Creighton University College of Nursing
MSN Scholarly Project Guidelines

Overview

The expectations for the scholarly project, a required component of the final residency is consistent with the stated purposes of the Master of Science with a major in Nursing (MSN) degree program. It is a scholarly demonstration of students' abilities for flexible leadership and critical action within complex, changing systems, including health, educational, and organizational systems. The scholarly project demonstrates students "knowledge and skills to lead change, promote health, and elevate care in various roles and settings."[13] The Scholarly project demonstrates mastery of the Essentials. "These Essentials are core for all master's programs in nursing and provide the necessary curricular elements and framework, regardless of focus, major, or intended practice setting. These Essentials delineate the outcomes expected of all graduates of master's nursing programs."[18]

The MSN Scholarly Project documents achievement of program objectives. Required core and support courses provide the underlying scientific basis and the scholarly and analytic methods for evidence-based practice and for improving and transforming health care and health care delivery systems. The specialty and role courses provide content and experiential activities aimed at the application of skill sets associated role-specific competencies.[14]

The research core, seminar, specialty, capstone, and residency courses are integral for the project development, and dissemination processes. All MSN students integrate elements of the evidence-based decision-making process with systematic review of the scientific literature. Students identify a problem, search and critically appraise the literature related to the identified problem and its resolution and propose an evidence-based approach for addressing the problem and improving outcomes.

Hallmarks of Scholarly Projects

The MSN Scholarly Projects provide evidence of the student's ability to demonstrate the following competencies:

1. Analyze theoretical concepts and knowledge from nursing and other disciplines relevant to advanced nursing practice in the provision and improvement of health care.
2. Assume leadership in designing, managing, and implementing quality, cost-effective, and innovative services to clients in a variety of health care settings.
3. Incorporate knowledge of population-based care and cultural influences in ensuring appropriate and sensitive health care.
4. Influence health policy formulation and implementation to address socioeconomic and health care issues.
5. Demonstrate proficiency in analyzing and utilizing research from nursing and other relevant disciplines to improve practice.
6. Engage in a systematic process of moral reasoning and values-based dialogue to resolve/address ethical dilemmas/situations.
7. Demonstrate competencies as, nurse educators and, or nursing leaders.

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[13] American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN). (2011). The essentials of masters education for advanced nursing practice (p.3). Washington, DC: Author.

[19] National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF). (p.1) 2011.

Types of MSN Scholarly Projects

Students, with guidance from their academic advisors, their professional experience within a specialty area, and input from stakeholders, identify and select well defined projects with a limited scope. Students conduct their projects with the approval and guidance of their MSN Scholarly Project Advisors and may complete the MSN Scholarly Project alone or as a member of a collaborative team. The MSN Scholarly Project will be disseminated to stakeholders.

The types of scholarly projects include:

Quality Improvement (QI)

The student identifies a problem in conjunction with stakeholders. The problem is investigated using appropriate tools, and improvement strategies and outcomes are delineated based on integrative research reviews. A plan for improvement and sustainability is developed based on theoretical change strategies.

Program Development and/or Evaluation

The student develops a program based on a review of literature and data that identify a need, a statement of explicit goals or objectives, implementation methods and a timeline, and an evaluation and sustainability plan. The Evaluation plan includes an assessment of the inputs, processes, and outcomes of a specific program.

Evaluation of New Practice Model, Guideline, or Innovation

The student evaluates a recently implemented practice model, guideline, or innovation. The student conducts a systematic review of the literature on the key tenets of the model and delineates the strengths and limitations of applying the model in the micro- or macro-system. The project involves conducting an evaluation using a systematic approach and appropriate standards and tools.

Faculty Research

Opportunities exist in which students may be involved in on-going research projects at the discretion of the faculty member. If selected for involvement in faculty research, a student will engage in activities integral to the project and that meet the student's program objectives.

MSN Scholarly Project Faculty Advisor and Responsibilities

A. Criteria for MSN Scholarly Faculty Advisor
1. Holds full-time 9- or 12-month faculty appointment in the CON and agrees to be available for consultation during off months.
2. Has an earned master's degree in nursing or doctoral degree in nursing or a related field.
3. Has expertise relevant to the scholarly project.
4. Is available to the student on a regular basis during the duration of the project.

B. Responsibilities of a Faculty Advisor
1. Approves the project.
2. Guides the development and preparation of the scholarly project, including planning, development and dissemination.

3. Meets on a regular basis with student or students regarding the project.

4. Assures Institutional Review Board (IRB) compliance as appropriate (see table for specific activities).

5. Reviews and evaluates drafts of the final written project report and dissemination process (inclusive of poster or oral presentation or submission of a manuscript).

Scholarly Project Support Core and Specialty Courses

MSN Scholarly Project Development

The student identifies and investigates a problem of significance under the direction of the MSN Scholarly Project Advisor. Previous assignments in prior courses may provide direction for the project topic. Required components of the scholarly project include submission and revision of the background, significance, problem statement, and purpose to the MSN Scholarly Project Advisor.

The student completes revisions of the components of the proposal submitted during the first practicum course. Required components of the scholarly project include submission and revision of the conceptual framework, literature review, and recommendations for practice to the MSN Scholarly Project Advisor. After approval by the MSN Scholarly Project Advisor, the proposal is formally presented to the student's peers in the MSN Capstone Seminar Course.

The student completes any additional revisions of the final scholarly project deemed necessary by the MSN Scholarly Project Advisor. The student will disseminate the project as a poster presentation to the university and college community during the annual Iota Tau Research Day. The student will submit the final scholarly project to the Creighton Health Sciences Digital Repository. Successful completion of the Scholarly Project is required to obtain a satisfactory grade in the residency and to graduate from the MSN Program.

MSN Scholarly Project Courses

MSN in Nursing Education	MSN in Nursing Administration and Leadership
NUR 765- Nurse Educator Clinical Focus	NUR 690- Organizations as Complex Adaptive Systems Practicum
NUR 767- Nurse Educator Capstone Seminar	NUR 788- Organizational Transformation Practicum
NUR 798- Nurse Educator Residency	

*Examples of dissemination include a manuscript, a poster presentation, or an oral presentation.
**Specific task assignments for accomplishing the Scholarly Project are negotiated between the student and Faculty Advisor. If a student's performance is not consistent with the agreed-upon expectations, the Faculty Advisor will consult with the Program Coordinator for a resolution strategy.

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