau (Pi Phi Chapter) .....	27
<b>Directory .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Phone Numbers .....</b>	<b>30</b>

## **Welcome to the DNP/Certificate programs at Viterbo University**

The School of Nursing is committed to providing an educational experience for qualified professional nurses who wish to pursue an advanced degree or specialty certification in Nursing. This program attempts to meet the unique needs of the DNP/certificate student while assuring fulfillment of the expectations related to higher education. Various educational methodologies appropriate to the adult learner with life and professional experience are incorporated into the curriculum plan and course delivery methods. Attempts have been made to facilitate full-time and part-time study while maintaining the demands of family and professional roles. We wish you the best of enriching experiences as you start graduate school.

Welcome to this professional venture!

Michele Merten, DNP, ANP-C  
Graduate Program Director

## **School of Nursing – General Information**

---

### **School of Nursing Mission Statement:**

The School of Nursing prepares nurse leaders for professional holistic nursing practice and advancement of nursing knowledge, through the pursuit of wisdom. Faculty create an educational experience that embraces diversity, equity and inclusion within the values of caring, wisdom, integrity, collegiality, and commitment for faithful service and ethical leadership in a global community.

### **Vision**

The School of Nursing will develop nursing leaders whose competence, caring, and commitment to excellence will empower individuals and communities to achieve their highest level of health and well-being.

### **The Goals of the School of Nursing are to:**

- Implement a professional nursing curriculum that builds on a strong liberal arts foundation for student learners and offers specialization, expansion, and/or advancement in nursing practice for graduate and professional learners
- Provide an educational experience that emphasizes active learning in a values-based context
- Create a collegial environment that facilitates the professional development of students and faculty
- Prepare graduates for professional practice in a dynamic health care environment

## **DNP and Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Certificate Programs**

- **Post-BSN to DNP**
  - Adult gerontology acute care nurse practitioner (AG-ACNP)
  - Adult gerontology nurse practitioner (AGNP)
  - Family nurse practitioner (FNP)
  - Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNA)
  - DNP/MBA dual degree program
  - Ethical Leadership

- **Post-MSN to DNP**

For current Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs)

For those wishing APRN preparation who already have a master's in nursing

For master prepared nurses who are not APRNs and who wish to pursue advanced specialty at the aggregate/systems/organizational level

For master's prepared nurses who wish to pursue a dual degree MBA/DNP

- **Post-Graduate Certificate (AG-ACNP)**

For current APRNs

For those wishing APRN preparation as an AG-ACNP who already have a master's or DNP in nursing

The curriculum will prepare graduates for advanced nursing roles that enhance the standard of practice in a variety of settings. Graduates may function as nurse practitioners or in other advanced professional leadership roles.

## **DNP Curriculum**

The curriculum is a variable credit program requiring core DNP courses, the completion of a DNP project, didactic courses, and the required practicum experiences.

The DNP degree may be accomplished in three calendar years of study or two years (post-MSN to DNP), with 6-7 credits a semester considered full time. Options to shorten or extend this period are possible. Total credits and clinical hours needed for graduation vary according to the choice of track. Classes are normally scheduled one day during the week with special classes occasionally scheduled on weekends. Clinical practicums require additional time and when possible may be done in the student's demographic area.

A partially online/partially face-to face course format is typically utilized, although some classes are completely online. Online schedules will vary depending on the role preparation. Post-MSN to DNP student schedules vary depending on if obtaining NP preparation or not.

The curriculum is arranged such that the first year includes core courses that are taken by all post-BSN to DNP students, and some post-MSN to DNP students. During the first or second year of curriculum for post-BSN to DNP, students typically begin role specific courses and begin their scholarly writing assignments designed for their designated track. In the final year students complete the clinical practicum experiences required for their designated track.

## AG-ACNP Certificate Curriculum

The 21-credit curriculum prepares the adult-gerontology or family nurse practitioner certified NP to care for acute, critical, and chronically-critically ill individuals. The curriculum is structured over five semesters, with two semesters of didactic content, and clinical practicum experiences over the final three semesters. Didactic classes may be scheduled one day a week together with students in the BSN-DNP/AG-ACNP track.

## National Certification

Graduates of the post-BSN to DNP program may be eligible for various certification examinations depending on the role preparation chosen and individual clinical backgrounds. Graduates of the CRNA, adult gerontology acute care nurse practitioner (AG-ACNP), adult gerontology (AGNP), or family nurse practitioner (FNP) track will be prepared to take their respective national certification exam. Registration for the NP certification examinations should not proceed until approved by DNP Clinical Practicum Liaison. Options for other certification (e.g. leadership certification) may be obtained, but are not the focus of the DNP curriculum.

## Doctor of Nursing Practice Curricular Model



In this graphical representation of the curriculum, the broad and multidisciplinary aspects of theory, practice, research, and evidence comprise the outermost circle of the model and serve as the scientific underpinnings of nursing practice. DNP/certificate students are assisted to integrate multiple theories from nursing and other disciplines, to analyze relevant research findings, and to



seek and evaluate evidence with which to enhance their knowledge and skills in advanced professional practice.

The next circle delineates the curricular concepts of health, quality, leadership, advocacy, ethics, collaboration, technology, and diversity. These broad concepts flow from the mission and expected graduate student learning outcomes as well as are consistent with the DNP Essentials Competencies (AACN, 2021). Content related to these major competencies/concepts is addressed in the core courses and threaded throughout the role and population-focused coursework that prepares graduates for expanded, specialized, and advanced nursing roles. While specific role preparations are unique, the core curricular components and unified mission and outcomes represent the solidarity of purposes among them. The circular framework implies a systematic and life-long commitment to learning to be proficient and current in the chosen roles and settings.

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) adopted a new educational framework designed to prepare nurses to respond to the rapidly changing healthcare system. The Viterbo University DNP program is in the progress of adapting curricular content to reflect *The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education* (2021).

American Association of Colleges of Nursing (2021). *The Essentials: Core competencies for professional nursing education*. <https://www.aacnursing.org/Education-Resources/AACN-Essentials>

## **Expected Student Learning Outcomes for DNP Graduates**

This program will prepare graduates who:

- Practice in an interprofessional, expanded, specialized, and/or advanced nursing role.
- Affirm the dignity of life and human diversity.
- Advocate for quality and safety outcomes for individuals, families, populations, and systems.
- Demonstrate professionalism, ethical leadership, and faithful service in their chosen roles and settings.
- Facilitate translation of research and evidence into practice.
- Utilize technology to impact best practice

## **Expected Student Learning Outcomes for AG-ACNP Certificate Graduates**

This program will prepare graduates who:

- Practice interprofessionally in an adult-gerontology acute care nurse practitioner specialty role

- Affirm the dignity of life and human diversity
- Advocate for quality and safety outcomes for persons / families experiencing acute, critical, or chronically-critically ill situations
- Demonstrate professionalism, ethical leadership, and faithful service in their role and setting
- Facilitate translation of research and evidence into practice
- Utilize healthcare and information technology to impact best practice

## **Plans of Study for Specific Tracks/Degrees**

See plans of study at <https://www.viterbo.edu/graduate-program-nursing/plans-study>

# **Entry/Ongoing Requirements and Policies**

## **Attendance and Time Spent in Preparation for Classes**

Adult learning principles are utilized throughout the curriculum. Additionally, everyone has a responsibility to create a non-distracting classroom environment conducive to learning for all individuals. Students are expected to be prepared for and actively contribute to classes, no matter what the format-in-person or virtual. Past and current work experiences are utilized and built upon. The programs are designed such that concentrated coursework/clinical is scheduled in day-long formats. Because of this method of scheduling, arriving on time and being present for all of class is critical. Arrangements must be made so that attendance is possible unless exceptional situations prevail. Special accommodation may be requested for a short-term absence for extenuating circumstances only. If students are unable to attend classes, the instructor must be contacted and arrangements must be made to meet learning outcomes. This makeup may require additional written work. If prolonged absence is unavoidable, continuation in the course may not be possible.

Outside of class, and during online weeks, students must be able to schedule their time carefully and condition themselves to meet the rigorous demands of the program. The “seat time” for face-to-face class and online class is a minimum of 750 minutes per credit. A guide for preparation for full-time students (at 6-7 semester-based credits) is 18-21 clock hours a week in addition to campus class/online class time. Taking more credits will increase this time. Students taking courses at the 700-800 levels are advised that these courses are considered higher level courses and will require even more time than the minimum stated above. If courses are taught in an

accelerated format (e.g., 10 weeks rather than 15 weeks), weekly time commitments will increase.

Students are advised that when enrolled in practicum experiences more than one day a week will be necessary to fulfill class and clinical requirements.

### **Health/Immunization Requirements/CPR/RN License**

Upon entry and as necessary throughout the programs, students must provide verification of the following:

- Diphtheria Tetanus or Tdap Booster within 10 years.
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella (two doses after age one) and/or positive titers.
- Varicella (Chicken Pox)—dates of disease or immunization (providing the result of a titer is required by some agencies, and having this evidence is highly recommended).
- Date and result of last PPD or Quantiferon-TB Gold blood test within the last year. If PPD is positive, the date and result of last chest X-ray is necessary.
- Dates of Hepatitis B vaccination (three doses) and/or evidence of a reactive hepatitis B titer.
- Annual influenza vaccination.
- Health insurance coverage when in clinical practicum experiences.
- A physical health exam within one year of entry and beginning clinical practicums.
- COVID vaccine

Students must submit immunization history and provide information regarding general health status. Students are asked to verify by signature that they believe themselves to be free of infectious disease or any other health conditions that may interfere with their personal safety or/and ability to provide safe care in advanced nursing roles. Some agencies may require additional verifications for clinical practicum experiences.

CPR must be current upon entry and throughout the program. With each renewal, students must upload a copy of their updated CPR card to the designated tracking platform.

RN licensure must be unrestricted and current upon entry and remain so throughout the program. With each renewal, students must provide a copy of their license to the designated platform. Students must have licensure in the state of their practicums. Separate Minnesota and Wisconsin licenses may be necessary for clinical practicum placement.

## Procedure for Caregiver/Criminal Background Search

1. DNP/certificate students will receive information on accessing *CastleBranch* and *Passport* to upload their immunization and licensure information. *CastleBranch* will also complete a criminal history check for students. There is a one-time fee for this program.
2. Positive findings in a criminal history check will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by School of Nursing officials to determine whether a student is eligible to care for patients in contracted clinical placements. An individual whose background check identifies barriers to clinical placement may not be allowed to progress in the program.
3. Students who have evidence of a criminal record will be contacted by the Graduate Program Director to discuss the implications for progression in the nursing program.
4. Annual background information disclosure forms must be completed by all students. A full background check is done every fourth year.

## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

See University website: <https://www.viterbo.edu/social-justice-and-equity/social-justice-and-equity>

## Policy and Guidelines Applying to Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Disabilities

The School of Nursing supports the Viterbo University policy and guidelines relating to the non-exclusion of qualified students from university programs solely because of disability. To meet the requirements of the DNP/certificate program at Viterbo University, a student must be able to perform skills that are essential to advanced nursing roles. While Viterbo University will provide reasonable accommodations in course requirements to assist a student with special needs to meet course outcomes, for some essential skills there are no known substitutes. The DNP/certificate program applicant and the DNP/certificate student must be able to meet the requirements of the role preparation/population foci chosen. Accordingly, these specific requirements may vary somewhat.

In general, the following attributes/abilities are expected:

1. **Physical Requirements:** The student must be capable of performing physical care of the client/patient. This includes, but is not limited to, the ability to move and position them, perform visual inspection, differentiate among a full spectrum of colors, differentiate between various sounds, perform tactile assessments, administer medication, and read a variety of gauges and monitors. The student must be able to maintain necessary skills in cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

- 2. Communication:** The student must be able to gather information relating to the client/patient, observe and describe physical and psychological changes, and recognize non-verbal communication. He/she must be able to communicate sensitively and effectively with clients/patients and their families and relate intellectually and professionally with members of the health care team. Professional writing and professional presentation skills are expected.
- 3. Intellectual Abilities:** Critical thinking, clinical reasoning, and problem solving are demanded of all professional nurses. This requires that the student possess abilities in logical thinking, measurement, calculation, reasoning, and analysis.
- 4. Behavioral and Social Attributes:** The student must possess emotional health and maturity to participate in the DNP/certificate program. They must be able to exercise good judgment and to act responsibly and promptly in completing program-related activities. The student must be able to function effectively under stress, adapt to changing environments, demonstrate flexibility, and function in uncertain circumstances while caring for patients/clients. The student must be able to demonstrate qualities of integrity, compassion, and skills in interpersonal relationships.
- 5. Evaluation:** The student may be required to take written or practical tests to evaluate their abilities to perform required advanced nursing knowledge, attitudes, and skills. Viterbo School of Nursing recognizes its responsibility to prepare competent professional nurses and at the same time incorporate persons with disabilities into its program.

## **Fees/Expenses**

University fees are added to cost per credit fees for some courses at the 800 level. In addition, course associated fees are assessed for selected courses in the DNP/certificate curriculum. If applicable at practicum site, practicum placement costs will be the responsibility of the student.

## **Scholarships**

Limited scholarships are available to continuing students (see below). An application process occurs each year in the spring for scholarships and is generally directed to future third year students. An announcement will be sent when application information is available. The Graduate Program Committee selects the awardees.

### **Endowed Nursing Scholarships**

- Sister Grace Clare Beznouz Scholarship
- Beres Family Endowed NP Scholarship
- Heili Family Scholarship (NP)
- Bonnie Nesbitt Scholarship (NP)

# **Academic Support Services / Policies / Grading**

## **Academic Advisement**

An academic advisor is assigned to DNP/certificate students after admission to the program. This advisor assists the student in planning and implementing their plan of study throughout the graduate program. The plan of study is determined during the first year of coursework or before.

Thereafter an annual review of the plan of study by the student should occur, so that program requirements are met in a timely manner. The Student Planner on VitNet/Self-Service should be consulted for verification. The academic advisor helps with plan of study decisions and advises on course and track-specific options. In the event a student perceives a need/desire to change advisors, the DNP Program Director should be consulted.

## **NP Predictor Exams**

An electronic standardized assessment has been shown to be highly accurate at predicting APRN certification success for NP students. NP students will be required to complete the predictor exam at the beginning of the final year.

Students who do not meet the program benchmark ( $\geq 70\%$ ) will be required to remediate and retest. Students who are unsuccessful on a second predictor exam will be required to pay out-of-pocket for another retest and will not be considered eligible for the national certification testing application until providing evidence of meeting the passing benchmark of the predictor exam.

The national certification examination pass rate is an important outcome measure included in the accreditation standards for the graduate programs. It is a professional expectation that program graduates provide this information when contacted by Viterbo University.

## **Credit for Prior Learning**

There is no credit awarded for prior learning offered except for transfer credits that are considered equivalent.

## **Evaluation/Grades**

Methods of evaluation are published in each course syllabus. Final course grades are determined based on evaluation methods and criteria and are reported on VitNet/Self-Service for student's

view, rather than in mailed grade reports. Symbols are used to indicate an instructor's evaluation of the student's work in a course. In the DNP/certificate program, the grading system for didactic coursework is as follows:

<b>A</b>	94-100% (Very good)
<b>AB</b>	92-93%
<b>B</b>	87-91% (Satisfactory)
<b>BC</b>	85-86%
<b>C</b>	80-84% (Less than satisfactory)
<b>CD</b>	78-79% (Unsatisfactory/failing)
<b>D</b>	74-77%
<b>F</b>	Below 74%

### **Satisfactory Progress/Probationary Status**

Graduate students are expected to earn a B or better in all of their courses AND maintain a semester GPA of 3.0 or better.

### **Didactic Classes (includes theory, seminar, and DNP project)**

Students not meeting academic expectations in any class may be contacted by the course instructor to implement a Student Success Plan created in coordination with their academic advisor.

Any student who earns a C in any course, OR drops below a semester GPA of 3.0, will be placed on probationary status and must achieve a grade of B or better in all subsequent courses AND maintain a semester GPA of 3.0 to remain in the program. A Student Success Plan may be initiated as part of the probationary status.

- A student who earns less than a C will be placed on probation and required to repeat the course and earn B or better in this and all subsequent classes and maintain a semester GPA of 3.0 to remain in the program.
- Students enrolled in 800 level courses must receive a B or better for each course. In the event the student falls below B for any course, an individual will be placed on probation and face remediation consequences up to and including repeating the course and/or dismissal from the program.

### **Practicum Classes**

- A student receiving a C or less for clinical practicum may be dismissed from the program. If dismissal does not occur, the student will be placed on a clinical remediation plan for the

subsequent practicum, must repeat the course with a B or better grade, and must achieve B or better in all remaining practicum courses to remain in the program.

- A student receiving a BC in practicum may remain in the program but will be placed on a remediation contract for the subsequent practicum and must achieve B or better in all remaining practicum courses to remain in the program.
- Students on remediation contracts may be required to complete additional clinical hours and/or register for additional clinical credits to achieve course/program outcomes.
- Expectations of a semester-based remediation contract must be fulfilled for progression to the next clinical practicum (or to graduate if that is the case). If the remediation contract is initiated before the end of the semester in which the student is registered, the remediation contract will continue for the following clinical practicum, with updates as indicated.
- After being on a remediation contract for one complete semester, grades of B or better must be earned for each subsequent practicum or the student may be dismissed from the program.

### **Re-entry**

Dismissal for academic reasons (e.g. grades, academic dishonesty) precludes readmission.

### **Formal Complaint Process**

Viterbo Speaks Up is a place where students can report crimes, worrisome behaviors, harassment, sexual violence assault, hate/bias discrimination, violations of the Viterbo University Student Code of Conduct, and other non-academic issues and concerns.

<https://www.viterbo.edu/student-affairs/viterbo-speaks>

Concerns should be expressed as soon as possible after an event occurs. Some complaint procedures have specific deadlines.

### **Track/Degree Level Change Request**

Students are admitted to a specific track and degree level for their specific role preparation/population foci. Track/degree level changes after admission may not be possible. An application process to change tracks/degree level must be initiated with the director of the DNP program. The ability to change tracks/degree level will depend on meeting the admission criteria for the track desired and space available. The plan of study for the track/degree level desired will be followed if the application for track change is accepted.



## **Academic Integrity Policies**

Viterbo students are expected to adhere to a behavior of academic honesty befitting their enrollment at this ecumenical Catholic Franciscan University. Students and faculty are responsible for promoting such behavior. The willful violation of these standards will result in actions being taken against students who engage in unethical conduct. The full “Academic Integrity Policy” is available in the Viterbo University Graduate Catalog. Viterbo University expects and requires its students to maintain high standards of scholarship and conduct. Students are accountable for their own learning and achievement. Plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty may lead to a failing course grade, and/or may contribute to a decision of dismissal from the program. It is expected that students work independently, unless instructed to do otherwise.

The School of Nursing Honor Code, which is provided below, also is utilized. Students in the DNP/certificate program, at the onset of their coursework are expected to abide by this Code.

## **School of Nursing Honor Code**

I am committed to academic honesty and the five core values of the School of Nursing at Viterbo University, even in the face of adversity.

### **Core Values**

#### *Caring*

We recognize and honor the dignity of students and faculty.

We strive to interact with all persons in respectful and compassionate ways.

#### *Integrity*

We accept personal accountability for all we say and do.

We strive to base our actions on ethical principles and values that flow from the Franciscan tradition.\*

#### *Commitment*

We are committed to pursuing excellence in education and learning. We are committed to advocate for the health of all persons and for advancing the profession of nursing. We are committed to professional development through scholarly activities.

#### *Collegiality*

We recognize and celebrate diversity and contribute our individual talents to our common work as scholars and professionals.

#### *Wisdom*

We recognize that reflection and discernment are integral to learning and professional growth and are vital for advancing nursing practice.

To attain these ideals, I embrace this honor system as my way of life.

\*Ethical Principles include autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, justice and veracity.

\*Values include contemplation, service, hospitality, stewardship, and integrity

## **Oral, Written, and Technological Communications**

Students receive directed feedback and critique on their speaking and writing skills throughout the program. Proper grammar, spelling, usage, and format are expected. It is essential that DNP students demonstrate effective communication skills. Students will utilize and develop various computer skills including presentation building skills, research skills, and the ability to participate in online learning modalities. APA format is required for written work.

## **Faculty Organization and Student Participation in Governance of the DNP/Certificate Program**

The faculty teaching in the DNP/certificate program, the Graduate Program Director, and the Dean of the School of Nursing and Health comprise the graduate practice committee (GPC), which is a standing committee of the School of Nursing. The chair of this committee is the Graduate Program Director. The functions of this committee are to plan, review, and implement the graduate curriculum, implement a systematic plan of evaluation for the graduate programs and its components, determine admission status of applicants to the DNP/certificate programs, plan and implement faculty and program development activities, develop and review policies regarding the DNP/certificate programs and award scholarships. This group meets monthly and as needed.

Focus group sessions, inviting all students at each level, are conducted annually for input into the curriculum, resource issues, including processes, policies, and student-related governance of the DNP/certificate programs.

Alternatively, students may provide anonymous or signed feedback in writing. Student input is addressed in GPC meetings for ongoing quality improvement and future planning. In addition, students are invited to provide feedback at any time on an individual or group basis with the director of the DNP program who will bring the issues/suggestions to the GPC group.

## **DNP Project (for post-BSN to DNP and post-MSN to DNP students)**

DNP students are expected to develop and conduct a culminating project, usually in association with a clinical agency. A faculty advisor and clinical mentor are facilitators in this process. The DNP project takes place over four semesters of work, over 1.5-2 years. The DNP project guidelines are available on Moodle.

## **Practicum Advisement**

A practicum advisor is responsible for indirect supervision of students in clinical experiences, along with an on-site preceptor who provides direct supervision, expert role modeling, and role expertise.

Typically, the preceptor has at a minimum a master's degree. The preceptor participates in the assessment of the student at the end of the contracted experience; however, the practicum advisor is responsible for the summative evaluation and final grade. Preceptors and practicum advisors will likely change during the semesters of practicum experiences.

## **Practicum Experiences: Post-BSN to DNP**

All DNP students, including those in post graduate programs, are expected to complete a minimum of 1,000 post-baccalaureate practice hours.

Pre-certification NP and CRNA students are required to engage in direct clinical practicum hours specific to their role and foci preparation. Prescribed combinations of direct and indirect hours are allowed with the DNP project and clinical practicum. Complete DNP practicum guidelines are available on Moodle. Students must accrue sufficient direct care hours for application to take the national certification exams for their specific role preparation.

## **Practicum Experiences: Post-MSN to DNP**

Students who are already nationally certified as NPs or APRNs, or otherwise qualified for the post-MSN DNP program, will participate in direct and/or indirect hours to complete their required 480 hours. A variety of mechanisms and/or processes are used to award post graduate DNP students practice hour credits. APRNs who hold current national certification in an area of advanced nursing practice that require a minimum of a graduate degree, may use practice hours for credit within certain parameters.

Specific guidelines are available on Moodle. Pre-certification NP students, who are post-MSN, will follow the clinical experiences required of the post-BSN to DNP students.

### **Practicum Experiences: Post-Graduate Certificate**

Students who are already nationally certified as NPs or APRNs, or otherwise qualified for the post-graduate certificate program, will participate in direct hours to complete their required 540 hours. Specific guidelines are available on Moodle.

### **Professional Dress/Behavior for Practicum Experiences**

Students will wear appropriate attire that distinguishes them as professionals in clinical practice and will conduct themselves accordingly. Often clothes considered “business casual” will be acceptable. Jeans are not allowed. A white lab coat over professional attire will be necessary for most clinical placements. A Viterbo University name pin identifying the student as a RN and a doctor of nursing practice/certificate student is required when participating in any clinical/field experience.

### **Professional Decorum/Classroom Etiquette Guidelines for the Classroom**

At Viterbo University, it is our goal to provide an environment for students to learn and prosper. In order to minimize disruptive behavior to other students and faculty, each student is expected to adhere to the following:

- Be on time for class.  
Coming in late to class is both disruptive to other students and to those who may already be presenting (including guest lecturers). If you know in advance that you are going to be late or if you have an emergency/illness, please contact your instructor.
- Turn cell phones to silence.  
Cell phones should either be turned off during class or silenced. Texting is not permitted during classroom time.
- Laptops/Tablets use is encouraged in the classroom.  
You should not be using a laptop during presentations to view social media or other non-classroom related sites.

- Be respectful of your fellow students, instructors, and guest lecturers. For example, when others are asking questions avoid having side conversations, as this is disrespectful to the individual asking the question and those who may be interested in hearing the answer.
- Professional decorum and dress are expected when you are to present in front of class or take part in formal test out sessions.

## **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)**

Maintaining confidentiality is an essential part of ethical nursing practice. Information accessed by students for patient care and for educational purposes is of a private nature and must be protected. Health information must be accessed and handled according to federal HIPAA standards and specific institutional policies.

During every practicum or field experience, all students must follow HIPAA policy as outlined by the agency/institution. Breach of the HIPAA policy could result in disciplinary actions up to and including dismissal from the program, as well as fines and civil penalties.

Some guidelines to follow include:

1. Do not give patient/client information to anyone unless there is a legitimate need to know.
2. When there is a need to discuss protected patient information, be aware of who may overhear conversations. Look for a private place to speak.
3. Keep written information out of public viewing.
4. Dispose of patient/client information in a confidential manner.
5. Remove all patient identifiers when used in reporting cases in conference or in assignments.
6. Follow all agency policies and procedures on protecting the confidentiality of patient/client information.

## **Records, Notes, and Confidentiality**

DNP/certificate students are bound by the usual and expected rules of professional confidentiality and documentation related to their practice as registered nurses. Specific agency policies must be followed. When recording on a legal document the DNP student will sign/subscribe the individual's, RN, BSN or MSN, DNP (or equivalent as earned), Viterbo DNP/Certificate Student, unless the agency has another policy.

## **Liability Insurance**

At the present time, students are not asked to obtain personal liability insurance. The University carries a liability plan covering students in their approved practicum settings, but only during the specific periods of registration for that course. However, students may schedule practicum hours outside specific periods of registration for that course providing they hold personal liability insurance and have permission to do so.

Students are expected to conduct themselves as professionals who are advanced learners and are personally accountable to the extent of their license as RNs and to the practicum policies and student learning outcomes.

## **Exposure to Communicable Diseases/Agency Expectations**

Students may be asked to complete health/safety/confidentiality/electronic health record verifications specified by the agency in which they are going to have their practicum hours. This requirement may include face-to-face classes/meetings or online sessions with necessary verification paperwork completed.

Every year students are asked to verify their training in HIPAA, standard precautions and protection from blood borne diseases, tuberculosis, and other safety hazards at their place of employment required trainings. This verification takes the form of a mandatory survey. The training must have occurred within the preceding two years. Alternatively, students will need to verify this training by alternative means (see Program Director to discuss) if not done at place of employment. Failure to complete the survey or necessary training will bar participation in practicum experiences.

The student is responsible for protecting their self and all patients by rigorously applying standard precautions in all clinical/field settings.

Students exposed to blood-borne pathogens in the clinical setting will follow the protocol for that agency regarding evaluation and prophylaxis following significant exposure and will be responsible for expense incurred. If the agency protocol does not cover students, the student will report to the health care facility of choice for evaluation and prophylaxis. Students are accountable

to report exposure to the on-site preceptor responsible for the clinical experiences in the agency, the practicum advisor, and the DNP clinical coordinator.

In the event of injury or health complications resulting from field/practicum experiences, the student is financially responsible for initial and follow-up care. Health insurance is strongly recommended. The University assumes no liability for injuries, illnesses, or new or existing health complications that occur during, or associated with, practicum experiences.

## **Student Support Services/Resources**

(See University Graduate Catalog for additional support services/resources)

### **The Academic Resource Center**

The mission of the Academic Resource Center (ARC) is to provide service and assistance to students in the development of skills necessary for effective performance in and positive adjustment to the learning environment. The ARC writing assistance is a resource that is frequently utilized by graduate students.

### **Library Services**

Kim Olson-Kopp is the School of Nursing's librarian partner. Students may communicate with her directly with problems, concerns, or special needs. See the library home page and the Graduate Catalog for more information on the excellent Library Services available.

### **Online Course Delivery**

Moodle is the school's online course management software. Students are enrolled in courses on Moodle to complete the asynchronous online components of courses. Moodle also serves as a repository for certain guidelines and forms needed during progression in the DNP/certificate program. A password will be given to each student. Moodle is accessible from the campus web page. Online webinar delivery systems may be utilized for synchronous learning activities in selected classes.

The DNP/certificate program utilizes online focus groups to learn about opinions on a designated topic and to guide future action. Faculty use Moodle to house electronic document resources for

students enrolled in didactic courses. These documents are copyright protected and provided to students for their fair use only.

## **Graduate Student Resource Room**

The graduate student resource room in the nursing building is available on the 5th floor (501) for graduate student use. A computer and a printer are available in this room. A refrigerator and microwave are available on this floor for student and faculty use. Please do not leave food in this refrigerator after your class day and respect the space by cleaning up after yourselves. *Please do not eat meals in the graduate student resource room. There is a balcony area to eat/relax outside off the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the nursing building and a break room area in basement area of building with vending machines.*

## **Counseling Services**

Counseling services at Viterbo involve short-term counseling to students free of charge.

The counseling office also acts as a referral resource to community mental health facilities when additional services are needed. Students are invited to contact the counseling office in-person or by telephone. Services involve primarily education, one-on-one sessions, and programs on mental health.

## **Food Service**

Campus dining facilities are in Marian Hall, the student union, and adjacent to the library.

## **Health Services**

Viterbo University has a health services office staffed by a RN on a full-time basis. Office hours are available each school day. In addition, the University has the service of a consulting physician. Services through the health service office are available to students without a fee.

La Crosse has excellent medical facilities available if needed. Mayo Clinic Health System-Franciscan Healthcare medical complex is located adjacent to the University. It includes a hospital, an emergency/urgent care department, and clinics. Gundersen Medical Center is located within eight city blocks of the campus, providing similar services.



## **Security/Safety**

Daytime and after-hours security can be contacted by using an on-campus phone and dialing 3911. For all life-threatening emergencies contact 911 directly. Emergency phones are located at various locations on campus. To help prevent theft, please lock cars and secure personal belongings. If questions/ concerns regarding security, please contact Physical Plant personnel.

Students may need to secure ID cards to access the nursing building for classes on weekends and evenings.

## **VitNet/Self-Service and Student Planner**

VitNet/Self-Service is the web advisor for students. A student's schedule, transcript, student planner, financial aid status, billing information, as well as grades and course descriptions can be accessed through this on-line resource through MYVU.

## **Help Desk**

Call or email the Help Desk for computer/technological problems: (608) 796-3870 or [helpdesk@viterbo.edu](mailto:helpdesk@viterbo.edu).

# **Miscellaneous Information**

## **Use of Laptop Computers**

Laptop computers/iPads may access campus Wi-Fi for internet connectivity with the appropriate password.

## **Email**

All students have an email account through Viterbo. This email address is used throughout the length of the program. If students prefer to have their email forwarded to a home or work email address, they must input their forwarding information on the Viterbo email system. Students MUST check their email at a minimum of once a day to receive important communications. This includes during semester breaks, vacations, and summer.

## **Health Insurance**

Personal health insurance is strongly recommended and required by some clinical agencies utilized for practicums. Students are not insured by Viterbo or by the health care agencies in which clinical experiences are conducted.

## **Printing**

A calculated amount of free printing is allowed via the computers in the computer labs, based on how many credits a student is enrolled in. If students exceed this amount in any semester, additional funding will need to be provided to apply to this account through the library.

## **Personal Copying**

Copiers are available in the library and at various other locations for personal copying. Students can make copies by signing onto the copy machines with their student IDs. The copies will be charged to their printing account.

## **ATM**

An ATM machine is in Viterbo's Student Union. There may be a transaction fee.

## **Class Cancellations/Alternative Arrangements Due to Severe Weather**

Information regarding University closings and weather delays will be announced on local television and radio stations, on the Viterbo website, and Viterbo University social media. Information on individual class cancellations will be posted by the instructor to Moodle. Students are encouraged to sign up for cell phone weather apps or alerts on the WKBT or WXOW websites.

In the event of hazardous driving conditions, both students and faculty should use individual judgment in attempting to get to campus. Because students and faculty come from different locations with varying weather patterns, either may be unable to get to class even though classes have not been officially cancelled.

If students are not able to come to class, they should contact their instructor(s) as soon as possible. Occasionally when regionally severe weather warrants alternative arrangements such as online class, podcasts, or virtual platforms may be utilized.

### **Overnight Accommodations**

A variety of accommodations are available in La Crosse, sometimes at a discount for those associated with Viterbo University. In the event of the unexpected need to stay overnight, in-town faculty and students often are willing to have overnight guests. Please try to have a contingency plan in place in the event you need to stay overnight.

### **Sigma Theta Tau (Pi Phi Chapter)**

**Graduate Student** - Students are invited to apply for membership as nurse leaders at any time in the program. Full-time students will be offered a membership fee discount and are entitled to pay half of the chapter and international membership fees. Be sure to mark your membership renewal form indicating that you are a full-time student.

## Directory

### School of Nursing

**Megan Smith, PhD, RN, CNE**  
**Dean, College of Nursing and Health**  
 BS, University of Wisconsin La Crosse  
 ADN, Western Wisconsin Technical College  
 BSN, University of New Mexico  
 MSN, University of New Mexico  
 PhD, University of Nevada Las Vegas

**Michele Merten, Assistant Professor**  
**Graduate Program Director**  
 ADN, Rochester Community and Technical College  
 BSN, Viterbo University  
 ANP, MSN, Viterbo University  
 DNP, Viterbo University

---

### Full-time and Part-time Nursing Faculty

**Judy Anderson, Professor**  
 BSN, Viterbo College  
 MSN, UW-Eau Claire  
 Ph.D, Widener University

**LuAnn Fowler, Assistant Professor**  
 BSN, Viterbo University  
 FNP, MSN, Viterbo University  
 DNP, Viterbo University

**Sherry Harris, Assistant Professor**  
 BSN, Winona State University  
 FNP, MSN, Indiana State University  
 DNP, Indiana State University

#### Adjunct Faculty

Janet Bahr, MSN, ANP-BC  
 Dorie Beres, Ph.D, ANP-BC, Professor Emerita  
 Cheristi Cognetta-Rieke, DNP, MBOE  
 Michelle Copley, DNP, ANP  
 Michelle Dahl, DNP, CRNA  
 Amy Derenne, Pharm.D  
 Ann Falkenberg Olson, Ph.D, FNP, WHNP-BC  
 Rachael Guenzel, DNP, CNP  
 Marcia Hagen, DNP, FNP  
 Susan Heitman, DNP

Kimberly Herman, DNP  
Jennifer Hill, DNP, FNP  
Hollie Hoffland, DNP  
Camilla Jaekel, Ph.D  
Julia Jurgensen, DNP, FNP  
Cameron Kiersch, DNP, RN  
Kathryn Koehne, DNP, RN  
Amanda Meyer, DNP, FNP  
Cynthia Niesen, DNP, RN, NEA-BC  
Jessica Peterson Ph.D, CRNA  
Teresa Pulvermacher, MSN, FNP  
Jamie Reigel, DNP  
Stephanie Schrader, DNP, FNP  
Megan Smith, Ph.D, RN  
Kalee Freeborn-Townsend, DNP, FNP  
Katherine Trelstad-Andrist, MSN, CNP  
Edward Zhovtis, DNAP, CRNA

### **Selected Support Staff**

**Tess Kruser**  
**Administrative Assistant, School of Nursing**  
BS, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

**Chad E. Gilbeck**  
**Help Desk Service Coordinator**  
BS, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

**Korinda Salaski**  
**Registrar**  
BA, Concordia University

**Administrative Offices and Service Areas**  
**(Off Campus use 796 / prefix 608 Area Code)**

**For Emergency: dial 3911**

Academic Resource Center (ARC) .....	3190
Alumni Office .....	3072
ADA Coordinator .....	3194
Box Office (Fine Arts Center) .....	3100
Business Office (Billing) .....	3850
Copy, Mail and Media Center .....	3055
Counseling .....	3808
Fax for School of Nursing .....	3668
IT Help Desk .....	3870
Graduate Program Administrative Assistant .....	3675
Graduate Program Director .....	3667
Library .....	3269
Physical Plant .....	3920
President's Office .....	3001
Registrar .....	3180
Vice President of Academic Affairs and Institutional Effectiveness .....	3080