School of Nursing Practicum Manual

Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Nurse Practitioner Specializations:

• Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner
• Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner
• Family Nurse Practitioner
• Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner
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Section 1. Introduction

Purpose of This Manual

Welcome to the field experience component of Walden University’s Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program. This manual describes the structure and timing of the classroom-based and on-site practicum experiences and the policies students must follow to be successful in the nurse practitioner (NP) specialties. For more information about the nursing programs, students should refer to the School of Nursing Handbook.

This manual is intended to provide MSN-NP students with information they need related to practicum policies and procedures as well as to serve as a reference for practicum preceptors and other practicum personnel.

This manual refers to the Walden University Catalog and the Walden University Student Handbook for specific information on university policies and courses. These resources can be accessed at catalog.WaldenU.edu.

Note: Walden University reserves the right to make program changes as needed to help ensure the highest quality program.

Walden University

The MSN program at Walden University is designed to promote Walden University’s vision, mission, and ongoing commitment to social change. These guiding principles serve as a framework for the program curriculum and outcomes and are included here as a reference.

Vision

Walden University envisions a distinctively different 21st-century learning community where knowledge is judged worthy to the degree that it can be applied by its graduates to the immediate solutions of critical societal challenges, thereby advancing the greater global good.

Mission

Walden University provides a diverse community of career professionals with the opportunity to transform themselves as scholar-practitioners so that they can effect positive social change.

Social Change

Walden University defines positive social change as a deliberate process of creating and applying ideas, strategies, and actions to promote the worth, dignity, and development of individuals, communities, organizations, institutions, cultures, and societies. Positive social change results in the improvement of human and social conditions.
School of Nursing

Vision
The School of Nursing envisions recognition as a preeminent 21st-century school of nursing in which the contributions of nursing, health, and related sciences will transform the provision of nursing services along the continuum of care and across the human lifespan to meet the needs of individuals and local and global communities.

Mission
The School of Nursing provides academically rigorous and culturally and contextually relevant educational programs, based on the scholar-practitioner model, for a diverse array of nursing professionals seeking enhancement of critical-thinking skills, abilities to select and implement evidence-based practices, and core and specialty nursing knowledge in order to transform society.

Goals
The goals of the School of Nursing at Walden are to

1. Empower nursing professionals through academic advancement that enhances personal growth, professional development, and academic achievement.
2. Create an educational environment where learners are able to build on their existing transformational and professional nursing knowledge, skills, and integrative abilities.
3. Educate nursing professionals with consideration for the complex needs of the diverse learner while upholding professional nursing standards.
4. Encourage learners to integrate biopsychosocial, nursing and health theories, research, and evidence-based practice that exemplify professional nursing standards.
5. Prepare professional nursing leaders who are empowered to promote social change for individuals, groups, and organizations locally, nationally, and globally.

MSN Program Outcomes
At the end of the MSN program, students will be able to

1. Synthesize organizational/systems leadership for cost-effective specialist nursing practice that contributes to high-quality healthcare delivery, advancement of the nursing profession, and social change.
2. Critique evidence-based literature drawing from diverse theoretical perspectives and pertinent research to guide decision making that demonstrates best practices for specialist nursing practice in a global society.
3. Integratively assess, diagnose, plan, implement, and evaluate cost-effective healthcare strategies that reduce health disparities by patient/population advocacy for access to specialist nursing care.
4. Demonstrate the ability to effectively communicate using audience-specific oral, written, and information technology for professional delivery of specialist nursing care.

5. Evaluate health needs of diverse populations for necessary teaching/coaching functions based on specialist nursing knowledge to restore/promote health and prevent illness/injury.

6. Exhibit ongoing commitment to professional development and value of nursing theories/ethical principles (altruism, autonomy, human dignity, integrity, social justice) in accordance with ethically responsible, legally accountable, specialist nursing practice.

7. Implement specialist nursing roles to promote quality improvement of patient-centered care in accordance with professional practice standards that transform health outcomes for diverse populations.

**Nurse Practitioner Licensure**

**Note on Certification**

The MSN-NP specializations are designed to prepare graduates to qualify to sit for national NP certification exams, which are required for practice as an NP in most states. Because no university program can guarantee that graduates will be permitted to practice as an NP upon graduation, Walden encourages students to consult with the appropriate Board of Nursing or state agency to determine specific certification exam requirements. Walden enrollment advisors can provide information relating to national certification exams; however, it remains the individual’s responsibility to understand, evaluate, and comply with all requirements relating to national certification exams for the state in which he or she intends to practice as requirements vary widely. Walden makes no representations or guarantee that completion of Walden coursework or programs will permit an individual to obtain national certification. For more information about NP certification exams, students should visit the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners at [https://www.aanp.org/index.php](https://www.aanp.org/index.php), the American Nurses Credentialing Center at [www.nursecredentialing.org](http://www.nursecredentialing.org), and the American Association of Critical Care Nurses at [www.aacn.org](http://www.aacn.org).

**Note on Licensure, Authorization, Endorsement, or Other State Credentials Necessary to Practice as a Nurse Practitioner**

The MSN-NP specializations are designed to prepare graduates with an active registered nurse (RN) license to practice as NPs. However, each state Board of Nursing has its own academic and certification requirements and issues its own credential for an RN to be permitted to practice as a NP in that state. Because no university program can guarantee that graduates will be permitted to practice as NPs upon graduation, Walden encourages students to consult with the appropriate Board of Nursing or state agency to determine specific requirements in the state in which they wish to practice. Walden enrollment advisors can provide guidance relating to the state-by-state requirements for practice as a NP; however, it remains the individual’s responsibility to understand, evaluate, and comply with all requirements relating to the practice as a NP in the state in which he or she intends to practice as requirements vary widely. Walden makes no representations or guarantee that completion of Walden coursework or programs will permit an
individual to obtain state licensure, authorization, endorsement, or other state credential. For more information about the requirements to practice as a NP, students should contact the appropriate Board of Nursing or state agency. After graduation, all certification, credentialing, and licensure forms and requests must be sent to Nursing Licensure at nurslicensure@mail.waldenu.edu.

**Field Experience Terms**

For the purposes of this manual, the following terms are defined in this way:

**Practicum**

A *practicum* is a distinctly defined supervised on-site experience in which students develop applied skills and integrate professional knowledge in the provision of advanced practice nursing care. Each practicum course requires a minimum number of hours as follows:

- All NP students with catalog years before Spring 2018 must complete four practicum courses, with a minimum of 576 hours of supervised clinical experience (144 hours in each course).
- All NP students with catalog years after Spring 2018 must complete four practicum courses, with a minimum of 640 hours of supervised clinical experience (160 hours in each course).

The didactic (classroom) and clinical components of the courses are integrated. The courses vary by specialization:

- Students in the Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (AGACNP) specialization must complete NURS or NUNP 6531, 6540, 6550, and 6560.
- Students in the Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner (AGPCNP) specialization must complete NURS or NUNP 6531, 6540, 6551, and 6565.
- Students in the Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) specialization must complete NURS or NUNP 6531, 6541, 6551, and 6565.
- Students in the Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) specialization must complete NURS or NUNP 6640, 6650, 6660, and 6670.

**Practicum Site**

A *practicum site* is a health agency or other appropriate setting at which students have supervised, applied practice experiences that are consistent with their education and training. Officials at practicum sites enter into an Affiliation Agreement with Walden, stating they will provide appropriate support and supervision for students during the practicum experience. Virtual or telehealth sites are not allowed for practicum courses.

In general, students must spend the majority of their clinical experience time in general primary care settings seeing a good overall mix of age groups over the lifespan (FNP) or with adolescents and adults (AGACNP, AGPCNP) with a broad range of health promotion, disease prevention, and acute and chronic health problem assessment and management needs. Appropriate practicum sites for the AGPCNP/FNP specializations can include physician’s offices (family practice,
pediatric practice, women’s health, or internal medicine); clinics that provide primary care, such as health departments; and hospital-based primary care clinics.

Acute care nurse practitioner students will focus their clinical rotations in the acute care hospital setting but may also complete rotations in adult internal medicine practices, urgent care centers, or subacute facilities, such as long-term acute care (LTAC) centers, depending on the objectives of the practicum course. The AGACNP provides care to adults and older adults with acute, critical, and complex chronic illnesses across the entire adult age spectrum from young adults (including adolescents) to adults and older adults (including frail older adults). AGACNPs are prepared to provide services ranging from disease prevention to critical care to stabilize the patient’s condition, prevent complications, restore maximum health, and/or provide palliative care. The AGACNP practice focuses on patients who are characterized as physiologically unstable, technologically dependent, and/or are highly vulnerable to complications. These patients require ongoing monitoring and intervention. The patients with acute, critical, and complex chronic illnesses may be encountered across the continuum of care settings.

PMHNPs will have practicum experiences in a wide range of setting with children, adolescents, adults, and older adults. NURS or NUNP 6640 and NURS or NUNP 6650 focus on psychotherapy practice where NURS or NUNP 6660 and NURS or NUNP 6670 are integrative experiences (psychopharmacology coupled with psychotherapy).

**Primary Care**

A primary care practice serves as the patient’s first point of entry into the healthcare system and as the continuing focal point for all needed healthcare services. Primary care practices provide patients with ready access to their own healthcare providers. These practices provide health promotion, disease prevention, health maintenance, counseling, patient education, diagnosis, and treatment of acute and chronic illnesses in a variety of healthcare settings. These practices are organized to meet the needs of patients with undifferentiated problems, with the vast majority of patient concerns and needs being cared for in the primary care practice itself. Primary care practices are generally located in the community of the patients, thereby facilitating access to healthcare while maintaining a wide variety of specialty and institutional consultative and referral relationships for specific care needs. The structure of the primary care practice may include a team of physicians and nonphysician health professionals. Appropriate settings for primary care should be in outpatient primary care settings.

All students in NP specializations require primary care experiences. FNP students must complete all clinical hours in primary care settings, AGPCNP students may complete clinical hours both in primary care and specialty care settings, and AGACNP and PMHNP students may complete clinical hours in primary care, specialty care, and acute care settings.

**Acute Care**

Acute care refers to a level of specialty care focused on the management of severe injuries, urgent medical conditions, exacerbation of chronic illnesses, and/or recovery after surgical procedures. Acute care settings provide patients with secondary healthcare services that address active healthcare problems. Acute care practices provide access to healthcare teams that span the
gamut of nursing, medical, and surgical specialties. Acute care practitioners perform assessments, order and interpret diagnostic tests, formulate diagnoses, perform procedures, and develop and/or implement treatment plans. The quintessential acute care setting is the in-patient hospital, but acute care is also provided in emergency rooms, urgent care centers, or surgery centers. Essentially, comprehensive care of patients with acute, critical, and/or exacerbated, complex, chronic conditions falls under the realm of the acute care provider regardless of the practice setting. The acute care provider is specialized in addressing the needs of high acuity patients along the illness-to-wellness spectrum.

**Supervision**

Supervision by a preceptor is composed of a tutorial and mentoring form of instruction in which practicum preceptors monitor students’ activities in the practicum during the provision of primary care and facilitate learning and skill-development experiences. Preceptors guide students and provide feedback on their practicum work.

**Field Experience Roles**

**Preceptors**

Preceptors are qualified practitioners within a clinical site who are responsible for guiding students’ practicum experiences (see Preceptor Requirements in Section 3). Preceptors must be employed at the field site. Walden expects preceptors to be accessible to students and to provide guidance and feedback that promotes growth of knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with Walden’s educational goals as well as with best nursing practices. Preceptors provide mentoring and guidance appropriate to students’ roles in their clinical sites, including ongoing feedback about the students’ progress in meeting clinical goals.

**Students**

Students at Walden are considered to be adult learners who are capable of seeking educational opportunities to meet their personal and professional goals. Walden expects students to collaborate with faculty members and be self-directed to meet educational requirements. Students work with faculty members, clinical instructors, and preceptors to ensure they obtain a well-rounded educational experience.

Students are expected to complete adhere to the following:

- Develop a learning contract to meet course objectives and outcomes for the practicum.
- Adhere to the learning contract as established by the student, clinical instructor, and preceptor.
- Comply with the policies and protocols established by the practicum site.
- Seek direct and indirect supervision from the clinical instructor and preceptor.
- Be appropriately prepared for each laboratory and clinical experience.
- Incorporate theory and research into clinical practice to provide evidence-based care to patients.
• Provide safe, competent, and quality care under the supervision of the clinical instructor and preceptor.
• Maintain an ethical and professional manner at all times.
• Use acquired knowledge and clinical skills for appropriate clinical setting.
• Use various educational resources to provide evidence-based care to patients.
• Be on time and be prepared for each clinical session.
• Develop a clear and concise plan to meet course outcomes.
• Be respectful and professional.
• Participate in regular conferences with the clinical instructor.
• Seek regular feedback from the clinical instructor and preceptor about progress in the clinical setting.
• Adhere to Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) guidelines at all times.
• Maintain a clinical journal, time logs, patient logs, and other pertinent clinical records as required by the clinical instructor and/or preceptor.
• Be adaptable and flexible learners.
• Evaluate the course, clinical experience, and preceptor.
• Develop long-term and short-term goals during the program.
• Participate in group and individual conferences.
• Complete the required hours needed for the didactic and clinical portions of the courses.
• Complete all course assignments satisfactorily.
• Contact the clinical instructor and practicum site if unable to attend a clinical experience.
• Use critical-thinking skills and sound clinical judgment in providing patient care.

Students With Disabilities

The School of Nursing at Walden will not discriminate on the basis of disability and is committed to providing all qualified students with disabilities equal access to its programs, services, and activities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

In postsecondary education, it is the students’ responsibility to self-identify disability status and register with the Office of Disability Services prior to requesting accommodations. To register, students should submit documentation of disability along with Walden’s Accommodation Request form to disability@mail.waldenu.edu.

The process and form are available from the Office of Disability Services. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations to access field experiences, such as a practicum and/or internship, should register with the Office of Disability Services prior to registering for those field experiences and clarify their specific accommodation needs. In most cases, field experience sites have their own systems for ensuring equal access for employees/interns with disabilities. The Office of Disability Services will help address any gaps in those systems.
Practicum Course Faculty Members

Walden nursing faculty members, who are doctorally prepared, teach the didactic portion of the courses and communicate with clinical instructors and preceptors regarding the students’ successful mastery of all competencies prior to recording the final course grades. Practicum course faculty members collaborate with students and clinical instructors and inform specialization coordinators about any difficulties that arise during the practicum experience. Didactic faculty members may also serve as clinical faculty.

Clinical Instructors

Clinical instructors are a critical element of the NP student practicum experience. These instructors monitor and assess appropriate learning experiences to facilitate students’ achievement as it relates to the practicum course objectives. The clinical instructors are NPs responsible and accountable for assuring that students meet the course objectives at a specific practicum site and work closely with preceptors.

Clinical instructors communicate on a regular basis with NP students and their preceptors regarding student progress and learning needs; they are also available to resolve problems that may arise. Clinical faculty make practicum site visits (virtually and/or physically) to review students’ experiences and the appropriateness of the setting. Clinical instructors are responsible for evaluating the students’ clinical work.

Specific clinical instructor responsibilities include the following activities:

• Providing guidance to students in formulating the learning contract;
• Conferring with students individually and in groups;
• Assigning student grades following review of the learning outcome measures identified in the course and the learning contract;
• Completing final student evaluations in Meditrek®; and
• Forwarding all evaluation forms to the specialization coordinator.

The clinical instructors and their assigned students should touch base very early in the quarter and arrange date(s) for the site visit(s). Students should turn in their subjective–objective–assessment–plan (SOAP) notes and their journal entries to their clinical instructors and maintain their time logs within Meditrek®. The clinical instructors are the students’ primary resource regarding any problems or issues that arise related to the practicum experience.

Specialization Coordinators

Specialization coordinators are doctorally prepared Walden faculty members whose primary role regarding the MSN practicum is to oversee the experience for a given MSN specialization (i.e., AGACNP, AGPCNP, PMHNP, or FNP). The specialization coordinators are an important resource for students during the program, especially if any problems arise during the practicum.
Program Director

The program director (PD) is a doctorally prepared full-time academic administrator who reports to the dean and supervises the specialization coordinators and faculty. The PD’s primary role is to maintain the quality and integrity of the degree program and oversee day-to-day program management. While working with specialization coordinators, the PD supports students throughout the MSN-NP program, including during the practicum experience.

Field Education Coordinators

Field education coordinators are Walden employees who help students understand the practicum policies and procedures. They answer questions about the practicum application process, review materials to ensure that students have completed all required application and documentation steps, and work collaboratively with the specialization coordinators and the PD throughout the approval process. Once practicum applications have been approved, the field education coordinators ensure that students are enrolled in their appropriate practicum course. Field education coordinators are assigned to students by region and are available to students via e-mail, phone, or appointment. Students can find their field education coordinator online at http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/contactus.

Working Together

Walden’s program directors, director of field placement, specialization coordinators, field education coordinators, practicum course faculty members, and clinical instructors are committed to working collaboratively with students and preceptors to support the successful completion of practicum experiences.

Process for Mentoring and Evaluation of Students

The practicum process is collegial, with the recognition that NP students are adult learners who are capable of critical self-reflection, open to constructive feedback, and responsible for their own learning. Expectations for clinical practicum performance correlate with the stage of the students’ learning; i.e., greater clinical practicum expertise is anticipated as students’ progress through the program.

Once students enroll in a practicum course, they are mentored and evaluated by their preceptor and a Walden clinical instructor who is assigned to them at the beginning of the quarter. Preceptors provide the experiences, supervise students, and provide evaluations to the clinical instructors. Practicum course faculty members grade students’ coursework and, in general, return students’ written work within Walden guidelines on returning grades. Students are encouraged to consult with practicum course faculty members by phone or e-mail about their progress throughout the quarter as stipulated in the course syllabus.

Students meet with their clinical instructor during the first or second clinical practicum seminar of the quarter. Clinical instructors are experienced NPs who grade students’ written work (SOAP notes, clinical logs, and reflections); in general, clinical instructors return students’ written work within Walden guidelines on returning grades. Students are encouraged to consult with clinical
instructors by phone or e-mail about their progress throughout the quarter as stipulated in the course syllabus.

Clinical instructors also maintain contact with students and preceptors throughout the quarter to determine whether the students’ learning needs are being met at their practicum site and to monitor students’ clinical progress. This culminates in a clinical practicum evaluation toward the end of the quarter. Clinical instructors arrange a time with students to evaluate the students’ clinical performance. Students should make sure that the date and time of the evaluation is agreeable with the preceptor, and if this is an on-site visit, that an appropriate number and type of clients are scheduled. During these visits, instructors provide students with mentorship and supervision during one or more patient encounters.

Field Experience Regulatory Requirements

State Requirements
The ability for students to complete a required practicum in each state depends upon the statutes and regulations of that state. It is the students’ responsibility to know and understand the statutes and regulations of that state and whether completion of the required practicum is permitted. Students should inform the field education office when moving to another state to ensure successful completion of practicum is permitted.

State Board Requirements
Some state boards of nursing have additional approval requirements. Because of these additional state board requirements and approvals, students who will perform their clinical practicum experience in the following states must submit their applications via Meditrek® at least 11 weeks (one quarter) prior to starting their practicum course as late applications will NOT be accepted for these states:

- **Rhode Island**: [http://www.health.ri.gov/partners/boards/nurseregistrationandnursingeducation/](http://www.health.ri.gov/partners/boards/nurseregistrationandnursingeducation/)
- **Tennessee**: [https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/health-professional-boards/nursing-board/nursing-board/about.html](https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/health-professional-boards/nursing-board/nursing-board/about.html)
- **Alaska**: [https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/cbpl/ProfessionalLicensing/BoardofNursing.aspx](https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/cbpl/ProfessionalLicensing/BoardofNursing.aspx)
  (Please be aware that Alaska Board of Nursing requires students to submit a form to the Alaska Board of Nursing. The School of Nursing Field Office can provide a copy of the Alaska Board of Nursing form)
- **North Dakota***: [https://www.ndbon.org/](https://www.ndbon.org/)

*The Alabama, Wyoming, North Dakota, and Alaska boards of nursing must approve clinical experiences in their state. Students planning on completing field experience at a site located in these states must obtain approval from the board of nursing prior to term start. Students will not
be able to proceed with field experience if the field office has not received evidence of approval prior to term start.

**Special Note for MSN Students in Washington**

Walden University is approved by the Washington State Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission to provide practice experiences in Washington State for a Bachelor’s of Science in Nursing (RN and BSN tracks), Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) with a specialization in Nursing Education, Nursing Informatics, Leadership and Management, Family Nurse Practitioner, Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner, Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner, and Psychiatric and Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, as well as the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program. For more information, go to the following website: [http://www.doh.wa.gov/LicensesPermitsandCertificates/NursingCommission/NursingPrograms.aspx](http://www.doh.wa.gov/LicensesPermitsandCertificates/NursingCommission/NursingPrograms.aspx).

**Non-U.S.-Based Student Requirements**

To be approved for the field experience, non-U.S.-based students must adhere to the following criteria:

- Students must be licensed in a U.S. state and complete their practicum in that state.
- Students must comply with all other requirements required of U.S. students.
- Students should contact nursing field education coordinators early to ensure that they have found an acceptable preceptor and meet all the other requirements.

Students who are licensed in the U.S. but who are currently located outside of the U.S. may not be able to complete practicum unless they can find an acceptable site. U.S. military bases are the only international sites acceptable for practicum.

**Licensure Review**

The School of Nursing Field Education Office will conduct a routine professional license verification search and verification review as part of the practicum application process. This search and review will be completed for all students applying for practicum and all candidates for preceptorship. Information for this review will be gathered through NURSYS®, state boards of nursing, state medical boards, or any other applicable professional credentialing authority. Any information attached to a professional license verification will be reviewed by the School of Nursing’s Licensure and Compliance department. The information that will be reviewed includes past and present credentialing information, such as state licensing board orders, consent agreements, letters of reprimand or censure, complaints, malpractice claims, settlements, and awards or other indication of action taken against the license by the professional credentialing authority.

This information will be reviewed as part of the application and preceptor approval process. Practicum applications will not be approved until this review has been completed.

If a student has a past or present order, consent agreement, letter of reprimand, censure or complaint, or any other information issued by the professional credentialing authority regarding the student’s professional license, the student will be required to inform their field site and
The preceptor of this information. The field site and preceptor will need to confirm that the student will be able to complete field experience at the site prior to the approval of the student’s practicum application. Written documentation from the field site and preceptor, which confirms that (a) the field site is aware of the past or present board issued information (as described previously) and (b) the field site has agreed to accommodate the practicum placement, must be submitted to the Walden University SON field office.

Please be aware that preceptor licensure is also reviewed by the SON Field Office for approval. The process is very similar to the student license review and includes review of current and past actions.

Note: If the status of a student’s RN license changes at any point after the student is admitted/enrolled into a nursing program, it is the student’s responsibility to inform the Director of Compliance and Licensure (nurslicensure@mail.waldenu.edu). Status changes, such as actions or restrictions placed on a student’s RN license, can affect the student’s ability to engage in practicum.
Section 2. NP Practicum Program

Specializations Overview

The practicum experience helps students transition from the role of learner to that of scholar-practitioner. To achieve this transition, students engage in a relationship with a clinical instructor and preceptor, focusing on roles and role functions and the achievement of individualized learning objectives. The primary objective of the practicum is to provide students with the basic skills necessary to serve as midlevel providers of primary care to selected populations and to prepare students to take the appropriate national certification exam.

- **Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (AGACNP):** Students in the AGACNP specialization engage in clinical experiences in which they focus on the provision of acute and chronic care for young adults (including adolescents and emancipated minors), adults, and older adults (including young-old, old, and old-old adults), including health promotion and assessment and management of acute and chronic health problems. There is a special emphasis on managing the care of acutely ill adults in a variety of settings including hospital settings. The content in the AGACNP specialization builds on concepts related to acute and chronic illness and its impact on individuals and families. This program educates students to work in an inpatient setting.

- **Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner (AGPCNP):** Students in the AGPCNP specialization engage in clinical experiences in which they focus on the provision of primary care for young adults (including adolescents and emancipated minors), adults, and older adults (including young-old, old, and old-old adults), including health promotion and assessment and management of acute exacerbation of chronic health problems and chronic illnesses in primary care settings and specialty care. The content in the AGPCNP specialization builds on concepts related to the trajectory of chronic illness and its impact on individuals and families. This program educates students to work in an outpatient setting.

- **Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP):** In this specialization, students are provided with the knowledge and skills necessary to manage health problems of individuals at any age. The management courses address the illnesses across the lifespan that are commonly encountered by advanced practice nurses in primary care settings. This program educates students to work in an outpatient setting.

- **Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP):** Students in the PMHNP specialization engage in a wide range of mental health services across the lifespan provided to patients and families in a variety of settings. The PMHNP content focuses on psychiatric disorders, stress and anxiety disorders, organic brain disorders, and substance abuse issues.

Required Activities

Students must satisfactorily complete all the requirements of their practicum courses (Table 1) in accordance with the information provided in the course syllabi. Students complete the didactic portion of the track online. They must receive a grade of *Satisfactory* (S) for the clinical components in courses that have integrated didactic (theory) and practicum components to
successfully pass the course. They earn 5 quarter credits and receive a letter grade on a 4.0-grading scale for each course. Please note that there has been an increase in clinical hours from 144 hours per course (576 hours total) to 160 clinical hours per course (640 total hour) effective Spring 2018.

Table 1a. NP Practicum Courses by Specialization for Students With Catalog Years Before Spring 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>AGACNP</th>
<th>AGPCNP</th>
<th>FNP</th>
<th>PMHNP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>NURS 6531 - Advanced Practice Care of Adults Across the Lifespan (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [144 hours])</td>
<td>NURS 6531 - Advanced Practice Care of Adults Across the Lifespan (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [144 hours])</td>
<td>NURS 6531 - Advanced Practice Care of Adults Across the Lifespan (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [144 hours])</td>
<td>NURS 6640 - Psychotherapy With Individuals (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [144 hours])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>NURS 6540 - Advanced Practice Care of Frail Elders (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [144 hours])</td>
<td>NURS 6540 - Advanced Practice Care of Frail Elders (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [144 hours])</td>
<td>NURS 6541 - Primary Care of Adolescents and Children (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [144 hours])</td>
<td>NURS 6650 - Psychotherapy With Groups and Families (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [144 hours])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>NURS 6550 - Advanced Practice Care of Adults in Acute Care Settings I (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [144 hours])</td>
<td>NURS 6551 - Primary Care of Women (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [144 hours])</td>
<td>NURS 6551 - Primary Care of Women (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [144 hours])</td>
<td>NURS 6660 - Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Role I: Child and Adolescent (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [144 hours])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course</td>
<td>AGACNP</td>
<td>AGPCNP</td>
<td>FNP</td>
<td>PMHNP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>NURS 6560 - Advanced Practice Care of Adults in Acute Care Settings II (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [144 hours])</td>
<td>NURS 6565 - Synthesis in Advanced Nursing Practice Care of Complex Patients in Primary Care Settings (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [144 hours])</td>
<td>NURS 6565 - Synthesis in Advanced Nursing Practice Care of Complex Patients in Primary Care Settings (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [144 hours])</td>
<td>NURS 6670 – Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Role II: Adults and Older Adults (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [144 hours])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total Hours Required</strong></td>
<td><strong>576</strong></td>
<td><strong>576</strong></td>
<td><strong>576</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1b. NP Practicum Courses by Specialization for Students With Catalog Years After Spring 2018*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>AGACNP</th>
<th>AGPCNP</th>
<th>FNP</th>
<th>PMHNP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>NUNP 6531 - Advanced Practice Care of Adults Across the Lifespan (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [160 hours])</td>
<td>NUNP 6531 - Advanced Practice Care of Adults Across the Lifespan (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [160 hours])</td>
<td>NUNP 6531 - Advanced Practice Care of Adults Across the Lifespan (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [160 hours])</td>
<td>NUNP 6640 - Psychotherapy With Individuals (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [160 hours])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>NUNP 6540 - Advanced Practice Care of Frail Elders (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [160 hours])</td>
<td>NUNP 6541 - Primary Care of Adolescents and Children (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [160 hours])</td>
<td>NUNP 6541 - Primary Care of Adolescents and Children (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [160 hours])</td>
<td>NUNP 6650 - Psychotherapy With Groups and Families (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [160 hours])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course</td>
<td><strong>AGACNP</strong></td>
<td><strong>AGPCNP</strong></td>
<td><strong>FNP</strong></td>
<td><strong>PMHNP</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
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<td>------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>NUNP 6550 - Advanced Practice Care of Adults in Acute Care Settings I (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [160 hours])</td>
<td>NUNP 6551 - Primary Care of Women (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [160 hours])</td>
<td>NUNP 6551 - Primary Care of Women (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [160 hours])</td>
<td>NUNP 6660 – Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Role I: Child and Adolescent (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [160 hours])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>NUNP 6560 - Advanced Practice Care of Adults in Acute Care Settings II (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [160 hours])</td>
<td>NUNP 6565 - Synthesis in Advanced Nursing Practice Care of Complex Patients in Primary Care Settings (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [160 hours])</td>
<td>NUNP 6565 - Synthesis in Advanced Nursing Practice Care of Complex Patients in Primary Care Settings (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [160 hours])</td>
<td>NUNP 6670 – Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Role II: Adults and Older Adults (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [160 hours])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Hours Required</strong></td>
<td><strong>640</strong></td>
<td><strong>640</strong></td>
<td><strong>640</strong></td>
<td><strong>640</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Prerequisite Notes:** Prior to beginning the practicum component, students must have satisfactorily completed NURS 6501 - Advanced Pathophysiology, NURS 6512 - Advanced Health Assessment and Diagnostic Reasoning, and NURS 6521 - Advanced Pharmacology. Students enrolled in NURS 6512 must have access to or purchase the following tools to complete the course:
- Otoscope and ophthalmoscope
- Stethoscope
- Reflex hammer and tuning fork (256 cps)
- Penlight, measuring tape, pocket eye chart, and monofilament tool

**Practicum Hours**
Students may start logging practicum hours within each course on the second day of the course provided that they have received a practicum approval notice from the field education coordinators and their clinical instructor approves.
Students may not log any hours before the start of the course, receive practicum application approval from the Field Experience Office, are registered for the practicum course, and receive approval from the clinical instructor. Students are only to log hours with preceptors that have been approved by the Field Experience Office in Meditrek®. If students log hours with an unapproved preceptor, these hours will not count toward the practicum hour requirement of the course and program.

Students must complete all designated and required practicum hours for each course by the end of Week 10. Each clinical course has a suggested number of patients that must be seen to complete the course. Please check this number with the faculty member in each clinical course at the beginning of the term.

- Students with catalog years before Spring 2018 must complete a minimum of 576 hours of direct patient care during the four courses.
- Students with catalog years after Spring 2018 must complete a minimum of 640 hours of direct patient care during the four courses.

Students must also meet the requirements for the minimum number of patients encountered per course along with the required practicum hours as follows:

- Students with catalog years before Spring 2018 must complete a minimum of 144 hours of direct patient care for each practicum course along with the following patient encounters:
  - NURS 6531, 6541 & 6565: 144 patients
  - NURS 6540: 100 patients
  - NURS 6550 & 6560: 75 patients
  - NURS 6551: 100 GYN patients; FNP students must see 100 GYN and 25 OB patients
  - NURS 6640, 6650, 6660 & 6670: 80 patients/clients
- Students with catalog years after Spring 2018 must complete a minimum of 160 hours of direct patient care for each practicum course along with the following patient encounters:
  - NUNP 6531, 6541 & 6565: 160 patients
  - NUNP 6540: 100 patients
  - NUNP 6550 & 6560: 80 patients
  - NUNP 6551: 100 GYN patients; FNP students must see 100 GYN and 25 OB patients
  - NUNP 6640, 6650, 6660 & 6670: 80 patients/clients

**The following activities count toward required practicum hours:**
- Activities that are directly related to the completion of practicum goals and objectives;
- Shadowing the preceptor (no more than 8 hours); shadowing is defined as following and observing preceptor with no direct patient care; and
- Attendance at meetings including short educational offerings, staff meetings, ground rounds, etc., while in the clinical settings.

**The following activities are not included as practicum hours:**
- Travel time related to and from practicum activities;
• Requirements mandated by clinical agencies;
• Communication (e.g., e-mails, phone calls), unless conferencing;
• Assignments related to the didactic portion of the course; and
• Conferences.

**Individualized Learning Objectives**

Walden expects that the practicum experience will allow students to focus on developing and strengthening discrete skills as well as integrating a range of skills into a coherent professional identity. Students set specific goals for the practicum experience that are consistent with their professional preparation and coursework. These goals inform the evaluation of their competencies at the end of the practicum.

In the first week of the practicum, students formulate two to three individualized learning objectives that they want to achieve during their practicum experience; these objectives are based on their previous assignments, practicum experiences, practice setting, and interests. As students approach the practicum, they should reflect on their coursework and identify two to three areas in which they feel the need for further growth or with which they might want application-level experience.

Students should discuss the ideas they identify with their preceptors and determine if the necessary resources are available at their placement sites. Then they prepare a set of measurable learning objectives, using Bloom’s taxonomy, that specify what they want to achieve.

**Conference Call**

Shortly after the initiation of the practicum course, clinical instructors coordinate a conference call with students and preceptors, which is intended to ensure that

• The clinical goals of the practicum are being addressed,
• Students and preceptors understand the key points of the clinical experience,
• An opportunity for questions is provided, and
• Any problems are identified and resolved.

The clinical instructor informs students of the requirements and procedures for setting up this call. The call is designed to be supportive of students and to monitor the fit of the site for meeting their educational goals and needs. It also offers students and clinical instructors the opportunity to collaborate with preceptors, answer any outstanding questions and, when needed, identify, address, and resolve any difficulties students may be experiencing at the practicum site.

**Journal and Time Log**

**Journal**

Students must periodically submit a journal entry showing how theoretical underpinnings may apply to a selected practicum experience and how that one aspect of their practicum is consistent with or different from learned theory.
The purpose of the journal is to identify activities, issues, or problems that show how theory is or is not applied and supported in the nursing practice specialization. Drawing from theoretical constructs learned in this program and the specialization content, learning outcomes, and competencies, students analyze their practicum experience.

In a one-page journal entry (250–300 words), students reflect on their practicum experiences and discuss how practices they observe or conduct differ from (or are in agreement with) substantiated theory. Students focus on one instance of this similarity or gap for each journal entry.

In each journal entry, students do the following:

- Describe a selected observed activity or situation (no more than half of a page).
- Analyze observations in the context of a selected theory.
- State conclusions regarding the fit of the selected theory to the selected event.
- Offer recommendations for improving the fit, if needed.
- Include APA-style citations and references.

Students must submit a journal entry when due, even if they are not on-site that week. If they are not on-site for a week in which a journal entry is due, they must reflect on experiences from any of the previous weeks of the practicum.

**Daily Time Log**

Using Meditrek®, students keep a log of the time they spend on practicum activities. Each log entry must be linked with an individual practicum learning objective or a graduate program objective. Students should track their hours in Meditrek® as they are completed. Students submit time logs the same weeks that journal entries are required. Time logs are signed off by preceptors and clinical instructors at the end of the course after the completion of hours.

The time log must include the following:

- Dates;
- Course;
- Clinical faculty; be sure to include the clinical instructor, not the didactic faculty member, in Meditrek®;
- Preceptor;
- Total time for the day; and
- Notes/comments.

**Note:** Preceptors and field sites are populated in Meditrek® for drop down options in time logs at the end of Week 1 for approved applications. If an application is approved after the course starts, the preceptor and field site will be populated weekly on Fridays. If students are unable to find their preceptor or field site in the dropdown box more than a week after application approval, please email nursingfield@mail.waldenu.edu.
Patient Log

Using Meditrek®, students keep a patient log of the time they spend with each patient. The patient log must include the following:

- Date,
- Course,
- Clinical faculty; be sure to include the clinical instructor, not the didactic faculty member, in Meditrek®,
- Preceptor,
- Patient number,
- Client information.
- Visit information,
- Practice management,
- Diagnosis,
- Procedure,
- Treatment plan and notes, and
- IV medication.

Note: Preceptors and field sites are populated in Meditrek® for dropdown options in time logs at the end of Week 1 for approved applications. If an application is approved after the course starts, the preceptor and field site will be populated weekly of Fridays. If students are unable to find their preceptor or field site in the dropdown box after a week of application approval, they should send the request to nursingfield@mail.waldenu.edu.

Performance Evaluation

During the first week of a practicum course, students develop a set of individualized practicum objectives for the experience that supports the course overall objectives and is approved by the clinical instructor. During the second week, students arrange a conference call between their preceptors and clinical instructors to discuss the practicum objectives and the activities planned during the practicum hours. A second and third conference call with preceptors and clinical instructors occurs at the midpoint and at the end of each practicum course. In the 10 weeks that follow, clinical instructors closely follow students’ activities through guided, posted discussions on the engagement of students with their preceptors to accomplish practicum objectives. Additionally, activities are reported to clinical instructors through eight journal entries. Also, clinical instructors review the time logs and journal entries to determine student progress three times during the 11 weeks.

Preceptors use a formal evaluation to communicate student progress to the clinical instructor twice during the practicum—at midterm and at the end of the course. Clinical self-evaluation is required as part of the process at the conclusion of the practicum experience, along with an evaluation of the entire process by the preceptor. Over the length of the course, preceptors and clinical instructors communicate often through e-mail and by phone conferences to meet the needs of students. Faculty members give the final grade, which is based on didactic and clinical grades. The clinical instructor provides the clinical grade to the faculty member teaching the
Students and preceptors must follow guidelines for submitting evaluations as posted in each course.

**Formal Preceptor and Student Feedback**

At the middle and end of each practicum course, students and preceptors are required to complete an online evaluation of their performance and experience. By Week 8, both students and preceptors will receive an e-mail from Meditrek® with directions on how to log in and complete an evaluation. Students will use the same user name and password provided to them for the application submission. Preceptors will receive new login information or be reminded of their login information if they had a previous student. Evaluations are due in Week 10.

These evaluations will not only provide information about the progress of individual students but also help program leadership to continuously work on the course review and improvements. Students receive an *Incomplete* (I) grade if any of the above evaluations are not received by the posted deadlines.
Section 3. Preceptor and Field Site Information

Finding Practicum Sites and Preceptors

Students should read this manual and refer to the practicum application submittal resources to begin the practicum process. Walden provides guidelines for how to choose a preceptor as well as a practicum site; however, because Walden students are located around the world, they have the flexibility to secure their own sites based on their region/location. Students will select a practicum site and initiate contact with a potential preceptor who meets the qualifications and may be interested in working with them.

It is recommended to start the search process for a field site and preceptor early in the program as it takes time to secure a field site. Most students should have their first preceptor nominee and a practicum site identified by the middle of their second term.

Students should keep in mind that they are taking four courses that focus on different populations and may need three to four different preceptors and sites over the course of their program.

A completed application must be submitted via Meditrek® by the practicum application deadline date (refer to Application Deadlines—Table 2 [see page 34]). The student must submit the application in Meditrek® in order for the application to be reviewed and processed. Applications in incomplete status will not be reviewed.

Guide to Practicum Success for School of Nursing Students

It is critical to students’ successful practicum experiences that they thoroughly and completely review the Walden University School of Nursing practicum manual designated for their program and specialty area in their first term and throughout their program. Walden provides guidelines for selecting an appropriate preceptor and practicum site, and the manuals outline the practicum application submittal resources necessary in order to begin the practicum process.

Preparing early will be critical to practicum success. It is highly recommended that students work with the Office of Field Experience to start the search process for a field site and preceptor early in the program, as it can take a significant amount of time to secure a preceptor and field site.

School of Nursing Practicum Process Summary

- The process of selecting a site for clinical placement begins with the student selecting a practicum site and initiating contact with a potential preceptor who meets the knowledge, education, skill, and certification qualifications necessary to support the outcomes as outlined in each field experience (i.e., practicum) course. Because Walden students are located around the world, students have the flexibility to secure their own sites based on their region or location.
• Most students should have their first preceptor nominee and a practicum site identified by the middle of their second term.
• Students should keep in mind that they are taking multiple courses that focus on different learning outcomes and may need several different preceptors and sites over the course of their program.
• A completed application must be submitted via Meditrek® by the practicum application deadline date for each term (refer to “Application Deadlines” in the Walden University School of Nursing practicum manual designated for the program and specialty area).
• Walden’s policy surrounding the selection of practicum sites and preceptors is aligned with the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education’s (CCNE) Key Element II-B Standard, which states that “the program is responsible for ensuring adequate physical resources and clinical sites. Clinical sites are sufficient, appropriate, and available to achieve the program’s mission, goals, and expected outcomes.” Further, it is Walden’s policy to ensure adequate physical resources and clinical sites by collaborating with students, preceptors, and administrators to support the successful completion of each student’s program of study, including the field experience and clinical placements.

**Tips for Practicum Site and Preceptor Search**

Securing a practicum site and preceptor can be as intensive as a job search. The Field Experience Office recommends some of the following tips for students when they are beginning the search process. Students should

• Review the tutorial, which includes tips to market themselves to potential preceptors and field sites: [http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/ld.php?content_id=10419574](http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/ld.php?content_id=10419574);
• Contact Career Services to update their résumé and cover letters with a focus on finding a practicum field site; Career Services can also provide mock interviews to prepare students for speaking with potential preceptors; the Career Services website can be found at: [http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/careerservices/home](http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/careerservices/home);
• Review the field site list on the Field Education website [http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/formsanddocuments](http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/formsanddocuments); this is a list of field sites that Walden University School of Nursing students have used in the past; it doesn’t necessarily mean that the site will be able to accommodate each student or that an active Affiliation Agreement is on file, but it is a good place to start;
• Use their professional and personal network to make connections; develop a profile on professional networks (e.g., LinkedIn) to network; research field sites; connect with colleagues, alumni of Walden, and a variety of other professional nursing-related groups;
• Research professional nursing associations and organizations to find preceptor resources;
• Contact their state board of nursing to see if they have a list of available preceptors or resources;
• Schedule an appointment with the regional nurse field education coordinator or field education coordinator to discuss other tips and ideas for securing a preceptor and field site. An appointment can be scheduled online at: [http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/contactus](http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/contactus); please keep in mind that the field education coordinator cannot place a student at a site, but the coordinator may have further advice for students;
• Schedule an appointment with the specialization coordinator (contact information listed in Section 7); specialization coordinators cannot place students at a site, but they may be able to offer suggestions or advice on potential preceptors or practicum experiences; and
• Access the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) student resources center, which may be helpful in finding a field site and preceptor (http://www.aanp.org/education/student-resource-center/connecting-with-nps).

Choosing a Site
Students should consider their career goals after graduation when they are choosing a practicum site. They must match their practicum setting and the preceptor that they nominate with their goals, within the specific guidelines of the course. To finalize their education, students must have an opportunity to apply their acquired knowledge, concepts, and skills. To do this, students may need to travel to a setting other than their own practice setting.

Students may complete the practicum where they work. However, their practicum experience must be
• In a different setting than their usual assigned employment role or work, and
• Completed outside of their normal working hours.

Students should follow the appropriate procedure at the field site to secure a practicum rotation and to understand the field site requirements prior to beginning the practicum.

Choosing a Preceptor
Students must identify a potential preceptor and determine if the individual is interested in working with them. If so, they must find out whether this individual meets the qualifications to serve as preceptor. Instructions on how to nominate a preceptor are provided later in this section in the instructions on how to complete the application. Students can contact their nursing field education coordinator to obtain feedback about whether the chosen preceptor is an acceptable candidate. Nursing field education coordinators can be contacted via e-mail at nursingfield@mail.waldenu.edu.

Preceptor Requirements
Prior to approval, the preceptor’s license and certification (if applicable) is verified and the curriculum vitae or résumé is evaluated by the nursing field education office, with final approval by the specialization coordinator. Approval is based on the preceptor meeting the following criteria:

• Educational Level Requirement:
  o AGACNP, AGPCNP, FNP: holds a master’s or doctoral degree in nursing.
  o PMHNP: holds a master’s or doctoral degree in area of practice.
• The preceptor is currently a registered nurse with an active, unencumbered license to practice as a nurse practitioner (NP) in the particular area of specialization and in the specific state.
The preceptor has national certification in an area of advanced practice nursing specialization (i.e., FNP; AGACNP; AGNP; PMHNP; certified nurse midwife [CNM]; adult, women’s health, or pediatric NP).

The preceptor has a minimum of 1 year of postgraduate experience and a current job role relevant to the MSN specialization. Preceptors in the state of Washington must have a minimum of 2 years of postgraduate experience due to state board of nursing requirements.

The preceptor is able and willing to commit to the preceptor role for the practicum experience.

The preceptor is employed at the field site where the practicum takes place.

The preceptor must not be a relative or significant other.

The preceptor must not be the student’s direct or immediate supervisor or any type of family member or personal friend.

Note: Please refer to the “Course Specific Guidance” section for more course-specific requirements for preceptors.

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR PRECEPTOR REQUIREMENTS:

- To learn the role of the nurse practitioner, it is required that at least two preceptors be NPs in an area of practice clearly relevant to meeting the objectives of the NP program/specialty. The two different NP preceptors must cover two separate practicum courses. Having two NP co-preceptors for one course does not meet this requirement. Note: PMHNP students are exempted from this requirement.

- Preceptors may only be used twice during the four practicum courses.

- Students may only use the same preceptor for two of their four practicum courses.

- Students cannot use the same preceptor at the same field site when they are doubling up practicum courses during the same quarter.

- Physicians (MDs, DOs) and physician assistants (PAs) may serve as preceptors but also must be credentialed and licensed to practice in the population-focused and/or specialty area of practice. In addition, this area of practice should be clearly relevant to meeting the course objectives of the student’s NP program and meet the course specific guidelines. Students are not allowed to use MDs or PAs for all four courses as at least two preceptors must be NPs.

- Special notes about Physician Assistants (PAs) as preceptors:
  - PAs do not count as meeting the requirement of having two NPs as preceptors.
  - PAs may not serve as preceptors in the PMHNP program.
  - PAs may not serve as preceptors in some states due to specific state board of nursing regulations. Please note that as of May 2018, the Alaska Board of Nursing does not permit certain professions, including PAs, to precept NP students.
  - PAs may not be acceptable preceptors in some states due to specific state board of nursing regulations. Preceptors who are an APRN or MD/DO are the best options. However, if you are considering using a PA or other professional as a preceptor, it is helpful to reach out to your board of nursing and the field office to determine whether the preceptor is acceptable.
  - A routine professional license verification will be obtained by Walden for all preceptor candidates. Any negative information, both past and present, that is part
of the license verification will be reviewed by the School of Nursing’s Licensure and Compliance department. Some examples of negative information are disciplinary orders issued by a professional licensing board, malpractice information and letters of complaint, censure, or reprimand. This information will be reviewed as part of the preceptor approval process and could lead to a determination that the preceptor does not meet the university’s requirements. Students will have the opportunity to appeal the decision or to nominate a replacement preceptor who will undergo the same review. Students should be aware that their practicum application will not be approved until an acceptable preceptor is approved.

Many students find it helpful to take a look at their preceptor’s license information prior to submitting their practicum application. If students choose to review this information, it can be found online through NURSYS® or the corresponding state board of nursing website if the preceptor is a nurse, or by reviewing the preceptor’s license information provided by their professional licensing authority (medical board, Department of Health, etc.). If students have any questions about this process or any possible negative information regarding a potential preceptor, they should contact nurslicensure@mail.waldenu.edu.

**Note:** Approval of the preceptor must occur prior to the student starting the practicum course and logging hours. Students cannot begin logging practicum hours until their practicum application is fully approved and have been registered for the course.

**Use of the Same Preceptor for Multiple Practicum Courses**

Approval to use the same preceptor for all four practicum courses is not allowed. Students are able to use the same preceptor for a maximum of two times for all practicum courses with prior approval from the specialty coordinator. Each practicum course has different requirements. It is unlikely that one preceptor will have the expertise with a sufficient number of all four populations for students to acquire the appropriate training. It is important to remember that this is the students’ opportunity to learn and selecting a preceptor that meets only the minimum requirements will likely result in an inadequate experience.

**Preceptor-to-Student Ratio.**

Walden University’s School of Nursing abides by the appropriate compliance requirements and standards as determined by various state, national, and professional nursing agencies. One standard to which we comply is an on-site preceptor-to-student ratio of 1:1 for direct supervision. The purpose of this standard is to ensure that students have a quality experience during their practicum. The Field Education Office reviews, approves, and monitors applications for nominated preceptors for the Nurse Practitioner program in the order that applications are submitted. If a nominated preceptor has met the maximum number of students for which they can precept during the quarter, the preceptor will not be approved.
Course-Specific Requirements

The following are suggestions, listed by specialization, for students to consider when choosing a preceptor and site for each required practicum course. Students can also consult the course descriptions in the catalog and at the end of this manual as a guide.

**Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (AGACNP)**

NURS or NUNP 6531 - Advanced Practice Care of Adults Across the Lifespan
- **Types of Patients**: Ages 13 and older with acute illness or exacerbation of chronic diseases.
- **Types of Services**: Assessment and management of acute illness or exacerbation of chronic diseases.
- **Possible Preceptor Choices**: Internal medicine ANP, AGPCNP, ACNP, AGACNP, FNP, GNP, MD, DO, PA, or hospitalist ANP, AGPCNP, ACNP, AGACNP, FNP, GNP, MD, DO, PA.
- **Possible Site Choices**: Adult Internal medicine practice, urgent care center or clinic, long-term acute care (LTAC) facilities, and hospitals (only with a hospitalist or NP/PA working in a hospitalist role).
- **Nonacceptable Sites**: Specialty clinics or specialty hospital practice, critical care units, emergency departments, Cancer Centers of America, and family practice outpatient clinics or offices, retail health clinics, or state or local health departments.

NURS or NUNP 6540 - Advanced Practice Care of Frail Elders
- **Types of Patients**: Ages 55 and older with acute illness or exacerbation of chronic diseases.
- **Types of Services**: Assessment and management of acute illness or exacerbation of chronic diseases, recommendation of appropriate immunizations for elders, medication management with focus on unique needs of the geriatric patient, and assessment and facilitation of functional abilities in consideration of chronic and aging limitations.
- **Possible Preceptor Choices**: ACNP, AGACNP, ANP, AGPCNP, FNP, GNP, MD, DO, PA, or hospitalist.
- **Possible Site Choices**: Inpatient hospice/palliative care, inpatient rehabilitation unit, hospital or LTAC facility, ACE (acute care for elderly) unit, intermediate care unit, or step-down unit.
- **Nonacceptable Sites**: Surgery centers, emergency departments, urgent care center or clinic, critical care units, and dialysis clinics.

*Note*: Only patients over the age of 55 should be seen and logged for this course.

NURS or NUNP 6550 - Advanced Practice Care of Adults in Acute Care Settings I
- **Types of Patients**: Ages 13 and older with acute, critical, or significant exacerbation of pre-existing disease states.
- **Types of Services**: Assessment and management of acute or critical disease states which may require airway management, pulmonary support, cardiovascular intervention,
intravenous medication management, infection disease intervention, renal intervention, neurologic/neurosurgical management, or abdominal pathology management.

- **Possible Preceptor Choices:** ACNP, AGACNP, ANP, AGPCNP, FNP, GNP, MD, DO, PA, intensivist, or hospitalist.
- **Possible Site Choices:** Acute care hospital setting, critical care units, emergency departments (ED). The following in-hospital specialty rotations will be considered based on the services provided: Cardiology, Endocrinology, Gastroenterology, Hematology/Oncology, Infectious Disease, Nephrology (excluding dialysis units), Neurology/Neurosurgery, Pulmonology, Surgery, Transplant, and Trauma.
- **Nonacceptable Sites:** Dialysis units, palliative care units, Cancer Centers of America, and family practice clinics/offices or retail health clinics.

**NURS or NUNP 6560 - Advanced Practice Care of Adults in Acute Care Settings II**

- **Types of Patients:** Ages 13 and older with acute, critical, or significant exacerbation of pre-existing disease states.
- **Types of Services:** Assessment and management of acute or critical disease states which may require airway management, pulmonary support, cardiovascular intervention, intravenous medication management, infection disease intervention, renal intervention, neurologic/neurosurgical management, or abdominal pathology management.
- **Possible Preceptor Choices:** ACNP, AGACNP, ANP, AGPCNP, FNP, GNP, MD, DO, PA, intensivist, or hospitalist.
- **Possible Site Choices:** Acute care hospital setting, critical care units, ED. The following in-hospital specialty rotations will be considered based on the services provided: Cardiology, Endocrinology, Gastroenterology, Hematology/Oncology, Infectious Disease, Nephrology (excluding dialysis units), Neurology/Neurosurgery, Pulmonology, Surgery, Transplant, and Trauma.
- **Nonacceptable Sites:** Dialysis units, palliative care units, Cancer Centers of America, and family practice clinics/offices or retail health clinics.

**Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner (AGPCNP)**

**NURS or NUNP 6531 - Advanced Practice Care of Adults Across the Lifespan**

- **Types of Patients:** Ages 13 and older in the primary care setting for primary care.
- **Types of Services:** Assessment and management of primary care.
- **Possible Preceptor Choices:** Primary care ANP, AGPCNP, FNP, GNP, MD, DO, PA. Family practice ANP, AGPCNP, FNP, GNP, MD, DO, PA. Internal medicine ANP, AGPCNP, FNP, GNP, MD, DO, PA. The preceptor in the practice cannot have a specialty.
- **Possible Site Choices:** Family practice, internal medicine practice, or primary care clinic.
- **Nonacceptable Sites:** Surgery centers, EDs, emergent care clinics, specialty clinics, or long-term care facilities.

**NURS or NUNP 6540 - Advanced Practice Care of Frail Elders**

- **Types of Patients:** Age 55 and older with primary care issues.
• **Types of Services:** Assessment and management of primary care, recommendation of appropriate immunizations for elders, medication management with focus on unique needs of the geriatric patient, assessment and facilitation of functional abilities in consideration of chronic and aging limitations.

• **Possible Preceptor Choices:** Primary care ANP, AGPCNP, FNP, GNP, MD, DO, PA. Family practice ANP, AGPCNP, FNP, GNP, MD, DO, PA. Internal medicine ANP, AGPCNP, FNP, GNP, MD, DO, PA.

• **Possible Site Choices:** Family practice and internal medicine if patients meet the age requirements, long-term care, hospice, or assisted living/Alzheimer’s facility.

• **Nonacceptable Sites:** Surgery centers, EDs, home health, emergent care clinics, and dialysis clinics.

*Note:* Only patients over the age of 55 should be seen and logged for this course.

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**NURS or NUNP 6551 - Primary Care of Women**

• **Types of Patients:** Women ages 13 and older in need of women’s healthcare related to primary care needs.

• **Types of Services:** Assessment and management of women’s healthcare needs, PAP, GYN management, STD management.

• **Possible Preceptor Choices:** MD, DO, FNP, PA, WHNP, ANP, AGPCNP.

• **Possible Site Choices:** Any family practice, internal medicine practice, primary care clinic, health department clinic, or Planned Parenthood that provides a minimum of 50% women’s care, which can include GYN, pap smears, birth control, menopause, STDs, OB/GYN Clinic.

• **Nonacceptable Sites:** Infertility clinics.

*Note:* AGPCNP students only complete gynecological (GYN) or reproductive health clinical hours. There is no obstetrics (OB) component for AGPCNP students.

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**NURS or NUNP 6565 - Synthesis in Advanced Practice Care of Complex Patients in a Primary Care Setting**

• **Types of Patients:** Ages 13 and older primary care needs or exacerbation of illness.

• **Types of Services:** Assessment and management of primary care related illness or exacerbation of chronic diseases.

• **Possible Preceptor Choices:** Primary care ANP, AGPCNP, FNP, GNP, MD, DO, PA. Family practice ANP, AGPCNP, FNP, GNP, MD, DO, PA. Internal medicine ANP, AGPCNP, FNP, GNP, MD, DO, PA. Specialty sites ANP, AGPCNP, FNP, GNP, MD, DO, and PA.

• **Possible Site Choices:** Family practice, internal medicine practice, or primary care clinic.

• **Nonacceptable Sites:** Surgery centers, EDs, and emergent care clinics or retail clinics.

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**Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP)**

**NURS or NUNP 6531 - Advanced Practice Care of Adults Across the Lifespan**

• **Types of Patients:** Ages 13 and older in the primary care setting for primary care.

• **Types of Services:** Assessment and management of primary care.
• **Possible Preceptor Choices:** Primary care MD, DO, PA, FNP, AGNP. Family practice MD, DO, PA, FNP, AGNP. Internal medicine MD, DO, PA, FNP. The preceptor’s practice cannot have a specialty.

• **Possible Site Choices:** Family practice, internal medicine practice, or primary care clinic. Additional sites that may be acceptable include health departments and retail clinics (e.g., CVS) that provide primary care.

• **Nonacceptable Sites:** Acute care facilities (hospitals, surgery centers, EDs, emergent or urgent care clinics), specialty clinics, long-term care facilities, university health services, hospice care centers, pain management centers, home care, and cancer centers.

NURS or NUNP 6541 - Primary Care of Adolescents and Children

• **Types of Patients:** Patients must be children or adolescents from newborn to 17 years of age.

• **Types of Services:** Assessment and management of primary care of children and adolescents. Must see patients in a pediatrics practice and must see both well and sick children/adolescents.

• **Possible Preceptor Choices:** Pediatrician MD or DO. FNP, PNP, and PA in pediatrician’s office.

• **Possible Site Choices:** Pediatrician office, family practice, primary care clinic, or health department clinic.

• **Nonacceptable Sites:** Acute care facilities (e.g., hospitals, surgery centers, EDs, emergent or urgent care clinics), specialty clinics, long-term care facilities, university health services, hospice care centers, pain management centers, and cancer centers.

*Note:* All patients seen must be children or adolescents in a pediatrics (newborn to 17 years) practice, well and/or sick.

NURS or NUNP 6551 - Primary Care of Women

• **Types of Patients:** Focused on the care of women. Focuses on the primary care services to women of all ages.

• **Types of Services:** Provide obstetrical and gynecological care. Focuses on women’s healthcare, family planning, and reproductive services.

• **Possible Preceptor Choices:** OB and/or GYN MD, DO, Nurse Midwife, FNP, PA, WHNP.

• **Possible Site Choices:** OB and or GYN practice, family practice, internal medicine practice, primary care clinic, or health department clinic that contains a minimum of 50% women’s care, including prenatal and postnatal care, GYN, pap smears, birth control, menopause, and STDs.

• **Nonacceptable Sites:** Infertility clinics.

*Note:* FNP students complete obstetrics (OB) and gynecological (GYN)/reproductive health clinical hours. Of the practicum hours, at least 40 hours must be related to prenatal and postnatal care. Students are not to be involved in births or surgeries.
NURS 6565 - Synthesis in Advanced Nursing Practice of Complex Patients in a Primary Care Setting

- **Types of Patients**: Care of patients across the life span.
- **Types of Services**: Assessment and management of acute and chronic health conditions of patients across the life span.
- **Possible Preceptor Choices**: Primary care MD, DO, PA, FNP. Family practice MD, DO, PA, FNP. Internal medicine MD, DO, PA, FNP. The preceptor’s practice cannot have a specialty.
- **Possible Site Choices**: Family practice, internal medicine practice, primary care clinic. Additional sites that may be acceptable include health departments and urgent care facilities that provide primary care.
- **Nonacceptable Sites**: Acute care facilities (e.g., hospitals, surgery centers, EDs, emergent care clinics), specialty clinics, long-term care facilities, university health services, hospice care centers, pain management centers, and cancer centers.

**Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP)**

Preceptors for PMHNP practicum courses must have a master’s or doctoral degree in the area of practice.

**Note:** It is acknowledged that a variety of factors will influence the number of clients seen, but students should strive to see as many clients possible each clinical day. The clinical experience must be scheduled to last for a duration of no less than 8 weeks to increase the likelihood that students will be exposed to a wide range of clients with different mental health care needs. Over the course of that 8 weeks, no fewer than 80 patients/clients should be seen.

NURS or NUNP 6640 - Psychotherapy With Individuals

- **Possible Preceptor Choices**: Psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner (who engages in psychotherapy—not only medication management; if the preceptor is seeing patients for 15-minute medication checks, this is NOT psychotherapy and this preceptor is not acceptable), psychiatric mental health clinical nurse specialist, psychiatrists (who engage in psychotherapy—not only medication management; if the preceptor is seeing patients for 15-minute medication checks, this is NOT psychotherapy), licensed social worker, license mental health counselor/professional counselor, licensed psychologist, other appropriately licensed/certified mental health professional.
- **Possible Site Choices**: Private practice, community psychiatric center, college counseling center, employee assistance program (EAP) sites, or assisted living/Alzheimer’s facility; hospital or specialty care facility, drug/alcohol rehabilitation centers, crisis centers, community counseling centers, long-term care, hospice, palliative care, or any other site where individual therapy takes place (to be determined on an individual basis).
- **Nonacceptable Sites**: Home Health and Tele-Psychiatry.
- **Nonacceptable Preceptors**: FNP, AGACNP, AGPCNP, or any other NP other than a board-certified psychiatric/mental health nurse practitioner. No PAs. No preceptors that are “spiritual” or “religious-based” counselors will be permitted unless they possess a master’s or higher degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher learning and are licensed to provide psychotherapy services in his or her state.
NURS or NUNP 6650 - Psychotherapy with Groups and Families

- **Possible Preceptor Choices:** Psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner (who engages in psychotherapy—not only medication management; if the preceptor is seeing patients for 15-minute medication checks, this is NOT psychotherapy), psychiatric mental health clinical nurse specialist, psychiatrists (who engages in psychotherapy—not only medication management; if the preceptor is seeing patients for 15-minute medication checks, this is NOT psychotherapy), licensed social worker, license mental health counselor/professional counselor, licensed psychologist, other appropriately licensed/certified mental health professional.

- **Possible Site Choices:** Private practice, community psychiatric center, college counseling center, employee assistance program (EAP) sites, or assisted living/Alzheimer’s facility; hospital or specialty care facility, drug/alcohol rehabilitation centers, crisis centers, community counseling centers, long-term care, hospice, palliative care, or any other site where group and family therapy take place (to be determined on an individual basis).

- **Nonacceptable Sites:** Home Health and Tele-Psychiatry.

- **Nonacceptable Preceptors:** FNP, AGACNP, AGPCNP or any other NP other than a board-certified psychiatric/mental health nurse practitioner. No PAs. No preceptors that are “spiritual” or “religious-based” counselors will be permitted unless they possess a master’s or higher degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher learning and are licensed to provide psychotherapy services in his/her state.

NURS or NUNP 6660 - Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Role I: Child and Adolescent

- **Possible Preceptor Choices:** PMHNP or a child/adolescent psychiatrist.

- **Possible Site Choices:** Pediatric hospice/palliative care, hospital or specialty care facility, private practice, community psychiatric center, high school/college counseling center, drug/alcohol rehabilitation centers, crisis centers, community counseling centers, any other site where psychotropic medications are prescribed to children or adolescents (appropriateness of sites to be determined on an individual basis).

- **Nonacceptable Sites:** Home Health and Tele-Psychiatry.

- **Nonacceptable Preceptors:** FNP, AGACNP, AGPCNP or any other NP other than a board-certified psychiatric/mental health nurse practitioner. No PAs.

*Note:* All patients seen must be children or adolescents below the age of 18.

NURS or NUNP 6670 - Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Role II: Adults and Older Adults

- **Possible Preceptor Choices:** PMHNP or an adult/geriatric psychiatrist.

- **Possible Site Choices:** Private practice, community psychiatric center, college counseling center, employee assistance program (EAP) sites, or assisted living/Alzheimer’s facility; hospital or specialty care facility, drug/alcohol rehabilitation centers, crisis centers, community counseling centers, long-term care, hospice, palliative care, or any other site where psychotropic medications are prescribed to adults/older adults (appropriateness of sites to be determined on an individual basis).

- **Nonacceptable Sites:** Home Health and Tele-Psychiatry.
Nonacceptable Preceptors: FNP, AGACNP, AGPCNP, or any other NP other than a board-certified psychiatric/mental health nurse practitioner. No PAs.

Supplemental Preceptor Option
In some cases, there may be someone who would be an ideal preceptor, but he or she does not meet all the requirements for the course. If students find themselves in this situation, then they have an option to nominate another person as their supplemental preceptor, provided they also nominate a preceptor who fulfills the requirements. When students complete their practicum application, as described later in this section, they must provide a fully completed application for both their preceptor and their supplemental preceptor. Applications for supplemental preceptors should be submitted as early as possible. However, applications will be accepted during the quarter if students need a supplemental preceptor during the quarter to meet the required practicum hours. These applications go through the same review process as other applications.

Examples:

- A preceptor may be able to provide hours for NURS 6551 in the area of women’s health but not enough hours for the 40 hours of prenatal and postnatal care. In this instance, a supplemental preceptor may be submitted by the student to obtain enough hours in prenatal and postnatal care for the course requirements.
- A preceptor may not see enough patients for the student to log the required practicum hours and patients. In this instance, a supplemental preceptor may be submitted by the student to obtain enough hours for the course requirements.
- During the course, the student may not be able to log enough hours with the preceptor to meet the course requirements. In this instance, a supplemental preceptor may be submitted by the student to obtain enough hours for the course requirement.

Change of Preceptor
Because circumstances change, sometimes students need to change preceptors before their practicum experience begins or during their practicum experience.

For Students Who Need to Change Their Preceptor Before the Practicum Course Begins:
Students will need to notify the Field Education Office as soon as possible if a preceptor changes before the practicum begins so that a new application can be opened by the Field Education Office and submitted by the student. If the new preceptor involves a new practicum site, then a new Affiliation Agreement will also be needed, which may delay the practicum experience until a later term.

For Students Who Need to Change Their Preceptor After the Practicum Course Begins:
Students will need to notify the Field Education Office and the faculty member who is teaching the practicum course so that the faculty member can contact the specialization coordinator. The specialization coordinator will contact the field office to open a new application. Students must submit a new replacement application for the new preceptor to be approved. If the new preceptor involves a new practicum site, then it is likely the practicum experience will be delayed.
Section 4. Application Process

Application Deadlines

The deadline for submitting a practicum application is the 1st day of the quarter preceding the quarter that the students wish to begin the practicum, as shown in Table 2. Students must be sure that they understand the deadline. For example, if students plan to enroll in a practicum course in the fall quarter, their practicum application is due by the first day of the summer quarter.

Students must submit a separate application for each field site and preceptor every quarter, even if the field site and preceptor remain the same. Students will not be registered for practicum courses if there is not an approved application on file.

Students should be aware of their program of study and anticipate when they will be ready to begin the practicum. Students are encouraged to contact their academic advisor with any questions about their program of study. It is the students’ responsibility to know what quarter they will beginning their practicum courses.

Walden advises students to submit their application via Meditrek® as early as possible. Students may submit an application for practicum at least two quarters prior to the practicum start. Experience has shown that the applications that are completed in haste and submitted near the deadline are most frequently those that are missing items, have errors, or have other problems that can lead to delays or the denial of approval.

If an application is submitted late or after the application deadline, there is no guarantee that staff will be able to review the application in a timely manner prior to the term start. Submitting an application by the application deadline is strongly advised to allow enough time for processing and increase the likelihood of an application getting reviewed and potentially approved. There are many factors that can significantly impact whether or not an application can be approved in the time it takes for Walden to process and negotiate an Affiliation Agreement, to process and review the application, and for the student to complete the onboarding requirements. The field experience staff will work diligently to review and process late applications to the best of our ability, but there are no guarantees. Late applications are processed in the order they are submitted in Meditrek®. If an application is unable to be approved for the requested quarter, it will be closed, and students must resubmit a new application for the next quarter.

Late applications will not be accepted at a certain point before the term begins due to the time it takes to process applications. Students need to be sure they are submitting applications by the application deadline.

Exception: Because of some state board requirements and approvals, late applications will not be accepted from students who will perform their clinical practicum experience in Alabama, Alaska, North Dakota, Rhode Island, Wyoming, or Tennessee.
**Table 2a. Deadlines for Practicum Applications**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If students plan to enroll in a clinical course in this quarter:</th>
<th>Their application is due the FIRST day of this quarter.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>Fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Winter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Spring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2b. Deadlines for Practicum Applications (2018–2019 School Year)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Term start Dates</th>
<th>Application Deadline Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2018</td>
<td>May 29, 2018</td>
<td>February 26, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2018</td>
<td>August 27, 2018</td>
<td>May 29, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter 2018</td>
<td>November 26, 2018</td>
<td>August 27, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2019</td>
<td>February 25, 2019</td>
<td>November 26, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2019</td>
<td>May 28th, 2019</td>
<td>February 25, 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Application Submission**

Students need to be sure to submit an application in Meditrek® by the application deadline to ensure enough time for application processing and course registration.

Each practicum course requires a separate application. This is necessary because each practicum course has distinct requirements. Students must also submit a new and separate application each time they wish to change preceptors and/or practicum sites. If a student is using multiple preceptors for one course, separate applications must be submitted for each preceptor. If students are using multiple field sites to complete practicum hours, separate applications must be submitted for each field site.

**Meditrek®**

The practicum application consists of multiple parts that students must submit via Meditrek®. Students must submit their practicum application via Meditrek® by the application deadline. Application instructions for Meditrek® can be found on the field office website. There are webinars, tutorials, and FAQs on how to guide students on submitting an application in Meditrek®.

Meditrek® is the online clinical rotation management system used to track, monitor, and manage the practicum experience. Students will receive Meditrek® login and password information, directly from Meditrek®, for the entirety of their use with Meditrek®.

- Students will receive one user name and password to utilize Meditrek® for submitting practicum applications, completing practicum logs and practicum evaluations.
- Students should receive login information prior to their first practicum course, approximately 6 months prior to the practicum start. If students have not received their password 1 month at least before their application is due, they should complete a request form online at:  
• Students can utilize Meditrek® to monitor the status and progress of their applications each term.
• Students can access Meditrek® here: https://edu.Meditrek.com/Default.html.

**Starting an Application**

1. Students must log in to their Meditrek® account to open a new application.
2. Students must select the application type to start a new application. The application types are as follows:
   - **Primary Application:** The application is the primary application for the preceptor and field site for the quarter and course.
   - **Supplemental Application:** The application is for an additional preceptor and/or field site, which is needed to supplement the primary application for the quarter and course. Supplemental applications are often needed to complete course requirements or to log the required hours.
   - **Replacement Application:** The application is replacing a previously submitted application for a different preceptor and/or field site for the quarter and course. Replacement applications are often needed if a previously nominated preceptor is no longer able to precept or does not meet the requirements.
   - **Remedial Application:** The application will be used to complete course requirements after the term has been completed for the prior term (e.g., for students who received an incomplete grade in the course during the prior term and need to log hours during the next quarter).
3. Students must select the correct course number and correct term when opening a new application. Applications will not be reviewed if the incorrect term is selected. It is the students’ responsibility to ensure they are selecting the correct quarter for the application submission. The term of the application cannot be changed.

**Policy on Electronic Signatures**

Walden manages the clinical application processes in a nearly paperless environment, which requires reliance on verifiable electronic signatures, as regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Legally, an electronic signature can be the person’s typed name, e-mail address, or any other identifying marker. An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically.

**Practicum Requirements**

**License—Student and Preceptor**

Students and preceptors must maintain an active, unencumbered license in the state/country where students plan to complete their practicum experience. License verification will be reviewed as part of the application and preceptor approval process. Practicum applications will not be approved until this review has been completed.
**Licensure Review of Students.** The Field Education Office will conduct a routine professional license verification search and review as part of the practicum application process. This search and review will be completed for all students applying for practicum and all candidates for preceptorship. Information for this review will be gathered through NURSYS, state boards of nursing, state medical boards, or any other applicable professional credentialing authority. Any information that is attached to a professional license verification will be reviewed by the School of Nursing’s Licensure and Compliance department. The information that will be reviewed includes past and present credentialing information, such as state licensing board orders, consent agreements, letters of reprimand or censure, complaints, malpractice claims, settlements, and awards or other indication of action taken against the license by the professional credentialing authority.

If students have a past or present order, consent agreement, letter of reprimand, censure or complaint, or any other information issued by the professional credentialing authority regarding the students’ professional license, the students will be required to inform their field site and preceptor of this information. The field site and preceptor will need to confirm that the students will be able to complete field experience at the site prior to the approval of the students’ practicum application. Written documentation from the field site and preceptor, which confirms that (a) the field site is aware of the past or present board issued information (as described previously) and (b) the field site has agreed to accommodate the practicum placement, must be submitted to the Walden University SON field office. After the review of the license information, the field education staff will send instructions to students to request acknowledgment forms from their preceptor(s) and field site administrator(s).

**Licensure Review of Preceptors.** A routine professional license verification will be obtained by Walden for all preceptor candidates. Any negative information, both past and present, that is part of the license verification will be reviewed by the School of Nursing’s Licensure and Compliance department. Some examples of negative information are disciplinary orders issued by a professional licensing board, malpractice information and letters of complaint, censure, or reprimand. This information will be reviewed as part of the preceptor approval process and could lead to a determination that the preceptor does not meet the university’s requirements. Students will have the opportunity to appeal the decision or to nominate a replacement preceptor who will undergo the same review. Students should be aware that their practicum application will not be approved until an acceptable preceptor is approved.

Many students find it helpful to take a look at their preceptor’s license information prior to submitting their practicum application. If students choose to review this information, it can be found online through NURSYS® or the corresponding state board of nursing website if the preceptor is a nurse, or by reviewing the preceptor’s license information provided by their professional licensing authority (medical board, Department of Health, etc.). If students have any questions about this process or any possible negative information regarding a potential preceptor, they should contact nurslicensure@mail.waldenu.edu.

**Professional Liability Insurance (PLI)**

Students must obtain and maintain professional liability insurance (PLI). Students must have their own professional liability policy even if their employer or practicum site has a policy that
covers students. A memorandum of certificate of insurance coverage for the active policy will need to be uploaded to the Meditrek® application and the CastleBranch profile. The PLI must meet the following requirements:

a. Coverage dates: The insurance plan must cover the entire time of the quarter in which practicum will occur. The dates must cover the duration of the practicum course(s).

b. Memorandum or certificate of insurance coverage must contain your name, address, date of the policy, coverage amounts, coverage type and expiration date.

c. Coverage Amounts: Must be a minimum of $1 million per incident and $3 million aggregate.

d. Coverage Type: The coverage type must be clearly stated in the memorandum or certificate of insurance coverage. Insurance coverage as a RN will not be accepted. The following coverage type is required:

i. Students in the MSN - Nurse Practitioner Program: Must be coverage for a nurse practitioner student.

ii. Students in the MSN - Specialization programs to include Education, Informatics, Public Health, and Leadership Management: Must be coverage for a general nursing student.

iii. Students in the DNP program: Must be coverage for a general nursing student.

Most insurance companies offer student nursing coverage. Walden University does not endorse any specific insurance company, and students are free to shop for a policy that fits the practicum liability insurance requirements. However, from reviewing student applications, the most commonly used insurance providers include Nurses Service Organization (NSO), Healthcare Providers Service Organization (HPSO), March, and Mercer.

The field experience staff will work with students to resolve issues with their insurance if students provide early notification with a clear explanation. Students should contact the nursing Field Experience Office at nursingfield@mail.waldenu.edu.

**Onboarding Requirements**

Walden University School of Nursing’s Onboarding Policy requires practicum students to obtain specific verifications such as health screenings and background checks in order to be approved for practicum (“Onboarding Requirements”). Onboarding requirements are defined as a specific set of prepracticum requirements established by the Walden University School of Nursing based on the most common field site requirements, which will enable students to potentially qualify for a wide range of field sites. These onboarding requirements vary from state to state; however, they generally include the passing of a background check and drug screening, health requirements, required training and professional liability insurance, and any additional onboarding requirements that may be required by the field site. This requirement aligns Walden University with field site expectations and practices that have become standard in the healthcare industry. Because some health systems and field sites mandate Onboarding Requirements that are not detailed in the Affiliation Agreement, it is beneficial to Walden students to have these requirements in place prior to term start. This policy will require all MSN and DNP students to proactively complete onboarding requirements to avoid practicum delays.

This is a Walden University requirement that applies to all nursing practicum students. Being an employee of the field site does not exempt students from this requirement.
Requirements, including health screenings and background checks, will only be approved if submitted through Walden University’s designated provider, CastleBranch. The School of Nursing Field Education Office Staff will confirm submission of all requirements in CastleBranch to approve practicum applications. Please be aware that students are responsible for all expenses incurred for onboarding requirements. **Students WILL NOT be permitted to start their field experience until Onboarding Requirements are complete.**

Onboarding requirement results will be managed, stored, and tracked by CastleBranch. When required, Walden University will communicate the satisfactory completion of these requirements to field sites.

Students who do not meet these requirements prior to term start will not be permitted to begin their field experience until the Onboarding Requirements have been completed. In situations such as this, failure to complete the Requirements prior to term start may result in students not being able to start field experience until the next term.

If an approved field site requires something in addition to what is required by Walden University, an additional package can be obtained through CastleBranch, at the request of Walden’s Field Education Office, to fulfill those requirements.

See the Frequently Asked Questions for Onboarding in the FAQ section for more information.

**CastleBranch**

CastleBranch, Walden’s designated vendor for onboarding requirements, provides a secure platform to complete onboarding requirements. Onboarding requirements include, but are not limited to, the following items: background screenings, a drug test, health requirements, trainings, professional liability insurance, and any additional onboarding requirements that may be required by the field site. Students must complete onboarding requirements online at [http://walden.castlebranch.com](http://walden.castlebranch.com). Students must complete ALL the requirements listed in the CastleBranch portal to begin their practicum. The practicum application will not be approved until ALL the requirements are complete.

When ordering the background screening, students will be provided a *Disclosure and Authorization* form by CastleBranch, which all students must sign in advance of obtaining the background check. The *Disclosure and Authorization* form is required by federal law. Although the *Disclosure and Authorization* form references an employment check, for these purposes, it also applies to students applying for field experience.

Students complete onboarding requirements online at [http://walden.castlebranch.com/](http://walden.castlebranch.com/). Any questions regarding the purchase of a screening package can be answered by CastleBranch at 1-888-723-4263. For questions regarding the field site, Onboarding requirements or practicum applications regarding this process, please contact nursingfield@mail.waldenu.edu.
Preceptor Commitment Form

The Preceptor Commitment Form is an agreement with the preceptor to participate in the preceptorship with a Walden University nursing student. The Preceptor Commitment Form is an official form and requires the preceptor to complete the form in its entirety. Students are not to complete this form on behalf of the preceptor. The form is student-, course-, and term-specific. Thus, a form is required to be completed for each student for each class every quarter.

This Preceptor Commitment Form is different from the Affiliation Agreement. The field education staff at Walden will work directly with the administrator at the field site to establish an Affiliation Agreement, which is a legal agreement directly with the field site and is different from the Preceptor Commitment Form.

The Preceptor Commitment Form is e-mailed directly to the preceptor at the time students enter preceptor information on the Meditrek® application in the “Preceptor and Field Site Information” section. The preceptor should review the form, complete it in its entirety, and sign the form. Students must obtain this form directly from the preceptor to upload it in the Meditrek® application. Preceptor Commitment Forms can also be found online at: https://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/PreceptorResources.

If the preceptor completes the form electronically, he or she must agree to the Walden University Policy on Electronic Signatures. If the preceptor does not complete the form electronically, he or she must print legibly and provide a signature at the bottom of the form.

After the preceptor completes and signs the form, he or she should send it directly to the student. The student will then upload this form as part of their application in Meditrek®. It is the responsibility of students to upload the Preceptor Commitment Form in Meditrek® and link it to their application.

Upon final approval of the students’ application, the preceptor will receive a confirmation e-mail with a Preceptor Orientation.

More information for preceptors can be found online at http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/PreceptorResources and click on the “Course Information” tab to review course objectives and clinical checklists.

If preceptors have any questions, they may contact the Field Education Office at nursingfield@mail.waldenu.edu.

Affiliation Agreement With Practicum Field Sites

An Affiliation Agreement is a legal contract between Walden University and a practicum field site. The Affiliation Agreement should not be confused with the Preceptor Commitment Form. Accreditation standards and university policy require that an Affiliation Agreement be in place before students start their practicum.

Coming to a mutual agreement about the terms of the Affiliation Agreement can take time, sometimes several weeks or months. In most cases, Walden is able to reach a mutual agreement...
with students’ practicum sites. There are times, however, when a field site and Walden are not able to enter into an agreement or cannot reach an understanding on the terms of the agreement due to a variety of factors that may be out of either organization’s control. When there is reason to believe that the Affiliation Agreement between Walden and a site will not be completed, Walden will make every effort to notify students in a timely fashion. If there is enough time, Walden works with students as they try to find a new preceptor and site, even if the Office of Field Experience is continuing to work with the first site. Students are strongly encouraged to arrange for alternative practicum sites as back-up options.

Walden requires that Affiliation Agreements are finalized for every field site where practicum will occur. If students plan to complete practicum hours at multiple sites, an application must be submitted and approved for each and every field site and preceptor. If students plan to complete practicum hours with a contract agency and will be logging hours at multiple sites, an application must be submitted and approved for each physical field site.

In some cases, the Affiliation Agreement with a planned practicum site may not be completed and it may be too late for students to find a new site prior to the start of the current term. If this happens, students are delayed a term while they find a new site. Students are allowed a limited exception to apply for the next term so that they can prepare a new application. Walden is not able to predict or control delays, but they are avoided if possible. It is highly recommended for students to arrange for alternative back-up field sites.

**Field Site Administrator—Affiliation Agreement Contact**

Students must enter the field site administrator contact information in the application in Meditrek®. The contact information for the field site administrator is entered in the “Affiliation Agreement” section of the application in Meditrek®.

It is the responsibility of students to obtain the contact information for the appropriate individual at the field site with authority to sign a legal contact. Preceptors may know whom to contact at practicum sites; otherwise, students should ask if their practicum site has an education or staff-development manager or a risk manager. Authority to sign the Affiliation Agreement could possibly be handled by a dean, chief nursing officer, director, CEO, or other administrator; large organizations may have an on-site legal department and an attorney who signs Affiliation Agreements. The person who signs the agreement must be authorized to do so by the practicum site. The individual authorized to sign the agreement is usually not the preceptor.

**Note:** It is very important to enter the correct contact information in Meditrek® for the contact at the field site because inaccurate information will delay processing of the agreement.

**Process for Affiliation Agreements**

Generally, field education coordinators will begin reviewing all applications after the application deadline. Field education coordinators will review applications to determine if there is an active and valid Affiliation Agreement on file with the field site. If there is no Affiliation Agreement with the field site, a field education coordinator will e-mail the field site administrator with instructions on establishing an Affiliation Agreement with Walden University.
Note: If a field site administrator has not received the e-mail about the Affiliation Agreement, the following actions are recommended:

- Confirm the contact information is correct for the field site administrator in the application in Meditrek®. If the contact information is incorrect, please e-mail nursingfield@mail.waldenu.edu with the correct contact information and the Affiliation Agreement information will be resent.
- If the contact information is correct, confirm with the field site administrator to check his or her spam or junk e-mail folder for the e-mail.
- If the field site administrator has not received the e-mail, the agreement information can be resent or the administrator may e-mail sonaffiliation@mail.waldenu.edu to resend the Affiliation Agreement information.
- If the field site administrator would like the Affiliation Agreement information to be faxed to them, send an e-mail request to sonaffiliation@mail.waldenu.edu.

Options for Sites to Establish an Affiliation Agreement With Walden

- The field site is willing to sign Walden University’s standard Affiliation Agreement: This agreement is e-mailed directly to the field site administrator. The field site administrator signs the agreement and returns it to the Field Education Office.
- The field site would like to use Walden University’s standard Affiliation Agreement with changes: This agreement is e-mailed directly to the field site administrator. The field site administrator should make redline changes to the template agreement and return it to the Field Education Office. The contract administrators in the legal department will review the requested changes to either confirm the changes or to communicate with the field site to discuss further terms.
- The field site would like to use their preferred template for an Affiliation Agreement: The field site administrator should e-mail their preferred template to sonaffiliation@mail.waldenu.edu. The contract administrator in the legal department will review the template and communicate directly with the field site administrator to negotiate the terms of the contract.

Affiliation Agreement Status in Meditrek®
Students can monitor the progress of the Affiliation Agreement process on their application checklist in Meditrek®.

- Information Submitted by Student: Application has been submitted by the student. The field site Affiliation Agreement information has not been reviewed by the field education staff.
- Initial Request Sent to Field Site: Walden University does not have an existing valid agreement for this field site. The field education coordinator has sent an e-mail request to the field site administrator to initiate an agreement. Reminders are e-mailed to the field site administrator every 2 weeks when in this status. E-mails are sent using the contact information of the field site administrator listed by the student on the application.
- Awaiting Response from Field Site: The field education coordinator has received a communication from the field site organization but has not received an agreement template from the field site and/or is awaiting a follow-up response from the field site organization.
• Submitted to Walden Field Experience: Information has been submitted regarding the field site and is being processed by the field education staff to move to the next stage.
• In Legal Negotiation Between Walden and Field Site: Walden University’s legal staff are in negotiations with the field site to complete an Affiliation Agreement.
• Completed and Approved: The Affiliation Agreement has been fully executed and approved.

Application Requirements in Meditrek®

Students need to submit their practicum application via Meditrek® by the application deadline (see Table 2). The following information and documents are required to submit a complete application in Meditrek®.

Forms to Complete in Meditrek®

• Student Information to include the following:
  o Student’s name
  o Gender, DOB, Last 4 digits of SSN
  o Address
  o Phone numbers
  o Walden ID number
  o Walden e-mail address

• FERPA Release: Students will complete a FERPA release when completing and submitting an application in Meditrek®. The FERPA release authorizes Walden University to release all information, without limitation, regarding enrollment and academic records for the purpose of arranging for, participating in, and being evaluated on the field experience.

• Preceptor and Field Site Information: Students will complete information about the preceptor and field site in the application to provide information about the qualifications and appropriateness of the site. It is important for students to include as much information as possible about the preceptor and field site to assist the field education staff to determine if the preceptor and field site will meet the requirements of the practicum course. The required information is as follows:
  o Preceptor contact information to include name, title, phone number, and e-mail address.
  o Preceptor credentials
  o Preceptor information to include education degree, licensure, certification, license number, state of license and expiration date.
  o Field Site Location: field site name and address.
  o Field Site Description.
  o Preceptor and Field Site Information:
    o Description of the job responsibilities of the preceptor.
    o Description of how the preceptor will provide the student with an appropriate practicum experience to meet the learning objectives of the course.
    o Description of how the field site will provide the student with an appropriate practicum experience to meet the learning objectives of the course.
• Supporting information or documentation to support the nomination of the preceptor and field site.

Note: Once this section is complete, the preceptor information can be submitted, and an e-mail will be sent to the preceptor with the “Preceptor Commitment Form.”

• Affiliation Agreement Section: Students need to identify, with the help of the preceptor and/or practicum site contact, who the appropriate individual is at the practicum site that can speak to the Affiliation Agreement. This individual may be the CEO, dean, contracts manager, site director, human resources, owner, or president. Large organizations may have an on-site legal department that reviews such agreements and may have an attorney who signs Affiliation Agreements. Students will complete contact information for the field site and the field site administrator that would be responsible for facilitating the Affiliation Agreement. The required information is as follows:
  o Field site name, address;
  o Name of administrator authorized to negotiate the Affiliation Agreement;
  o Contact information for the field site administrator; Note: Students need to ensure correct contact information is entered in Meditrek® as wrong contact information will delay processing;
  o Healthcare organization: If the field site is under a healthcare organization or parent company, the agreement may be under the name of the healthcare system or organization, so the name of the healthcare system or organization is needed.

Documents to Upload in Meditrek®

Students are responsible for uploading all documents in Meditrek® to complete their application. For the most up-to-date information regarding applications and Meditrek®, including webinars, tutorials, and FAQs, refer to the field experience website: https://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/home.

Note: See section on “Practicum Requirements” for more details on these requirements.

• Professional Liability Insurance: Proof of student’s professional liability insurance:
  o Memorandum of certificate of insurance coverage for the active policy;
  o Coverage amounts required are a minimum of $1 million per incident and $3 million per aggregate;
  o Coverage dates must cover the duration of the practicum course from the first day of class to the last day of class;
  o Coverage type must meet the following requirements:
    ▪ Students in the MSN - Nurse Practitioner Program: Must be coverage for a nurse practitioner student;
    ▪ Students in the MSN-Specialization programs to include Education, Informatics, Public Health, and Leadership Management: must be coverage for a general nursing student;
    ▪ Students in the DNP program: must be coverage for a general nursing student.

• Student RN License:
  o Must have an active and current nursing license; and
  o Must be licensed in the state/country where practicum will occur.
• Preceptor Commitment Form:
  o This form is sent directly to the preceptor via e-mail when students submit the
    preceptor information section in Meditrek®;
  o Preceptor must complete the form in its entirety and sign the commitment form;
  o Preceptor should submit the form directly to the student for the student to upload
    in the application in Meditrek®.

  **Note:** Preceptor Commitment Forms should not be completed by the student on
  behalf of the preceptor. If it is found that the student completed the Preceptor
  Commitment Form on behalf of the preceptor, a case will be reviewed by the
  Academic Integrity Analyst.

**Additional Application Requirements—Onboarding**

Students must complete all onboarding requirements through Walden University’s designated
provider, CastleBranch, online at [http://walden.castlebranch.com](http://walden.castlebranch.com).

Students do not need to complete onboarding requirements prior to submitting an application, but
the requirements must be completed before an application is approved. Students will have the
option to mark their CastleBranch status on their application in Meditrek®. However, the
practicum application will not be fully approved until a CastleBranch package is completed. It is
highly recommended that students complete requirements in CastleBranch as soon as possible to
ensure timely approval of their practicum application.

The School of Nursing Field Education Office Staff will confirm submission of all requirements
in CastleBranch in order to approve practicum applications. The practicum application will not
be approved until all the requirements are complete. If a field site requires something in addition
to what is required by Walden University, an additional package can be obtained through
CastleBranch, at the request of Walden’s Field Education Office, to fulfill those requirements.
The field education staff will e-mail students with further information about additional field site
requirements.

**Application Review and Approval**

Applications must be completed in its entirety and submitted in Meditrek®. Applications in
incomplete or incomplete-started status will not be reviewed by the field education staff. It is the
students’ responsibility to ensure an application is finalized and submitted in Meditrek®.

Generally, field education coordinators will begin reviewing applications after the application
deadline. Applications are reviewed in the order they are submitted in Meditrek®. Approval of
the application must occur prior to the student starting the practicum course and logging hours.
Students cannot begin logging practicum hours until their practicum application is fully approved
and have been registered for the course.

Students are able to monitor the progress of their application review by logging in to their
Meditrek® account and accessing the application checklist and clicking on the course number.
The Application checklist will list the review status of each section of the application. When a section of the application is approved, it will be listed next to the section with the date approved.

**Application Approval**

- The application must be submitted in Meditrek®. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.
- The nursing field education coordinators will process the students’ practicum applications and notify students if applications are returned or if changes are needed.
- The field education coordinators will review the students’ application materials. If an application is denied, students will be notified, and, in most cases, they will be given an opportunity to revise their application within a short amount of time.
- If an application is approved, an email will be sent by Meditrek® to the preceptor and to the student.

**Application Steps**

1. When students successfully submit their application, they will receive an automatic e-mail from Meditrek® stating it was submitted and finalized. Applications will not be reviewed until an application is officially submitted in Meditrek®.
2. The application has different sections and each section is worked on by different coordinators simultaneously. Students should monitor their e-mail account for e-mails from the field education staff requesting updates to their application.
3. The Affiliation Agreement and other parts of the application are separate entities and are worked on simultaneously.
4. Students will receive an e-mail with one of the following responses regarding their application:
   - **Returned Status**—The application has been returned for further work: The e-mail will identify what students need to correct. Students will need to log back into Meditrek®, select the application, correct the error, and then resubmit. Students will then get another e-mail that the application has been resubmitted.
   - **Pending Status**—The application is being reviewed by the field education staff. If further information is needed, an e-mail will be sent requesting additional information.
   - **Approved Status**—The application has been approved. Students are approved to complete practicum at the approved field site with the approved preceptor during the approved quarter. The practicum course registration will be processed after the application has been approved.
5. Students should monitor their spam/junk e-mail folder for important e-mails from the Field Education Office regarding information about their practicum application.
6. Students can log in to Meditrek® at any time to see the status of their application by clicking on the course on their list of applications. The application statuses are listed below.

**Note:** Students are encouraged to monitor their spam/junk e-mail folders regularly.
Application Status

Students can monitor the progress of their application review and approval in their checklist in Meditrek®. The statuses are as follows:

- **Closed**: The application is closed due to inability to approve the application. Students are e-mailed with specific details for the closed application.
- **Incomplete—Started**: Students have started the application but haven’t submitted the application in Meditrek®. The application will not be reviewed until it is submitted in Meditrek®.
- **Incomplete**: Students have started the application and submitted the practicum site information but have not submitted the application in Meditrek®. The application will not be reviewed until it is submitted in Meditrek®.
- **Submitted**: The application was submitted to Walden and is ready for review by the field experience staff.
- **Returned**: The application was submitted and reviewed by a field education coordinator and returned to the student for further work due to issues with the application. An e-mail will be sent to the student with further instructions and information. The application will not be further reviewed until the issues are resolved by the student and resubmitted in Meditrek®.
- **Pending**: The application has been submitted and being reviewed by the field experience staff. An e-mail will be sent to the student if any additional information is needed or requested.
- **On-Hold**: All aspects of the application have been reviewed but is pending approval for the field site Affiliation Agreement and possible onboarding requirements. No further action is needed by the student.
- **Approved**: Everything is approved, including the Affiliation Agreement. Student is approved for practicum and may be registered for the practicum course.

Preceptor Options

**Change of Preceptor—Replacement Preceptor**

Because circumstances change, sometimes students need to change preceptors before they begin their practicum experience. If students need to change their preceptor before the practicum course begins, students will need to notify the Field Education Office as soon as possible to request a late application request in order to open a new application in Meditrek®. This is known as a replacement application. If the new preceptor involves a new practicum site, then a new Affiliation Agreement will also be needed. Depending on the timing before the term begins, there may not be enough time to process an application, Affiliation Agreement and onboarding; which may delay the practicum experience until a later term.

**Co-Preceptors**

In some cases, there may be someone who would be an ideal preceptor, but he or she does not meet all the requirements for the course. If students find themselves in this situation, then they have an option to nominate another person as their supplemental preceptor, provided they also nominate a preceptor who fulfills the requirements. When students complete their practicum
application, they must provide a fully completed application for both their preceptor and their supplemental preceptor. Applications for supplemental preceptors should be submitted as early as possible. However, applications are not accepted during the quarter if students need a supplemental preceptor during the quarter to meet the required practicum hours. If students have a co-preceptor (supplemental preceptor), they must complete and submit a separate application for the preceptor and co-preceptor. These applications go through the same review process as other applications.

**Supplemental Preceptors**

Students may need additional preceptors in order to meet all the requirements for the course including logging all the required hours and/or patients. If students need to precept with multiple preceptors to meet the course requirements, then they have an option to nominate another person as their supplemental preceptor, provided they also nominate a preceptor who fulfills the requirements. When students complete their practicum application, they must provide a fully completed application for both their preceptor and their supplemental preceptor. Applications for supplemental preceptors should be submitted as early as possible. However, applications are accepted during the quarter if students need a supplemental preceptor during the quarter to meet the required practicum hours. If students need a supplemental preceptor, they must complete and submit a separate application for the preceptor and co-preceptor. These applications go through the same review process as other applications.

Examples for Reasons for Supplemental Preceptors:
- A preceptor may not see enough patients for the student to log the required practicum hours and patients. In this instance, a supplemental preceptor may be submitted by the student to obtain enough hours for the course requirements.
- During the course, the student may not be able to log enough hours with the preceptor to meet the course requirements. In this instance, a supplemental preceptor may be submitted by the student to obtain enough hours for the course requirement.

**Field Site Assigns Preceptor After Affiliation Agreement**

In some cases, there may be field sites that will not assign a preceptor until after an Affiliation Agreement has been completed. Students must still submit an application in Meditrek® following the process outlined in this section in these situations to abide by the application deadline. In order to submit an application while waiting for the field site to assign a preceptor, students should use placeholder information and documents to fill in areas of their application, which are otherwise incomplete. For instance, students can enter “TBD” into the text field requesting preceptor information. For the Preceptor Commitment Form, students can upload a word document to their application that briefly explains the circumstances and reason for using a placeholder document. Students should ensure that the document is uploaded and linked in the application. After all fields related to the preceptor have been completed with TBD and the placeholder word document is linked, students are able to submit and finalize their application in Meditrek®. By submitting an application, this allows the field education staff to begin working on the Affiliation Agreement. Once the preceptor is assigned, students must edit their application and enter the correct information for the preceptor in the application along with the Preceptor Commitment Form. Students may have to contact nursingfield@mail.waldenu.edu to return the application in Meditrek® in order for students to edit their application.
Course Registration and Start

Registration for the practicum courses is subject to review, based on whether students meet course prerequisites and have an approved practicum application on file.

The approval of the application does not guarantee the ability of students to be registered for practicum courses. Registration is subject to availability and based upon when the practicum application is approved. Walden University abides by the rules and regulations required by various state Boards of Nursing. Walden is committed to adhering to the academic standards and compliance requirements as determined by various state nursing boards. For this reason, Walden’s School of Nursing is not able to offer an unlimited number of practicum course sections.

Once a student is registered, we are unable to change course sections due to the need to ensure that we have the correct faculty-to-student ratios in sections for accreditation purposes, balancing course loads, optimizations, and cohorting of sections to meet various state boards of nursing faculty licensure requirements.

**It is the responsibility of the student to ensure all holds are removed from their account.** If students have been withdrawn, on a Leave of Absence, or have not been continuously enrolled at Walden, they must contact Academic Advising to return and be reinstated at Walden. The field education staff will not be able to process a course registration if students have a hold or have not been reinstated.

Students who do not meet the application requirements and deadlines found in this manual will be dropped from the practicum course until all appropriate documents are on file and approved and all course prerequisites are met. If students believe they have met all the requirements for starting the practicum and do not see the course registration on their myWalden page, they should contact the nursing field education coordinators at nursingfield@mail.waldenu.edu.

Students cannot start logging practicum hours until their practicum application is fully approved in Meditrek® and they have been registered for the practicum course.

Registration Timeline

Students will be registered upon full approval of their application. The field education staff will submit registrations to the Registrar scheduling department after the practicum application is approved.

**Timeline of Course Registration**

- If the practicum application is approved 4 weeks or more prior to term start, the field education staff will process the registration approximately 4 weeks prior to term start.
- If the practicum application is approved less than 4 weeks prior to term start, the field education staff will process the registration approximately within 2 business days after application is approved.
**Note:** It takes between 24 and 48 hours for students to see their course information in Blackboard.

### Logging Hours After Course Begins

Students may start logging practicum hours within each course on the second day of the course provided that they have received a practicum approval notice from the field education coordinators and their clinical instructor approves.

Students may not log any hours before the start of the course. Additionally, students may not log hours prior to; receiving practicum application approval from the Field Experience Office, they are registered for the practicum course, and they receive approval from the clinical instructor. Students are only to log hours with preceptors who have been approved by the Field Experience Office in Meditrek®. If students log hours with an unapproved preceptor, these hours will not count toward the practicum hour requirement of the course and program.

### Logs in Meditrek®

Using Meditrek®, students keep a log of the time they spend on practicum activities. Time logs are signed off by preceptors and instructors at the end of the course after the completion of logs.

**Timeline for Preceptors and Field Sites Programmed in Meditrek®**

- Preceptors and field sites are programmed in Meditrek® for dropdown options in time logs at the end of Week 1 for approved applications.
- If an application is approved after the course starts, the preceptor and field site will be populated weekly on Fridays.
- Preceptors are e-mailed their Meditrek® credentials Monday of Week 3 of the course. Preceptors use their Meditrek® credentials to sign off on time logs and complete evaluations. For preceptors who have not received their Meditrek® credentials, they are encouraged to check their spam/junk e-mail folders or submit a request for credentials to be resent by completing this request form: [http://www.emailmeform.com/builder/eml/Walden/RequestMeditrekCredentials](http://www.emailmeform.com/builder/eml/Walden/RequestMeditrekCredentials).

**Note:** If students are unable to find their preceptor or field site in the dropdown box after Week 1 and their application has been approved more than 1 week, they should e-mail nursingfield@mail.waldenu.edu.

### Change of Preceptor After Course Begins

Because circumstances change, sometimes students need to change preceptors during their practicum experience. If students need to change their preceptor after the practicum course begins, students will need to do the following:

- Notify the assigned faculty member immediately to discuss the impact of completing course requirements and the option of receiving an incomplete grade to gain additional time to log hours with a new preceptor.
- Notify the Field Education Office immediately. The field education staff will open a new replacement application for you in Meditrek®. Students must submit a new replacement
application for the new preceptor to be approved. If the new preceptor involves a new practicum site, then it is likely the practicum experience will be delayed if an Affiliation Agreements not on file.

Field Education Office

Field education coordinators are Walden employees who help students understand the practicum policies and procedures. They answer questions about the practicum application process, review materials to ensure that students have completed all required application and documentation and work collaboratively with the specialization coordinators and the program director throughout the approval process. Once practicum applications have been approved, the field education coordinators ensure that students are enrolled in their appropriate practicum course.

Field education coordinators are assigned to students by region. There are six field education staff members assigned to each region to provide assistance and support to students through the practicum application process. The staff are assigned by role and each is responsible to review the various components of practicum applications. The field education staff are assigned to the following roles by region:

- Nurse Field Education Coordinator: Responsible for ensuring the preceptor and field site meet the course requirements. This coordinator approves the preceptor/field site section of the application. This coordinator holds student appointments to provide support and guidance on preceptor and field site course requirements.

- Verification Field Education Coordinator: Responsible for ensuring students have completed the onboarding requirements. This coordinator reviews and approves the onboarding section of the application and reviews student accounts in CastleBranch. This coordinator holds student appointments to provide support and guidance on onboarding requirements.

- Affiliation Agreement Field Education Coordinator: Responsible for facilitating the Affiliation Agreement process with nominated field sites. This coordinator holds student appointments to provide updates and information on Affiliation Agreements. Please note that the actual contract negotiation is completed by a contract administrator as part of the legal department in the Central Office for Field Experience at Walden.

- Assistant Field Education Coordinators: Multiple coordinators are responsible for reviewing applications to include license reviews, preceptor forms, professional liability insurance documents and they complete a degree audit to verify course prerequisites have been met. These staff members also process registrations for practicum courses.

- Support Field Education Coordinator: Responsible for providing support for Meditrek® to include credentials, submitting applications, uploading documents, time logs, patient logs, and evaluations.

- Field Education Coordinator: Responsible for assisting students with the application process in general along with providing students support and guidance on searching for preceptors. This coordinator meets with students to provide support in searching for preceptors and field sites along with general questions about practicum.
Here are the different ways in which students can reach the field experience staff:

- **E-mail:** nursingfield@mail.waldenu.edu. E-mail is often the most efficient way to receive a prompt response. The response time averages between 1 and 2 business days.
- **Live Chat:** https://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/contactus. Live Chat is a great way to communicate with fully trained team members in real time. Live Chat is the best way to reach the field experience staff when they are experiencing high call volume.
- **Phone:** 855-593-9632. Periods of high call volume are often experienced during term start times so sending an e-mail, using Live Chat, or scheduling an appointment are great options to get in touch with field experience staff.
- **Appointments:** https://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/contactus. Students can arrange for a phone appointment online to schedule a time to speak with one of the team members in the students’ region by role.
- **Quick Answers:** https://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/home. Search the online database for answers to questions and get a quick answer online.

Field education staff are available to students via e-mail, phone, or appointment. Students can find their regional field education coordinator online at http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/contactus.
Section 5. Practicum Policies

This manual contains only select policy information. All Walden students agree to abide by all university policies and procedures as a condition of acceptance and continued enrollment. Students should consult the student handbook for complete information about university policies and procedures.

Student Conduct and Responsibilities

The following expectations for conduct and behavior apply to all constituents of the university, including students, faculty, and staff. The university supports and expects its members to comply with the principles developed by the International Center for Academic Integrity, as follows:

- **Honesty**: An academic community of integrity advances the quest for truth and knowledge by requiring intellectual and personal honesty in learning, teaching, research, and service.
- **Trust**: An academic community of integrity fosters a climate of mutual trust, encourages the free exchange of ideas, and enables all to reach their highest potential.
- **Fairness**: An academic community of integrity establishes clear standards, practices, and procedures and expects fairness in the interactions of students, instructors, and administrators.
- **Respect**: An academic community of integrity recognizes the participatory nature of the learning process and honors and respects a wide range of opinions and ideas.
- **Responsibility**: An academic community of integrity upholds personal accountability and depends upon action in the face of wrongdoing.

Walden is committed to conducting its affairs in accordance with this code in a socially responsible and ethical manner consistent with the Walden community’s respective educational, research, scholarly, and social change missions. As such, Walden supports a code of conduct that is consistent with applicable federal, state, and local laws guaranteeing nondiscrimination for all protected classifications, as well as with the university’s nondiscrimination policies. In addition, members shall not conduct themselves either inside or outside of the classroom in a manner that is unduly disruptive or unethical or that might lower the status or damage the reputation of the university.

Academic Standing

All Walden students are expected to remain in good academic standing throughout their studies, including the practicum, in accordance with university requirements.

Student Professional Competence Policy

There can be situations in which students maintain satisfactory academic standing but exhibit behaviors that raise questions about their capacity as professionals. There are a number of professional skills and characteristics that are important for those who provide services to
children, adolescents, and adults, as well as to professional organizations, in a variety of settings. These interpersonal/professional skills include, but are not limited to, adherence to ethical standards published by professional organizations, professional deportment, sensitivity to client issues, and appropriate use of supervision. Situations can arise in which faculty members, students, or other professionals observe behaviors by other students that demonstrate a lack of appropriate interpersonal or professional skills. The purpose of this policy is to provide a set of procedures that Walden faculty members will use to address such issues.

For the purposes of this procedure, a distinction is made between different types of behaviors that impede student development. These include (a) problem behaviors, (b) inappropriate and/or unprofessional conduct, and (c) critical behaviors.

**Problem Behaviors**

Problem behaviors occur when a student’s attitude and/or behavior is of concern and requires remediation but is not unexpected for professionals in training. These types of behaviors include, but are not limited to, performance anxiety, discomfort with clients of diverse ethnic backgrounds, and lack of appreciation for agency rules and expectations. These types of behaviors

- Can typically be remediated with feedback and further training and supervision,
- Do not result in the potential for physical and/or emotional harm to others,
- Are limited in duration, and
- Will likely not develop into an inappropriate and/or unprofessional conduct situation.

**Inappropriate and/or Unprofessional Conduct**

Inappropriate and/or unprofessional conduct is defined broadly as an interference in professional functioning that is reflected in one or more of the following ways:

- An inability and/or unwillingness to acquire and integrate professional standards into one’s repertoire of professional behavior;
- An inability to acquire professional skills to reach an acceptable level of competency; and/or
- An inability to control personal stress and/or excessive emotional reactions that interfere with professional functioning.

Problems typically become identified as inappropriate and/or unprofessional conduct when they include one or more of the following characteristics:

- The student fails to acknowledge, understand, or address the problem when it is identified, resulting in further manifestations signifying a more pervasive problem;
- The problem is not merely a reflection of a skill deficit that can be remediated by academic or didactic training. In this case, a group of professional experts (e.g., practicum course faculty members and preceptors) determines that the deficit is likely not correctable;
- The quality of services delivered by the student is sufficiently negatively affected;
- The problem negatively affects other students’ learning;
- A disproportionate amount of attention and intervention by training personnel and/or instructors is required to remediate the problem; and/or
• The student’s behavior does not change as a function of feedback, remediation efforts, and/or time.

Critical Behaviors

While critical behaviors can occur in the online learning environment, they are most likely to manifest during face-to-face meetings (e.g., residencies, meetings associated with coursework, practicum settings). Critical behaviors put, or have the potential to put, students or faculty members (including one’s self) at risk for physical harm or serious emotional distress. These types of behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following:

• Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol;
• Carrying a weapon;
• Harassing, sexual or other types;
• Having thoughts of suicide;
• Abusing verbally;
• Exhibiting psychological problems (e.g., those associated with such things as psychosis or mania); and/or
• Threats of harm, intimidation, and abusive or threatening postings.

These behaviors may result in legal, law enforcement, medical, and/or mental health interventions. The procedures for addressing these behaviors are covered in the Review Process for Code of Conduct Violations section of the student handbook.

Nondiscrimination and Sexual Harassment Policies

In Walden’s Code of Conduct, the university maintains the following nondiscrimination and nonharassment policies.

Nondiscrimination

Walden University does not discriminate or tolerate discrimination by or against members of the university community on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, mental or physical disability, veteran status, marital status, or other protected characteristics in the admission to, access to, or treatment or employment in any of its programs or activities.

Sexual Harassment

Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 prohibits sexual discrimination in educational settings. Walden’s Sexual Misconduct policy, which includes policies related to sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual violence may be found in the Walden University Student Handbook and by visiting https://www.waldenu.edu/experience/support-services/student-safety-title-ix.

If students have been a victim of any form of sexual violence, harassment, or discrimination (or know someone who has), whether at a Walden-sponsored event or at a field experience site, their first priority is their own personal safety. After the students are safe, they should contact either
the field experience coordinator or Walden’s Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for receiving and processing, in a timely manner, reports from students, faculty, staff, and administrators regarding rights and responsibilities concerning Sexual Misconduct in violation of Title IX. Any questions or complaints regarding Title IX may be referred to the Walden University Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Title IX Coordinator or to the Office of Civil Rights.

**Walden University’s Title IX Coordinators**
Title IX Coordinator Gina Dyson, Director, Student Affairs
Phone: 443-220-7016
E-mail: gina.dyson@mail.waldenu.edu

Title IX Deputy Coordinator Julie K. Ogren, Associate Director, Student Affairs
Phone: 612-312-2376
E-mail: julie.ogren@mail.waldenu.edu

Title IX Deputy Coordinator, Academic Residencies
RoChelle Gilbert, EdD, Associate Director, Academic Residencies
Phone: 612-308-9254
E-mail: rochelle.gilbert@mail.waldenu.edu

**Walden University School of Nursing Onboarding Requirement Policy**

All MSN and DNP students in the School of Nursing participating in practicum courses commencing on and after November 27, 2017 will be required to complete specific onboarding requirements in order to be approved to complete field experience. Some of these Onboarding Requirements* must be obtained or completed through Walden’s designated provider, CastleBranch. Information about CastleBranch can be found at http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/applicationprocess.

Students who do not meet this requirement prior to term start will not be permitted to begin their field experience until the onboarding requirements have been met. In situations such as this, failure to meet the requirements prior to term start may result in students not being able to start field experience until the next term.

Details of the practicum application process can be found in the program practicum manual located at http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/formsanddocuments. Requirements completed through CastleBranch must be started prior to submitting a practicum application and completed prior to term start.

*Onboarding Requirements defined: A specific set of pre-practicum requirements established by Walden School of Nursing based on the most common field site requirements, which will enable students to potentially qualify for a wide range of field sites. These onboarding requirements vary from state to state; however, they generally include a background check, drug screening, health requirements, required training, and professional liability insurance as well as additional
onboarding requirements that may be required by the field site. If an approved field site requires something in addition to what is required by Walden University, an additional package can be obtained through CastleBranch, at the request of Walden’s Field Education office, to fulfill those requirements.

**Walden University School of Nursing Technical Standards Policy**

**Technical Standards Necessary to the Successful Completion of School of Nursing Programs**

Walden University’s School of Nursing programs are designed to educate nurses for today’s professional environment by developing the skills of reflection, independent learning, and enhanced critical thinking that will enable students to graduate from its programs and better equip graduates to advance their careers, develop leadership skills, and stay current in their field throughout their career. Students enrolled in Walden School of Nursing programs must establish professional relationships both within and outside of the university setting and may be required to work actively and physically both in the classroom and with other practitioners and patients in a professional setting during field experiences. Therefore, the following list of technical standards are provided to clearly establish the level of capability required to successfully complete School of Nursing programs of study and to encourage current and prospective students to self-assess their qualifications for the program.

The School of Nursing encourages any student who may not be able to meet these standards due to a disability to contact the Office of Disability Services to discuss reasonable accommodations. A reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment of to an instructional activity, equipment, facility, program or service that enables a qualified student with a disability to have an equal opportunity to fulfil the requirements necessary for graduation from the nursing program.

A student in the School of Nursing must meet technical standard requirements in the following areas (examples are not all-inclusive):

1. **MOTOR AND MOBILITY FUNCTION**
2. **BEHAVIORAL/EMOTIONAL FUNCTION**
3. **CRITICAL-THINKING AND COGNITIONSKILLS**
4. **INTERPERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS**
5. **COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

Students are advised that their success in their chosen program may be dependent on an ability to meet these technical standards.

**1. MOTOR AND MOBILITY FUNCTION**

Students must be able to perform the following functions:

- Ability to observe patient condition and responses to health and illness;
• Coordinate both gross and fine motor muscular movements, maintain equilibrium, and functionally use the senses of touch and vision;
• Maintain stamina and physical ability required to participate in classes and activities that are part of the curriculum;
• Execute movements sufficient to communicate effectively in a written format;
• Obtain and interpret data from assessment techniques such as observation, palpation of anatomical structures, percussion, noting surface characteristics, assessment of tone, temperature, depth, and other diagnostic procedures; and/or
• Travel to clinical education sites.

2. BEHAVIORAL/EMOTIONAL FUNCTION
Students must be able to perform the following functions:
• Maintain the mental acuity and professional demeanor in stressful environments or during impending deadlines; and/or
• Maintain the mental acuity and professional demeanor sufficient to complete timed written and/or oral examinations and laboratory practical assessments within established time limits, especially when speed of performance or speed of decision making is a critical component.

3. CRITICAL-THINKING AND COGNITION SKILLS
Students must be able to perform the following functions:
• Analyze and synthesize data from a variety of sources;
• Put research findings into practice;
• Exhibit a positive, interactive response to feedback;
• Use sound judgment and apply safety precautions as appropriate; and/or
• Demonstrate higher-level cognitive abilities, which include
  o Rational thought,
  o Measurement,
  o Calculation,
  o Conceptualization,
  o Analysis,
  o Synthesis,
  o Organization,
  o Memory,
  o Application,
  o Clinical reasoning,
  o Ethical reasoning, and
  o Sound judgment.

4. INTERPERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS
Students must be able to perform the following functions:
• Interact appropriately with individuals and groups from a variety of social, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds;
• Actively participate and contribute to group projects;
• Consistently display integrity, honesty, empathy, caring, fairness, respect for self and others, diligence, and dedication;
• Promptly complete all assignments and responsibilities;
• Develop mature, sensitive, and effective relationships, not only with patients but with all members of the university community and other healthcare teams;
• Tolerate emotionally and mentally demanding workloads;
• Identify potentially violent or abusive situations with patients in order to safely withdraw from the interaction;
• Function effectively under stress, and proactively make use of available resources to help maintain both physical and mental health;
• Adapt to changing environments, display flexibility, and be able to learn in the face of uncertainty; and/or
• Take responsibility for themselves and their behaviors.

5. COMMUNICATION SKILLS
Students must be able to perform the following functions:
• Communicate effectively in verbal and written form in any applicable setting including communications with university faculty and staff, other students, and other healthcare professionals;
• Elicit, convey, and clarify information in a timely manner;
• Complete written work at a professional level in a timely manner;
• Document patient/client assessment/evaluation, intervention plans, and progress notations succinctly and in a timeframe similar to clinical constraints;
• Achieve basic technical competency required to function in the classroom and professional setting including functionality in word processing, e-mail, and use of the Internet; and/or
• Effectively describe perceived changes and perceive nonverbal communication.

Walden University is committed to providing equal access to qualified students with disabilities. A qualified student is a student with a disability who, with or without reasonable accommodations, meets the technical standards requirements for the participation in SON programs and activities. School of Nursing applicants and students who need reasonable accommodations to meet these requirements due to functional limitations caused by a disability, should contact disability@mail.waldenu.edu at the earliest opportunity to discuss available options. Students requesting disability accommodations must register with the Office of Disability Services prior to the start of their program, or as soon as possible if their personal situation changes and they are in need of disability accommodations.

*If students require an accommodation to complete any of the technical standards, it is their responsibility to contact the Disability Services Office (disability@mail.waldenu.edu, 612-312-1205, or 1-800-925-3368 x312-1205) to determine if reasonable accommodations can be made. There may be certain physical requirements and standards of performance that the School of Nursing programs cannot accommodate.
Problem Resolution and Process

During their practicum, students may be vulnerable to any number of difficulties that can pose barriers to a successful learning experience. By the time students reach the end of the program, they are entering the work setting and should demonstrate effective problem-solving skills in many difficult situations. However, students are not expected to resolve practicum problems alone.

Practicum Site Personnel

If a problem develops between students and their practicum preceptor (or other site personnel), they should consult the appropriate individual at Walden to help determine the appropriate strategy to resolve the problem in an informal manner: first, students should consult the practicum course faculty member, and then, if needed, they may consult the specialization coordinator.

Significant problems that arise in the practicum setting should be addressed using the process available to employees at the site and as officially documented in the site Affiliation Agreement signed for the practicum experience. The appropriate Walden faculty or staff member will assist students in preparing any necessary documentation and will closely monitor the progress of the problem resolution, including any grievance process.

The specialization coordinator and/or program director should inform the School of Nursing’s dean about any unresolved issues and must formally document the efforts to resolve the issues presented. The dean will review the efforts to resolve the problem and inform students of other possible recourse options.

Walden Faculty or Staff Members

Consistent with ethical guidelines, in nearly all situations, students should initially address any concerns directly with the faculty or staff member involved (e.g., practicum course faculty member, specialization coordinator) and attempt to resolve the issue at an informal level, before proceeding to a request for intervention (e.g., from the program director or dean). Failure to address the problem at the program level may delay resolution, as the problem will likely be referred back to the program level.

There shall be no retaliation against any student who identifies a problem or seeks assistance in resolving a conflict involving a member of Walden’s faculty or staff, including those students who choose to file a formal grievance.

Step 1. Consult the Program Director

If a problem develops between students and their practicum course faculty member (or other faculty or staff member), the program director will help students determine the appropriate strategy to resolve the problem in an informal manner. The faculty or staff member and/or the program director should fully inform the dean about any unresolved issues and document all attempts to resolve the issues students have presented. All parties should receive copies of any documentation after it is submitted to and approved by the appropriate dean.
Step 2. Consult the Dean
If students are not able to resolve the problem with the support and intervention of the program director, they should approach the dean to seek guidance and/or intervention. The dean should already have copies of all the documentation of the problem and resolution efforts. The dean will initiate further investigation of the concern. Students may be offered counseling or other needed supports at the dean’s discretion.

Step 3. Consider Filing a Grievance
If the dean is unable to facilitate resolution of the problem, students may consider filing a grievance following Walden University’s grievance procedure, as described below. Note: Filing a grievance may initiate reassignment of one or more of the involved parties for a reasonable period to allow for an appropriate investigation of the situation. The right to confidentiality, both of the complainant and of the accused, will be respected to the extent possible insofar as it does not interfere with the institution’s legal obligation or ability to investigate allegations of misconduct brought to the university’s attention or to take corrective action when it is found that misconduct has occurred.

A formal grievance must be identified as such in writing and directed to the chief academic officer, using the electronic Student Academic Appeals form. The grievance normally should originate no more than 30 calendar days following a resolution decision by the dean or designee (refer to Step 2) concerning the complaint or conduct that gave rise to the grievance. The chief academic officer initially reviews the case to determine appropriate action, which can include referring the matter to an appropriate university office for review. If the conflict is resolved at this stage, no further action is necessary.

Step 4. Hearing Committee
If the conflict cannot be resolved at the initial review stage, the chief academic officer appoints a hearing committee to review the allegations. A written decision from the committee will be delivered in as timely a manner as possible, while allowing for appropriate investigation and consideration, not to exceed 60 calendar days from the date the complaint is filed with the chief academic officer, unless the committee notifies the parties of the need for an extension to properly complete the process. The written records are confidential but available for on-site review by the person(s) directly involved.

In all cases, the decision of the chief academic officer is final and not subject to appeal.
Section 6. Frequently Asked Questions

**How long is my practicum?**
There are four courses in the nurse practitioner specializations with practicum components. For students with catalog years before Spring 2018 each course requires a total of 144 hours of direct patient care and must be completed by the end of Week 10 during the 11-week quarter. For students with catalog years after Spring 2018 each course requires a total of 160 hours of direct patient care and must be completed by the end of Week 10 during the 11-week quarter.

**Can I take two practicum courses concurrently?**
Walden recommends completing one clinical course at a time because of the number of hours that need to be completed during one 11-week quarter. A Fast Track option has been developed for students with catalog years before Spring 2018 in AGACNP, AGPCNP, and FNP specializations only. You may contact your advisor to determine if you qualify. If you meet the criteria and you are approved to complete two clinical courses simultaneously, you would be responsible for the 288 hours in addition to the didactic coursework.

**Do I have to finish all the practicum hours during each course?**
Yes, you must complete the required practicum hours during each course.

**What if I do not complete all of my practicum hours during a course?**
You should not have any problems accumulating enough hours. If you are concerned about this, you should contact your practicum course faculty member immediately.

**When should I submit my practicum application?**
You must submit the practicum application via Meditrek® no later than the 1st day of the quarter prior to the quarter in which you plan to start the practicum. (If you live in Alabama or Wyoming, you must submit the practicum application on the 1st day of the quarter 2 quarters prior to the quarter in which you plan to start the practicum.) You should review the deadline information in this manual. Application materials received after their respective deadlines are not processed until a later term.

**What is the earliest I can submit my practicum application?**
You may submit your NP Practicum Application 1–2 quarters before the deadline. The deadline is the 1st day of the quarter before the quarter students wish to begin the practicum.

**My site provides liability insurance coverage for me. Do I still need to have my own?**
Yes. All Walden students beginning a practicum are required to purchase professional liability insurance.
Who at my practicum site should I designate in Meditrek® as the practicum site Affiliation Agreement contact?

The Affiliation Agreement contact must be a site administrator who has the authority to sign legal agreements. Often, this person is the CEO, contracts manager, site director, human resources staff member, owner, or president. Large organizations may have an on-site legal department that reviews such agreements and may have an attorney who signs Affiliation Agreements.

If my potential preceptor does not have a master’s degree in nursing, can I still nominate him or her for my practicum?

You should make every attempt to find a preceptor who meets all the requirements outlined in this manual. If you know of someone who you believe is an ideal preceptor but who does not meet these requirements, then you should follow the instructions for using a co-preceptor or mentor.

When can I begin my practicum?

You may begin your first practicum experience after they have successfully completed all prerequisite coursework, submitted their practicum application documents, received notification of approval of their practicum application, and been enrolled in the practicum course. You must be in good academic standing to begin the practicum experience. If you are unsure of your academic standing, you should contact the Academic Advising Team at academicadvising@mail.waldenu.edu.

My site wants me to begin practicum activities before I start the practicum course. Am I allowed to start early?

No. You must wait until the second day of the practicum course and after receiving instructor approval of your objectives before beginning their practicum activities. Any hours accumulated prior to the second day of the practicum course are not accepted.

Can my practicum experience be virtual?

No. Walden does not offer an option for doing the practicum virtually. All clinical hours must be in an approved clinical site in direct care of patients.

Can I be paid for my practicum?

No. You cannot engage in a paid practicum experience under any circumstances.

How can I obtain professional liability insurance?

Walden does not endorse a particular insurance provider. Students usually obtain professional liability insurance coverage through companies such as Mercer, March, or Nurses Service Organization (NSO).

Will my preceptor be compensated?

Although Walden University School of Nursing does not compensate preceptors financially for preceptorships, they are provided with the following benefits:
• Verification document of hours precepted to utilize for continuing education and licensure renewal requirements; and
• Access to free continuing education opportunities provided by Walden’s School of Nursing Continuing Education program for nurses.

**Onboarding Frequently Asked Questions**

**Why are onboarding requirements being required?**
All healthcare facilities accredited by The Joint Commission ([http://www.jointcommission.org/](http://www.jointcommission.org/)) are required to obtain a background check on all employees, volunteers, and students that enter their facilities. Walden University is now requiring onboarding requirements to be completed in CastleBranch for students engaging in practicum experiences to ensure all students starting practicum courses have completed all requirements.

**My field site does not require me to complete a background check, drug test or immunizations. Do I still need to complete CastleBranch?**
Yes, this is a requirement of Walden University for students to complete prior to beginning practicum. Regardless of what your field site may require, completion of a CastleBranch package is a Walden University requirement.

**Do I need to complete onboarding requirements in CastleBranch if I am an employee of the field site?**
Yes, this is a Walden University requirement that applies to all SON practicum students. Being an employee of your field site does not exempt students from this requirement. Please note that, for purposes of completing practicum, the Onboarding Requirements set forth by Walden University and agreed to by Walden University and the Field site must be completed prior to the student beginning the practicum even if similar requirements had been completed as part of the student’s employment.

**Do I need to obtain a new package each quarter for each practicum course?**
No; however, you will need to obtain an updated background check and drug screen annually in CastleBranch if your practicum experiences encompass more than 1 calendar year. Some field sites may require a more recent background check and drug screen, so you may be requested to update those screens in CastleBranch depending on the specific field site requirement. The field experience staff will contact you for field site specific requirements.

**What if a background check or drug screen was performed by my employer?**
All background checks and drug screens must be completed through CastleBranch for validation and verification for Walden University. We are unable to accept background checks or drug screens from another source other than through CastleBranch.

**What is CastleBranch?**
CastleBranch is Walden’s designated vendor for onboarding requirements. CastleBranch is a service that allows students to complete onboarding requirements and Walden’s field education staff to verify completion of requirements. CastleBranch provides a secure and confidential platform to complete. CastleBranch provides a service for us to track, verify, monitor, manage, and store all documentation required for practicum placement for auditing purposes.
What are onboarding requirements?
Onboarding is a set of practicum requirements established by Walden’s School of Nursing based on the most common field site requirements, which will enable students to potentially qualify for a wide range of field sites. These onboarding requirements vary from state to state; however, they generally include a background check, drug screening, health requirements, required training, professional liability insurance and any additional onboarding requirements that may be required by the field site. If an approved field site requires something in addition to what is required by Walden University, an additional package can be obtained through CastleBranch, at the request of Walden’s Field Education Office, to fulfill those requirements.

How do I sign up for a package with CastleBranch?
Go to the Walden portal for CastleBranch at walden.castlebranch.com. The site will walk you through the steps of signing up for a package. There is no package code required.

What is Walden’s package code for CastleBranch?
Walden University students do not need a package code. Students need to register for a profile by going directly to the CastleBranch portal for Walden at walden.castlebranch.com. The site will walk you through the steps of signing up for a package. There is no package code required.

Can I just send all my documents directly to Walden University?
No, Walden University cannot directly accept any personal health documentation, background checks, or drug test reports. All documents received directly to Walden University will be immediately and confidentially destroyed.

How are the results of my background check shared with my practicum field site?
The results of your background check are only shared with the field sites to which you have authorized access through your practicum application. Once you have authorized a field site, through submission of a practicum application with a FERPA release in Meditrek®, Walden University will be able to provide verification and attestation to the field site directly.

How do I share my results and documents in CastleBranch to a field site?
Students can share their results and documentation in CastleBranch to representatives at their field site. Students can call CastleBranch directly to ask how to share the results with their field site.

What happens when my requirements expire in CastleBranch?
It is the student’s responsibility to ensure all requirements are up to date in CastleBranch. Students can update requirements in CastleBranch when they expire. CastleBranch will send e-mail notifications when requirements are due to expire. Students must upload updated documentation in CastleBranch to keep requirements in compliance.

How long will it take to complete the background check once I provide the necessary information to CastleBranch?
Turnaround time for background checks vary by state, but according to CastleBranch, 95% of background check results are completed within 3–5 business days. Information specific to your state can be obtained by contacting CastleBranch customer service. Students can request an
expedited review through CastleBranch by paying an extra service fee. Please contact CastleBranch for more information.
Section 7. Contact Information

School of Nursing

Nursing Field Education
Nursing Field Education website: http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son
Nursing Field Education Staff: nursingfield@mail.waldenu.edu
Nursing Field Education Supervisors: nursingfield@mail.waldenu.edu

NP Specialization Coordinators

Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner
Judi Kuric DNP, ACNP-BC, ACNPC, FNP-BC, CNRN SCRN: judi.kuric@mail.waldenu.edu

Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner
Kate Moore PhD, DNP, APRN-BC, CNE, FCCM: Kathryn.moore@mail.waldenu.edu

Family Nurse Practitioner
Phyllis D. Morgan, PhD, FNP-BC, CNE, FAANP: phyllis.morgan@mail.waldenu.edu
Stefanie Gatica, DNP, FNP-BC: Stefanie.gatica@mail.waldenu.edu

Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner
Timothy J. Legg, PhD, PsyD, PMHNP-BC, GNP-BC, CARN-AP, MAC, CAADC, CNE, NEA-BC, APHN-BC: timothy.legg@mail.waldenu.edu

MSN Nurse Practitioner Specializations Program Director
Linda Steele, PhD, ARNP, ANP-BC: linda.steele@mail.waldenu.edu

Vice Provost College of Health Sciences and Dean for the School of Nursing
Andrea Lindell, RN, PhD, ANEF: andrea.lindell@mail.waldenu.edu

Students should begin their inquiry at the level at which their question is most likely to be answered. Delays in obtaining information may result if students inquire first from an administrator and must be referred to a more appropriate resource person.

Note: Students should be familiar with the information in this manual, the School of Nursing Handbook, and the nursing field education website before contacting a School of Nursing faculty member or staff member for help.

Other Important Resources

Field Education Resource Links

Quick Answers: http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/home#s-lg-box-4293425.
Meditrek® Webinars:  
http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/formsanddocuments

Tutorials: http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/formsanddocuments

How to Submit an Application: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sk9OCfNE-cg&feature=youtu.be

Schedule an Appointment With Field Education Coordinators From the Region:  
http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/contactus

**Academic Advising Team**

Academic advisors are available at 1-800-WALDENU (1-800-925-3368), option 3, Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Central time. Students can also e-mail advisors for the MSN program: academic.advising@mail.waldenu.edu.

**Office of Disability Services**

The director of disability services can be reached by phone at 1-612-312-1205, or e-mail at disability@mail.waldenu.edu. For more information, visit the Office of Disability Services.
Section 8. Programs of Study

MSN Core Courses

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Credit Hour(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6001 - Foundations for Graduate Study</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6050 - Policy and Advocacy for Improving Population Health</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6051 - Transforming Nursing and Healthcare Through Technology</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6052 - Essentials of Evidence-Based Practice</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6053 - Interprofessional Organization and Systems Leadership</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MSN NP Specialty Track Courses

For students in catalog years before Spring 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FNP Track Courses</th>
<th>AGPCNP Track Courses</th>
<th>AGACNP Track Courses</th>
<th>PMHNP Track Courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6501 - Advanced Pathophysiology (Didactic—5 cr.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NURS 6512 - Advanced Health Assessment and Diagnostic Reasoning (Didactic—5 cr.)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6531 - Advanced Practice Care of Adults Across the Lifespan (Didactic—3 cr., Practicum—2 cr.)</td>
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<td>NURS 6630 - Psychopharmacologic Approaches to Treatment of Psychopathology (Didactic—5 cr.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6551 - Primary Care of Women (Didactic—3 cr., Practicum—2 cr.)</td>
<td>NURS 6551 - Primary Care of Women (Didactic—3 cr., Practicum—2 cr.)</td>
<td>NURS 6540 – Advanced Practice Care of Frail Elders (Didactic—3 cr., Practicum—2 cr.)</td>
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<td>NURS 6550 - Advanced Practice Care of Adults in Acute Care Settings I (Didactic—3 cr., Practicum—2 cr.)</td>
<td>NURS 6650 - Psychotherapy with Groups and Families (Didactic—3 cr., Practicum—2 cr.)</td>
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<td>NURS 6560 - Advanced Practice Care of Adults in Acute Care Settings II (Didactic—3 cr., Practicum—2 cr.)</td>
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<td>56 cr. (with Core Courses)—576 Practicum Hours</td>
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**MSN NP Specialty Track Courses**

For students in catalog years after Spring 2018

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Fast Track Option

The School of Nursing recommends completing one clinical course at a time because of the number of required hours that need to be completed during one 11-week quarter. A Fast Track option was developed for students with a catalog year prior to Spring 2018. The eligible specializations include the AGACNP, AGPCNP, and FNP specializations. PMHNP students are not eligible for a Fast Track option.

In addition to the parameters above, students who wish to double up on practicum courses must petition Academic Advising for approval. Petitions can be submitted up to two quarters prior to the start of your practicum and can be found on the Academic Advising tab of your portal. Authorization to take two practicum courses (1) is contingent upon approval of your sites and preceptors by the Field Experience Office via the practicum application process and (2) will be granted only if you meet the following criteria, which must be addressed in your petition:

- Enrolled in a catalog year before Spring 2018
- Enrolled in one of the three NP specializations: AGACNP, AGPCNP, or FNP
- 3.0 GPA in the MSN program
- Maximum employment of no more than 16 hours per week
- Ability to complete 28.8 hours of practicum per week for 10 weeks for a total of 288 hours (144 hours per course)
- Grade of B or better in NURS 6501, 6512, and 6521.

Students approved to complete two clinical courses simultaneously are responsible for the 288 practicum hours in addition to the didactic coursework.

If you have any additional questions, please contact your academic advisor at academicadvising@mail.waldenu.edu.

Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Specialization

*Note:* For students with catalog years before Spring 2018.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Sequence</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6531: Advanced Practice Care of Adults Across the Lifespan</td>
<td>• Must complete first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• May be taken concurrently only with NURS 6540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6540: Primary Care of Frail Elders</td>
<td>• May be taken concurrently only with NURS 6531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6550: Advance Practice Care of Adult in Acute Care Settings I</td>
<td>• Cannot take concurrently with any practicum course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6560: Advance Practice Care of Adult in Acute Care Settings II</td>
<td>• Must be final course</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• Cannot take concurrently with any practicum course</td>
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Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner Specialization

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NURS 6531</td>
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<tr>
<td>NURS 6551: Primary Care of Women</td>
<td>• May be taken concurrently only with</td>
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<tr>
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<td>NURS 6565</td>
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<td>NURS 6551</td>
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Family Nurse Practitioner Specialization

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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>• May be taken concurrently only with</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NURS 6565 (but must be final course)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6551: Primary Care of Women</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• May be taken concurrently with NURS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6541 or NURS 6551</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course Descriptions

For students in catalog years before Spring 2018

**NURS 6501 - Advanced Pathophysiology (5 cr.)**
Advanced practice nurses must be equipped with an in-depth understanding of pathophysiological disease processes across the lifespan. In this course, students focus on understanding the biophysiological processes, the deviations from these processes, and an in-depth examination of the scientific concepts related to the biology of disease processes. Advanced practice nursing students learn how normal organ systems function and how organ systems are interrelated to help the body maintain homeostasis. Through knowledge of pathophysiological disease processes, students gain the information needed to develop appropriate treatment plans for patients across the lifespan. Students explore a variety of topics, such as immunity, inflammation, cancer genetics, and cardiovascular disease. They also examine a range of disease processes, including hematologic, renal, neurologic, gastrointestinal, and reproductive disorders.
NURS 6512 - Advanced Health Assessment and Diagnostic Reasoning (5 cr.)
The physical and emotional well-being of patients and families can be complex and multifaceted. Advanced practice nurses need to have the knowledge and ability to provide safe, competent, and comprehensive physical health assessments. Students in this course focus on concepts and skills to assess patients across the lifespan. They learn to use diagnostic reasoning, advanced communication, and physical assessment skills to identify changes in health patterns. Students also use a systematic approach through which they focus on the assessment of patients with acute and chronic health problems. The advanced skills of suturing, reading 12 Lead EKGs, and interpreting X-rays will be covered. Students engage in course assignments that emphasize risk assessment, diagnostic reasoning, and evidence-based assessment across the lifespan.

NURS 6521 - Advanced Pharmacology (5 cr.)
A solid foundation in the concepts and principles of drug therapy across the lifespan is essential to the work of advanced practice nurses. Students in this course apply the advanced principles of pharmacology, including pharmacogenomics, pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics, by analysis of common drug classes prescribed by advanced practice nurses across the lifespan. Factors influencing successful therapy such as effectiveness, safety, acceptability, cost, genetic/environmental influences, complementary regimens, and patient behaviors are considered. Through this course, students prepare to examine complex decisions in the management and treatment of selected acute and chronic diseases across the lifespan through pharmacologic and nonpharmacologic agents. Advanced practice nursing students will have a more in-depth understanding of drug legislation and regulation for prescribing drugs.

NURS 6531 - Advanced Practice Care of Adults Across the Lifespan (5 cr.)
In this course, students learn how nurse practitioners master the art and science of clinical decision making among adult populations. Students focus on the diagnosis and management of primary healthcare needs and problems of the adult and elderly adult. They engage in a variety of course assignments that focus on physical and behavioral disease processes central to diagnosing illnesses as well as planning, implementing, and evaluating therapeutic treatment programs for acute illnesses commonly encountered in a primary healthcare setting. Students gain confidence in clinical experiences in a primary healthcare setting where they learn to plan, implement, and evaluate therapeutic regimens for adult patients with common acute and chronic illnesses. (Prerequisite(s): NURS 6501, NURS 6512, and NURS 6521.) Note: This course requires a minimum of 144 practicum hours.

NURS 6540 - Advanced Practice Care of Frail Elders (5 cr.)
The frail elderly are a subpopulation characterized by inactivity and weight loss. In this course, students focus on the complex healthcare and management needs of the frail elderly by advanced nurse practitioners in community settings. Students learn to plan, implement, and evaluate therapeutic regimens through the analysis of case studies and the actual care of frail elderly in various settings. Additionally, students examine content related to end-of-life care and caregiver issues to gain the knowledge and sensibilities needed to implement positive change for the quality of life available to this vulnerable population. (Prerequisite(s): NURS 6501, NURS 6512, NURS 6521, and NURS 6531). Note: This course requires a minimum of 144 practicum hours.
NURS 6541 - Primary Care of Adolescents and Children (5 cr.)
How can a nurse practitioner master the art and science of clinical decision making among pediatric populations? This course provides students with the opportunity to answer this question as they examine content related to the primary healthcare of children and adolescents while focusing on common health problems. Students learn how to identify, diagnose, and manage these problems. They also gain confidence in clinical experience in a primary healthcare setting that provides opportunities to assess, diagnose, plan, implement, and evaluate therapeutic regimens for acute and chronic illnesses commonly found in children and adolescents. (Prerequisite(s): NURS 6501, NURS 6512, NURS 6521, and NURS 6531).
Note: This course requires a minimum of 144 practicum hours.

NURS 6550 - Advanced Practice Care of Adults in Acute Care Settings I (5 cr.)
The complex assessment and care of patients in the hospital setting will require advanced practice nurses to obtain the specialized skills necessary to provide quality care for patients in these acute care settings. This course is designed to prepare students to provide care for acutely ill and critically ill patients. Students in this course will be introduced to the role of the advanced practice nurse, while gaining confidence in caring for acutely ill patients. Through course assignments and clinical practice in the acute care setting they will plan, implement, and evaluate care for critically ill patients. Students will also increase their knowledge of pharmacologic management of hospitalized patients, while applying knowledge gained through previous coursework. (Prerequisite(s): NURS 6501, NURS 6512, NURS 6521, NURS 6531, and NURS 6540). Note: This course requires a minimum of 144 practicum hours.

NURS 6551 - Primary Care of Women (5 cr.)
How can a nurse practitioner decide what is important to focus on in a 15- to 30-minute appointment with a woman seeking primary care? Students in this course gain opportunities to teach and promote wellness in women through the process of screening for commonly seen in gynecological disorders. Students learn to analyze data to interpret results for the benefit of women seeking assistance with planning healthy lifestyle behaviors. They also gain clinical experience in a primary healthcare setting that provides opportunities to increase competence in diagnosis, treatment, referrals, or follow-up care with a concentration on improving patient outcomes. (Prerequisite(s): NURS 6501, NURS 6512, NURS 6521, NURS 6531, and either NURS 6540 or NURS 6541). Note: This course requires a minimum of 144 practicum hours.

NURS 6560 - Advanced Practice Care of Adults in Acute Care Settings II (5 cr.)
Students in this course will advance their clinical competence in the care of patients in acute care settings by building on knowledge and skills gained in the NURS 6550. Through clinical practice, students will build confidence as they begin the transition from student to advanced practice nurse. Classroom activities and case studies will enable students to explore the complex healthcare system including multiple governmental, social and personal resources available to acutely ill adults across the age continuum. Clinical experiences in hospital settings will provide students with the continued opportunity to develop, implement, and evaluate management plans for adults and older adults with complex acute, critical, and chronic illness. The application of knowledge in the management of patients and the collaboration between the advanced practice nurse and the patient, family, and interprofessional healthcare team are emphasized. (Prerequisite(s): NURS 6501, NURS 6512, NURS 6521, NURS 6531, and NURS 6550). Note: This course requires a minimum of 144 practicum hours.
NURS 6565 - Synthesis in Advanced Practice Care of Complex Patients in Primary Care Settings (5 cr.)
Students in this synthesis course will focus on clinical competence in primary care settings by building on knowledge and skills gained in previous courses. Through clinical practice, students will build confidence as they begin the transition from the role of registered nurse to advanced practice nurse. Classroom activities and case studies will enable students to explore the salient nurse practitioner practice issues involved in the delivery of safe, competent, quality and cost-effective care of patients in a dynamic healthcare system. Clinical experiences in primary care settings will provide students with the continued opportunity to develop, implement, and evaluate management plans for patients with complex health conditions. The application of knowledge in the management of clients and collaboration among the advanced practice nurse and the client, family, and interprofessional healthcare team are emphasized. *(Prerequisite(s): NURS 6501, NURS 6512, NURS 6521, NURS 6531, and either NURS 6540 or NURS 6541, and NURS 6551).* **Note:** This course requires a minimum of 144 practicum hours and must be the last course in the curriculum.

NURS 6630 - Psychopharmacologic Approaches to Treatment of Psychopathology (5 cr.)
At times, psychotherapy is not enough to alleviate the emotional difficulties that some patients face. To that end, psychopharmacologic approaches are needed. Psychiatric mental health nurse practitioners (PMHNPs) must have a strong basis in psychopharmacology, extending from a prior education in pharmacology, to make appropriate medication choices for their patients. Learners in this course consider psychopharmacologic approaches to major mental health disorders including, but not limited to, major depressive disorders, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders as well as psychotic disorders. Learners explore key considerations associated with medication selection, monitoring of efficacy, and long-term management.

NURS 6640 - Psychotherapy With Individuals (5 cr.)
Psychotherapy involves giving more than “good advice.” For the psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner (PMHNP) to be effective, deliberate approaches to therapy must be used that are consistent with evidence-based practices. Learners in this course are introduced to a variety of therapeutic techniques that can be used during psychotherapy sessions with individuals across the lifespan. Emphasis is placed on evidence-based applications of various therapeutic approaches for a wide range of psychiatric issues. The focus of the practicum experience is on psychotherapeutic approaches with individuals. *(3 cr. didactic, 2 cr. practicum; 144 hrs.)*

NURS 6650 - Psychotherapy With Groups and Families (5 cr.)
Managed care has ushered in a new era of effective mental health services. To that end, the psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner (PMHNP) must know how to optimize not only his or her time, but also the treatment benefits associated with family and group therapy. In this course, the emphasis is on the concept of treatment of the family unit. Group dynamics and benefits associated with group therapy are also emphasized along with introducing the learner to techniques that can be used in group therapy settings. The focus of the practicum experience is on the treatment of the family unit as well as the provision of group psychotherapy. *(3 cr. didactic, 2 cr. practicum; 144 hrs.)*
NURS 6660 – Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Role I: Child and Adolescent (5 cr.)
Working from a lifespan approach, this first practicum course for the psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner (PMHNP) is an introduction for the learner to child and adolescent psychiatry. Emphasis is placed on the psychiatric and/or mental health disorders that begin in childhood and adolescence and topics include psychiatric assessment, differential diagnosis, application of diagnostic criteria, appropriate diagnostic testing, and diagnostic formulation. The learner will select a combination of psychotherapeutic modalities coupled with psychopharmacologic approaches to treat common psychiatric mental health conditions of children and adolescents. The focus of the practicum experience is on application of didactic concepts to actual patient care situations. (3 cr. didactic, 2 cr. practicum; 144 hrs.)

NURS 6670 – Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Role II: Adults and Older Adults (5 cr.)
Continuing from the lifespan approach, the learner in this final course for the psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner (PMHNP) focuses on psychiatric mental health issues that occur in adults and older adults. Selection of assessment approaches for the adult and older adult as well as differential diagnosis, application of diagnostic criteria, appropriate diagnostic testing, and diagnostic case formulation will be undertaken. The learner will use both psychotherapeutic approaches coupled with psychopharmacologic approaches to treat common psychiatric mental health conditions of adults and older adults. Through these practicum experiences, learners will focus on the application of didactic concepts to patient care situations. (3 cr. didactic, 2 cr. practicum; 144 hrs.)

Course Descriptions
For students in catalog years after Spring 2018

NURS 6501 - Advanced Pathophysiology (5 cr.)
Advanced practice nurses must be equipped with an in-depth understanding of pathophysiological disease processes across the lifespan. In this course, students focus on understanding the biophysiological processes, the deviations from these processes, and an in-depth examination of the scientific concepts related to the biology of disease processes. Advanced practice nursing students learn how normal organ systems function and how organ systems are interrelated to help the body maintain homeostasis. Through knowledge of pathophysiological disease processes, students gain the information needed to develop appropriate treatment plans for patients across the lifespan. Students explore a variety of topics, such as immunity, inflammation, cancer genetics, and cardiovascular disease. They also examine a range of disease processes, including hematologic, renal, neurologic, gastrointestinal, and reproductive disorders.

NURS 6512 - Advanced Health Assessment and Diagnostic Reasoning (5 cr.)
The physical and emotional well-being of patients and families can be complex and multifaceted. Advanced practice nurses need to have the knowledge and ability to provide safe, competent, and comprehensive physical health assessments. Students in this course focus on concepts and skills to assess patients across the lifespan. They learn to use diagnostic reasoning, advanced communication, and physical assessment skills to identify changes in health patterns. Students
also use a systematic approach through which they focus on the assessment of patients with acute and chronic health problems. The advanced skills of suturing, reading 12 Lead EKGs, and interpreting X-rays will be covered. Students engage in course assignments that emphasize risk assessment, diagnostic reasoning, and evidence-based assessment across the lifespan.

NURS 6521 - Advanced Pharmacology (5 cr.)
A solid foundation in the concepts and principles of drug therapy across the lifespan is essential to the work of advanced practice nurses. Students in this course apply the advanced principles of pharmacology, including pharmacogenomics, pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics, by analysis of common drug classes prescribed by advanced practice nurses across the lifespan. Factors influencing successful therapy such as effectiveness, safety, acceptability, cost, genetic/environmental influences, complementary regimens, and patient behaviors are considered. Through this course, students prepare to examine complex decisions in the management and treatment of selected acute and chronic diseases across the lifespan through pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic agents. Advanced practice nursing students will have a more in-depth understanding of drug legislation and regulation for prescribing drugs.

NUNP 6531 - Advanced Practice Care of Adults Across the Lifespan (5 cr.)
In this course, students learn how nurse practitioners master the art and science of clinical decision making among adult populations. Students focus on the diagnosis and management of primary healthcare needs and problems of the adult and elderly adult. They engage in a variety of course assignments that focus on physical and behavioral disease processes central to diagnosing illnesses as well as planning, implementing, and evaluating therapeutic treatment programs for acute illnesses commonly encountered in a primary healthcare setting. Students gain confidence in clinical experiences in a primary healthcare setting where they learn to plan, implement, and evaluate therapeutic regimens for adult patients with common acute and chronic illnesses. (Prerequisite(s): NURS 6501, NURS 6512, and NURS 6521.)
Note: This course requires a minimum of 160 practicum hours.

NUNP 6540 - Advanced Practice Care of Frail Elders (5 cr.)
The complex assessment and care of patients in the hospital setting will require advanced practice nurses to obtain the specialized skills necessary to provide quality care for patients in these acute care settings. This course is designed to prepare students to provide care for acutely ill and critically ill patients. Students in this course will be introduced to the role of the advanced practice nurse, while gaining confidence in caring for acutely ill patients. Through course assignments and clinical practice in the acute care setting, they will plan, implement, and evaluate care for critically ill patients. Students will also increase their knowledge of pharmacologic management of hospitalized patients, while applying knowledge gained through previous coursework. Note: This course requires a minimum of 160 practicum hours.

NUNP 6541 - Primary Care of Adolescents and Children (5 cr.)
How can a nurse practitioner master the art and science of clinical decision making among pediatric populations? In this course, students have the opportunity to answer this question as they examine content related to the primary healthcare of children and adolescents while focusing on common health problems. Students learn how to identify, diagnose, and manage these problems. They also gain confidence in clinical experience in a primary healthcare setting that provides opportunities to assess, diagnose, plan, implement, and evaluate therapeutic
regimens for acute and chronic illnesses commonly found in children and adolescents.  
(Prerequisite(s): NURS 6501, NURS 6512, NURS 6521, and NURS 6531 or NUNP 6531).  
**Note:** This course requires a minimum of 160 practicum hours.

**NUNP 6550 - Advanced Practice Care of Adults in Acute Care Settings I (5 cr.)**  
The complex assessment and care of patients in the hospital setting will require advanced practice nurses to obtain the specialized skills necessary to provide quality care for patients in these acute care settings. This course is designed to prepare students to provide care for acutely ill and critically ill patients. Students in this course will be introduced to the role of the advanced practice nurse, while gaining confidence in caring for acutely ill patients. Through course assignments and clinical practice in the acute care setting they will plan, implement, and evaluate care for critically ill patients. Students will also increase their knowledge of pharmacologic management of hospitalized patients, while applying knowledge gained through previous coursework. (Prerequisite(s): NURS 6501, NURS 6512, NURS 6521, NUNP 6531, and NUNP 6540).  
**Note:** This course requires a minimum of 160 practicum hours.

**NUNP 6551 - Primary Care of Women (5 cr.)**  
How can a nurse practitioner decide what is important to focus on in a 15- to 30-minute appointment with a woman seeking primary care? Students in this course gain opportunities to teach and promote wellness in women through the process of screening for commonly seen in gynecological disorders. Students learn to analyze data to interpret results for the benefit of women seeking assistance with planning healthy lifestyle behaviors. They also gain clinical experience in a primary healthcare setting that provides opportunities to increase competence in diagnosis, treatment, referrals, or follow-up care with a concentration on improving patient outcomes. (Prerequisite(s): NURS 6501, NURS 6512, NURS 6521, NUNP 6531, and either NUNP 6540 or NUNP 6541).  
**Note:** This course requires a minimum of 160 practicum hours.

**NUNP 6560 - Advanced Practice Care of Adults in Acute Care Settings II (5 cr.)**  
Students in this course will advance their clinical competence in the care of patients in acute care settings by building on knowledge and skills gained in the NUNP 6550. Through clinical practice, students will build confidence as they begin the transition from student to advanced practice nurse. Classroom activities and case studies will enable students to explore the complex healthcare system including multiple governmental, social and personal resources available to acutely ill adults across the age continuum. Clinical experiences in hospital settings will provide students with the continued opportunity to develop, implement, and evaluate management plans for adults and older adults with complex acute, critical, and chronic illness. The application of knowledge in the management of patients and the collaboration between the advanced practice nurse and the patient, family, and interprofessional healthcare team are emphasized.  
(Prerequisite(s): NURS 6501, NURS 6512, NURS 6521, NUNP 6531, and NUNP 6550).  
**Note:** This course requires a minimum of 160 practicum hours.

**NUNP 6565 - Synthesis in Advanced Practice Care of Complex Patients in Primary Care Settings (5 cr.)**  
Students in this synthesis course will focus on clinical competence in primary care settings by building on knowledge and skills gained in previous courses. Through clinical practice, students will build confidence as they begin the transition from the role of registered nurse to advanced practice nurse. Classroom activities and case studies will enable students to explore the salient
nurse practitioner practice issues involved in the delivery of safe, competent, quality and cost-effective care of patients in a dynamic healthcare system. Clinical experiences in primary care settings will provide students with the continued opportunity to develop, implement, and evaluate management plans for patients with complex health conditions. The application of knowledge in the management of clients and collaboration among the advanced practice nurse and the client, family, and interprofessional healthcare team are emphasized. *(Prerequisite(s): NURS 6501, NURS 6512, NURS 6521, NUNP 6531, and either NUNP 6540 or NUNP 6541, and NURS 6551 or NUNP 6551).* **Note:** This course requires a minimum of 160 practicum hours and must be the last course in the curriculum.

**NUNP 6630 - Psychopharmacologic Approaches to Treatment of Psychopathology (5 cr.)**
At times, psychotherapy is not enough to alleviate the emotional difficulties that some patients face. To that end, psychopharmacologic approaches are needed. Psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioners (PMHNPs) must have a strong basis in psychopharmacology, extending from a prior education in pharmacology, to make appropriate medication choices for their patients. Learners in this course consider psychopharmacologic approaches to major mental health disorders including, but not limited to, major depressive disorders, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders as well as psychotic disorders. Learners explore key considerations associated with medication selection, monitoring of efficacy, and long-term management.

**NUNP 6640 - Psychotherapy With Individuals (5 cr.)**
Psychotherapy involves giving more than “good advice.” For the psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner (PMHNP) to be effective, deliberate approaches to therapy must be used that are consistent with evidence-based practices. Learners in this course are introduced to a variety of therapeutic techniques that can be used during psychotherapy sessions with individuals across the lifespan. Emphasis is placed on evidence-based applications of various therapeutic approaches for a wide range of psychiatric issues. The focus of the practicum experience is on psychotherapeutic approaches with individuals. *(3 cr. didactic, 2 cr. practicum; 160 hrs.)*

**NUNP 6650 - Psychotherapy With Groups and Families (5 cr.)**
Managed care has ushered in a new era of effective mental health services. To that end, the psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner (PMHNP) must know how to optimize not only his or her time, but also the treatment benefits associated with family and group therapy. In this course, the emphasis is on the concept of treatment of the family unit. Group dynamics and benefits associated with group therapy are also emphasized along with introducing the learner to techniques that can be used in group therapy settings. The focus of the practicum experience is on the treatment of the family unit as well as the provision of group psychotherapy. *(3 cr. didactic, 2 cr. practicum; 160 hrs.)*

**NUNP 6660 – Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Role I: Child and Adolescent (5 cr.)**
Working from a lifespan approach, this first practicum course for the psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner (PMHNP) is an introduction for the learner to child and adolescent psychiatry. Emphasis is placed on the psychiatric and/or mental health disorders that begin in childhood and adolescence and topics include psychiatric assessment, differential diagnosis, application of diagnostic criteria, appropriate diagnostic testing, and diagnostic formulation. The learner will select a combination of psychotherapeutic modalities coupled with psychopharmacologic
approaches to treat common psychiatric mental health conditions of children and adolescents. The focus of the practicum experience is on application of didactic concepts to actual patient care situations. (3 cr. didactic, 2 cr. practicum; 160 hrs.)

NUNP 6670 – Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Role II: Adults and Older Adults (5 cr.)
Continuing from the lifespan approach, the learner in this final course for the psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner (PMHNP) focuses on psychiatric mental health issues that occur in adults and older adults. Selection of assessment approaches for the adult and older adult as well as differential diagnosis, application of diagnostic criteria, appropriate diagnostic testing, and diagnostic case formulation will be undertaken. The learner will use both psychotherapeutic approaches coupled with psychopharmacologic approaches to treat common psychiatric mental health conditions of adults and older adults. Through these practicum experiences, learners will focus on the application of didactic concepts to patient care situations. (3 cr. didactic, 2 cr. practicum; 160 hrs.)