

ADVANCED NURSING PROJECT GUIDELINES

**GRADUATE NURSING PROGRAM, MS(N)
COLLEGE OF HEALTH & HUMAN SCIENCES
SCHOOL OF NURSING
WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
CULLOWHEE, NORTH CAROLINA**

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ADVANCED NURSING PROJECT GUIDELINES

MS(N) students are required to complete either a thesis or a research project in order to meet the program's research requirement and to be eligible for graduation. The Advanced Nursing Project is an alternative to the thesis. The Project provides evidence that the graduate student has engaged in scholarly and creative work in his or her profession. In the School of Nursing, the Project is expected to address a problem relevant to nursing. The procedures outlined below are intended to assist students in the preparation of a Project that is consistent with the excellence in scholarship expected of a graduate of the Master of Science (Nursing) program.

The focus of the research project will incorporate the utilization of research – including the evaluation of research, problem identification within the clinical practice setting, awareness of practice outcomes, and the clinical application of research. Students may choose from the following list or develop another project for faculty approval: a research study; a secondary analysis; a pilot study; a computer program applicable to nursing education, administration, or practice; learning materials for nursing or client education; publishable integrative literature review, quality assurance project, fundable grant or research proposal, or a publishable scholarly paper based on research utilization.

The product is a scholarly document that is presented at the School of Nursing Research Day or other appropriate venue once the final document is approved by Committee. Although the project must meet criteria for content and written presentation, it does not follow all the same procedural steps nor does it adhere to all the same format criteria required of a thesis.

1. Selection of Advanced Nursing Project Chair and Committee

A project requires a minimum of two nursing faculty with graduate appointments. The student selected Chair will be a doctorally prepared nursing faculty member. One member of the committee must be in the same professional discipline as the student's program track.

The Advanced Nursing Project is conducted under the direction of a Project Chair. The Project Chair helps the student ensure that the content, conduct, and form of the Project are acceptable to the profession of nursing, the School of Nursing, and the Graduate School of the University. The student cannot graduate without the committee's approval of the completed Project. The student has the privilege - and the responsibility - of selecting a Project Chair appropriate to his or her Project.

The student will work closely with the Project Chair; therefore, a personal as well as a professional "fit" is beneficial. The student's peers, academic advisor, or other faculty member may help guide the student to an appropriate person who might be willing to serve as Project Chair. A list of faculty research interests, updated annually, is posted on the MS(N) WebCat Homeplace and provided to students during NSG 511 Research for Advanced Practice Nursing. In asking a faculty member to be a Project Chair, it is helpful for the student to understand that, from the faculty point of view, the job of the Project Chair is intensely time-consuming and requires considerable expertise in the area being examined. Therefore, faculty members may decline a request to serve because they cannot offer the student the time or the expertise that is needed.

Once a student has selected a Project Chair, the student will meet with the chair to:

- a. Discuss and agree on the nature of the project or study
- b. Negotiate a timeline of activities to be completed
- c. Identify additional committee members the student might approach
- d. Outline role responsibilities for all committee members once full committee is formed.

2. Approval of Project Committee

After the Project Chair and committee member have agreed to serve, it is the student's responsibility to:

- a. Obtain the all signatures on the appropriate approval form (Preliminary Thesis/Project Proposal, Appendix A, and Membership on Masters' Project Committee, Appendix B) and on the Publication Agreement (Appendix C).
- b. Submit the completed forms to the Office of the Administrator of Graduate Nursing Programs.
- c. The student should also submit a copy to the appropriate MS(N) track coordinator.

(The purposes of this form are 1) to keep the Administrator of Graduate Nursing Programs apprised of faculty involvement on Advanced Nursing Projects, and 2) to ensure that the student has selected a Chair who meets the requirements of the Graduate School.)

- d. Enroll for the next semester in NSG 679 with the Project Chair as the Instructor of Record.

3. Changes in Project Chair

In some cases it is necessary or advisable for the student to select a different Project Chair. If any changes are made, a new approval form for the Advanced Nursing Project Chair must be signed and submitted as described above. The most current approval form serves as the official record.

A change in the Project Chair may involve delays because the new Project Chair's perspectives may differ from those of the former Project Chair. To avoid changes due to faculty resignation or retirement, the student is urged to complete the Project in a timely manner. In some cases, the student may elect to change the Project Chair; the student should carefully weigh the advantages and disadvantages of such a change and choose the route that will be most beneficial for the completion of his or her degree requirements and professional goals.

4. Advanced Nursing Project Registration

Once a student enrolls in NSG 679, Project, with the chair as the instructor of record, the student must remain continuously enrolled for the course for a minimum of 2 credits. Students who have not completed the Project after registering for the first 2 credits must continue to register for NSG 679 for one credit each succeeding term (including summer) until the project is completed. The student may not graduate until the project is complete, even if more than 2 credits are used. The chair may enter grades for NSG 679 as either S/U as the student progresses, or enter IP (in progress) until the project is completed, and then change to S/U. No I (incomplete) may be given for thesis work.

5. Protection of Human Subjects

If the proposed study involves any research with human or animal subjects, or the records of humans (e.g., medical charts, questionnaires, death records, computer databases for humans, etc.) the student must obtain the approval of the pertinent University's Review Board, IRB for human subjects or IACUC for animals.. If other agencies are involved, written approval by the IRB or designated official(s) of the involved agency/agencies (e.g., the hospital or other setting in which the research will be conducted) must also be obtained. While it is a good idea to seek informal approval from the agencies before you submit the final proposal to your Project Chair (so that you will know whether it is feasible to conduct your research at the desired agency), you may NOT seek formal written approval from any agency until AFTER the Project Chair has given you approval to do so. You may not seek University IRB approval, which also requires external agency approval, until after the Project Chair's approval and faculty committee approval of the proposed project.

The guidelines and forms for the University IRB application are available from the WCU Office of Research or from their website located at <http://www.wcu.edu/6801.asp>; all forms, procedures and resources can be accessed from that page. Read and follow the instructions carefully. (Note that you should NOT submit your entire Preliminary Thesis/Project proposal; instead, follow the directions on the application.)

Note that ALL research involving human or animal subjects, including research that is "exempt" from full IRB review, must be approved by the IRB prior to collection of data. Human subjects, including pilot study subjects, may NOT be approached for the study before IRB approval is obtained. Plan appropriately for time. If several agencies in addition to the University's IRB are involved, the process can be very time-consuming. Each institution has its own rules and timelines regarding approval of research proposals.

6. Development of Project and Written Report of Project

The Advanced Nursing Project is a scholarly endeavor and must be of a quality appropriate to submit for publication or formal presentation. Any topic relevant to nursing and deemed suitable by the Project Chair may be pursued through the Advanced Nursing Project option. When research is conducted for the Advanced Nursing Project, it may be helpful for the student to download the Thesis Guidelines from the MS(N) WebCat Homepage for more information on the research process.

The following table includes suggestions for development and documentation of various types of advanced nursing projects.

| Research Projects | Literature Review | Teaching Module | Grant Application |
|--------------------------|---|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Problem Identification | Problem Identification | Identification of Topic | Problem Identification |
| Purpose | Purpose | Identification of Audience | Purpose |
| Framework | Framework for synthesis of literature or research | Educational Model | Selection of Source of Funding |
| Review of Literature | Review of Literature | Review of Literature | Needs Assessment |
| Methodology | Synthesis of Literature | Methodology | Review of Literature |
| Results | Results | Production of Module | Strategies to Achieve Outcomes |
| Significance | Significance | Evaluation | Budget |
| Implications | Implications | | Evaluation Plan |

The outcome of the Advanced Nursing Project may be self-contained, as, for example, a self-instructional manual for nursing continuing education, a research report or manuscript, a video, or a digital file. However, the student also is to submit a formal report of the Project to the School of Nursing. This written report should demonstrate the knowledge base underlying the finished product. The guidelines below must be followed:

A. Order and content of Project Report

1. Title page
2. Approval page with faculty signature
3. Abstract giving overview of project
4. Table of contents
5. List of figures or tables
6. Body of project report (may be presented in chapters)
The IRB # and date of approval may be included in the body rather than appending the entire approval forms.
7. Reference list
8. Appendices (may contain the manuscript or other printed materials developed for the project)

B. Final appearance

1. Black vinyl cover with flat binding
2. Cover label containing project title, author, and date
3. Print requirements
 - a. Size 12 Font
 - b. Standard font (Times New Roman)
 - c. Laser printer
4. Smooth-edged paper
5. No obvious corrections
6. Originals, not Xerox copies

C. The School of Nursing has adopted the style manual of the American Psychological Association (APA), 5th Ed. as the format to be used by students. The student is expected to follow the APA style unless there is a compelling reason, approved by the Project Chair, to deviate from this requirement. This might include preparation of a manuscript to meet specific journal guidelines.

The Project Chair will advise the student in the preparation of the written report. The Project Chair may need to review numerous drafts before the Project is approved. The student should allow approximately two weeks for each round of reviews.

The Advanced Nursing Project and the written report of the Project must be approved by the Project Committee before the student can graduate. If committee members disagree or give conflicting advice, the Project Chair's decision is final. It is the student's responsibility to stay informed of deadlines for submission of paperwork relevant to graduation and to plan the time appropriately. *A general rule is that preparation of the Project ALWAYS takes longer than anyone thinks it will.*

7. Oral Presentation of Project

The student will be asked to present the Project orally. The student and the Project Chair will determine the appropriate audience for the presentation, usually at the School of Nursing Research Day; other students or faculty will be invited to attend. The presentation is scheduled AFTER the Project Chair has indicated that the Project is satisfactory. The Project Chair can provide guidance to the student in how to conduct the presentation.

8. Copies of Advanced Nursing Project and Report

Completed projects and reports are retained on file at the School for future reference by students and faculty. The student will provide one copy of the project outcome (e.g. video, research report or manuscript, handbook, computer software, etc.) and the final Advanced Nursing Project report with the original signed approval page (Appendix D) to the Office of the Administrator of Graduate Nursing Programs. A copy on a CD should also be submitted. **FINAL PROJECT REPORTS THAT DO NOT MEET THE SPECIFICATIONS OUTLINED ABOVE MAY BE REJECTED BY THE ADMINISTRATOR OF GRADUATE STUDY.** The student also will provide one copy of the report and, if requested, a copy of the project itself to the Project Chair, the program track coordinator, and the committee members.

9. Collaborative Advanced Nursing Projects

With the approval of the Project Chair and Administrator of Graduate Nursing Programs, the advanced nursing project may be completed by two students working in partnership. See Appendix E for Collaborative Research (Project) Agreement Form.

APPENDIX A

WCU SCHOOL OF NURSING

GRADUATE PROGRAM

Preliminary Thesis/Project Proposal

Proposal for MS(N) Project/Thesis: List type of project/thesis (e.g. Integrative Lit Review)

NAME: _____, WCU MS(N) Program **DATE:** _____

Proposed Title: *Put title here*

Alternate Titles: *Put alternate titles here* (titles may vary for publication/conference venue)

Para 1: Tells us what question you are asking or topic you are exploring, provides information on the focus of your project, and why it is important.

This project/thesis will be a _____ (examples: comprehensive integrated literature review; original research findings; thesis; grant proposal) to provide evidence-based information on _____ . The focus will be on _____ . This aspect of _____ is important because/essential to _____ .

Para 2: Summary of essential information related to the topic, drawn from the literature.

Should include any statistical data, epidemiology, etiology, prevention, natural history, interventions, outcomes that are already known as a basis for your project/thesis.

Para 3: What your research/thesis or grant work will provide to the community and readers of your published work. For instance – summary of current recommendations (with levels of evidence), importance to the community, how this will help the reader or the reader's practice.

Para 4: Identify journal(s) or conference(s) to which this paper will be submitted, or grant funding organizations. (Optional but encouraged)

Student _____ **Date** _____

Chair _____ **Date** _____

This Proposal should be **NO MORE than ONE page.**

Submit signed original copy to Program Administrator and one copy to Chair. Keep a copy for your own records.

APPENDIX B
WCU SCHOOL OF NURSING
GRADUATE PROGRAM
MEMBERSHIP ON MASTER'S PROJECT COMMITTEE

I have discussed _____ proposed
(student name)
thesis topic regarding

and agree to serve in the following capacity on his/her Project Committee.

Chair _____
Date _____

Member _____
Date _____

Member _____
Date _____

Submit signed original copy to Program Administrator, and one copy to Chair and each committee member. Keep a copy for your own records.

**APPENDIX C
WCU SCHOOL OF NURSING
GRADUATE PROGRAM**

PUBLICATION AGREEMENT

As a requirement for successful completion of a thesis/project, I agree that I will submit for publication and/or presentation the thesis/project results in a peer-reviewed journal and/or peer-reviewed conference prior to graduation from the MS(N) program.

Authors on the article/presentation will be:

1. Student Investigator (if more than one student, in agreed-upon order as follows):
(first student author) _____
(second student author) _____
2. Committee Chair,
3. other Committee members (in alphabetical order).

If the submitted manuscript is not accepted, the committee chair and committee member(s) may submit the project results as an article or presentation and, although authorship is to be shared equally, first authorship will be assigned to the individual who primarily prepares the manuscript for publication or presentation. The contact author will be the committee chair. No investigator shall impede the publication or presentation of results without due reason and justification. Planned use of research findings/results in future publications or projects must be discussed among investigators/members before graduation of student investigators. It is understood that student members will maintain current contact information with the committee chair and MS(N) program. **A letter of agreement will be developed and signed by all committee members prior to the student member(s) graduation.**

(signed) _____ Date _____
Graduate Nursing Student (A)

(print name) _____

(signed) _____ Date _____
Graduate Nursing Student (B)(if applicable)

(print name) _____

(signed) _____ Date _____ (signed) _____ Date _____
Thesis/Project Chair Committee Member (faculty)

(print name) _____ (print name) _____

(signed) _____ Date _____ (signed) _____ Date _____
Committee Member (faculty) Committee Member (faculty)

(print name) _____ (print name) _____

Submit signed original copy to Program Administrator, and one copy to Chair and each committee member. Keep a copy for your own records.

APPENDIX D
WCU SCHOOL OF NURSING
GRADUATE PROGRAM
MASTER'S PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

Date: _____

Student: _____ 92# _____

Project Title: _____

The student has completed the project to the satisfaction of the project committee.

Committee Members:

_____ Chair

_____ Member

Submit signed original copy to Program Administrator, and one copy to Chair and each committee member. Keep a copy for your own records.

APPENDIX E

WCU SCHOOL OF NURSING

GRADUATE PROGRAM

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH (PROJECT) AGREEMENT

Students who wish to work collaboratively **must** develop a written agreement and have the agreement approved by their project Chair before beginning collaborative work. All faculty and students must agree to any changes made to the agreement after the initial agreement is developed.

Investigators:

(Typed names)

1.

2.

Thesis or Project Chair(s):

(Typed names)

1.

2.

Purpose of the Research Project:

We understand that conducting collaborative research is a challenging endeavor that can yield positive results. In order to maximize its advantages we agree to the following terms:

A. Distribution of Workload

During the completion of this research project, we agree that each of the members will contribute equally to the project. All students must participate in all major components of the project, including addressing the methods, conceptual framework, and significance of the project to nursing. Recognizing that each individual brings different strengths to the group process, we have agreed upon the following distribution of work:

Workload Distribution (%)

Investigator 1

Investigator 2

B. Financial

We also agree to share fiscal responsibilities equally, and in order to receive funding, to submit funding applications.

Cost Distribution (%)

Investigator 1

Investigator 2

C. Timeline

We agree to work steadily toward completion of the project according to the following timeline.

Task

Target Date

Person Responsible

D. Future Access to Data

(Specify negotiated agreement here.)

E. Loss of Participant

We understand that a student who does not participate in accordance with the agreement, or whose work is not of acceptable quality, may be asked to leave the group by the other group members. The decision to ask an individual to leave the group must be communicated to that individual and the Advanced Nursing Practice (ANP) Chair by at least 8 weeks before the project due date (or other time frame, if specified in the agreement). If this is not done, the faculty member(s) will assume that all group members are meeting their obligations.

An individual also may elect to leave the group (e.g., due to change from full-time to part-time status). Except in emergencies, this decision must be communicated to the group and the ANP Chair by at least 8 weeks before the project due date (or other time frame, if specified in the agreement). The agreement should specify that a group member who leaves the project for any reason will have access to those components of the project in which s/he actively participated (e.g., student could use the review of literature in completion of a later individual project if the student participated in development of the review of literature).

F. Known Commitments

We agree to make known to all members of the group any known future commitments (e.g. planned vacations, weddings) that might influence participation in the project according to the timeline.

Submit signed original copy to Program Administrator, and one copy to Chair and each committee member. Keep a copy for your own records.

Examples of MS(N) Proposals

Proposal Example #1: Grant Proposal

Proposal for MS(N) Project: Grant Proposal

NAME: ____ (name here) _____, WCU MS(N) Program

DATE: ____ (date here) ____

Proposed Title: Grant Proposal to Kate B. Reynolds: Updating Nursing Skills Lab at xxxxxx Community College.

Alternate Title: Grant Proposal for Innovative Nursing Skills Lab.

This project will outline the need for a grant, the grant selection process and the actual grant submission.

The following will be included in the Grant Project:

1. Discuss the need for the grant – support the need with data and literature review. This grant will discuss the need for more nursing students and the current inadequacy of the college’s nursing laboratory.
2. Review of literature and benchmark with other schools of nursing regarding laboratory equipment, including trends in nursing skills labs.
3. Delineate plans to implement a new skills lab. Including how each piece of equipment requested will add to the laboratory and increase nursing student’s knowledge and skills.
4. Explore granting agencies, including criteria for granting agencies. Choose one or two granting agencies that fund grant proposals to which this grant proposal meets the criteria. Discuss if your proposal meets the criteria of the granting agency. Kate B. Reynolds is a perfect grantor for this project.
5. Garner support both financial and in-kind from participating institutions and other parties of interest, including letters of support. xxxxxx Community College is willing to match a grant from Kate B. Reynolds.
6. Create and implement a timeline for a draft grant proposal, including a preliminary meeting with the grantor (if required).
7. Write the grant according to the grantor(s)’ guidelines, submit the grant within the grantors timeline.
8. Revise grant as needed per grantor’s suggestions.

Proposal Example #2: Publishable Integrative Literature Review

Proposal for MS(N) Project: Publishable Integrative Literature Review

NAME: _____ (name here) _____, WCN MS(N) Program

DATE: _____ (date here) _____

Proposed Title: Reducing Polypharmacy in the Elderly

Alternative Titles: Polypharmacy: When is too much too much?

This paper will be a comprehensive literature review to provide evidence-based information on polypharmacy and its effects on the elderly population. The focus will be on polypharmacy as a safety issue and possible ways to reduce or better control prescribing practices. This aspect of health care is important because many adverse reactions and hospital admissions could be averted if better control efforts for medication prescribing and administration were utilized.

The elderly have been identified as the fastest growing population in the USA. This population also consumes the largest amount of medications, and spends the most money on prescription drugs, leading to high costs for health care. Safety with medication use is also of concern. In fact, *Healthy People 2000* identified polypharmacy as a medication safety issue. And, it is known that age related physiological and cognitive functions alter medication effectiveness. A priority goal for *Healthy People 2010* is reduction of polypharmacy in elderly individuals. Recently, initiation of medication reconciliation records in hospitals has been a step forward toward safeguarding the public.

This research project will review causes of polypharmacy and identify its adverse effects. The author's goal is to enlighten healthcare providers regarding the ramifications of their prescribing practices. It is also to inform prescribers of interventions to reduce the amount of medications used without comprising patient outcomes. This educational focus will work in conjunction with a priority goal for *Healthy People 2010*, to help reduce the burden of polypharmacy, especially in the elderly individual.

This paper will tentatively be submitted to one of the following journals;

Journal of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners
The Nurse Practitioner
Medication and Aging
Journal of Gerontology

Proposal Example #3: Original Research (Survey Method)

Proposal for MS(N) Project: Original Research (Survey Method)

NAME: _____ (name here) _____, WCN MS(N) Program

DATE: _____ (date here) _____

Proposed Title: How Well Do Nurse Practitioners in North Carolina Negotiate Aspects of Employment Which Have Monetary Value In Addition To Salary?

Alternative Titles: Do Nurse Practitioners In North Carolina Negotiate Aspects of Employment That Have Monetary Value In Addition to Salary?

This research project will collect data on employment benefits which have monetary value in addition to salary that are received by Nurse Practitioners in North Carolina. Subjects will complete an anonymous mail survey; subjects are practicing FNP in NC and names/addresses will be obtained from the NC Board of Nursing. Information obtained will then be compared to national data available for Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants for the purpose of determining how well North Carolina Nurse Practitioners are negotiating employment agreements. By obtaining this information, results may demonstrate opportunities for improvement for Nurse Practitioners in North Carolina when negotiating employment agreements. This information is important because many Nurse Practitioners are not aware of benefit options which may be available to them. By obtaining and publishing this information, Nurse Practitioners both in North Carolina and nationally, will have additional information from which to base their employment agreement negotiations.

National data available from the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners in 2004, the *Nurse Practitioner* in 2006, and the American Academy of Physician Assistants in 2006 provides information on benefits received by Nurse Practitioners or Physician Assistants but no studies have been conducted to determine what benefits Nurse Practitioners in North Carolina receive. According to the North Carolina Board of Nursing, there were 2,641 practicing Nurse Practitioners in North Carolina in October 2006. Additionally, 977 Nurse Practitioners were eligible to practice but were not actively employed as Nurse Practitioners. The Task Force on the North Carolina Nursing Workforce reports that approximately 50 counties in North Carolina are considered to have persistent health professional shortage areas. With this demonstrated health care provider shortage, it is imperative that Nurse Practitioners be recruited and retained in the field of practice. Information is not currently available as to why some Nurse Practitioners choose not to practice, but one potential reason is that of lack of adequate employee benefits. Although this study will not address reasons why Nurse Practitioners leave the field of practice, it is hoped that by providing information regarding potential aspects of employment agreements which can be negotiated, more Nurse Practitioners will be able to obtain terms of employment that are more satisfactory to them and will therefore stay in the profession.

A paper containing this information will be submitted to a professional journal for publication. Potential journals include *Journal of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners*, *The Tar Heel Nurse*, *The Nurse Practitioner*, *The American Journal of Nursing*, or *The Journal of Advanced Nursing*.

Running head: Title of Paper

Title of Paper

in APA Style

Firstname Lastname

Western Carolina University, MS(N) Program

In partial fulfillment of the MS(N) degree Research Project/Thesis Requirements.

Committee Chair Name with degree(s) & rank

Committee Members Names with degree(s) & rank

Date