

**Culminating Experience Student
Handbook**

SF State University School of Nursing

Master of Science in Nursing

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CULMINATING EXPERIENCE PROCESS

Background

The Culminating Experience (CE) is the School of Nursing (SoN) Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program's capstone event. The CE provides you with the opportunity to demonstrate that you have achieved the expected program student learning outcomes. By demonstrating achievement of the expected program learning outcomes, you also show that you have achieved the competencies within your concentration. Over time, graduate programs have measured student achievement in various ways including oral and/or written comprehensive examinations, thesis or applied research projects such as a field study. All graduate programs are required to have a culminating experience to measure student achievement of expected program learning outcomes. The SoN revised the MSN curriculum in 2011 for implementation in fall 2012. A major change incorporated in the revised curriculum was a change in the culminating experience reflected in the 2013 CE Guidelines. In fall 2017 and fall 2019, the SoN opted to further refine the expectations of the CE experience.

Expected MSN Program Learning Outcomes

- ‘ Applies and integrates broad organizational, client-centered, and culturally appropriate concepts in the planning, delivery, management, and evaluation of evidence-based clinical prevention and population care and services.
- ‘ Demonstrates nursing and inter-professional collaboration that facilitates open communication, mutual respect, and shared decision-making to achieve quality patient care.
- ‘ Creates collaborative programs and educational approaches that address health promotion and disease prevention needs of culturally-ethnically diverse individuals and populations.
- ‘ Demonstrates a professional leadership role to promote quality and safe clinical patient care that incorporates ethical and critical decision-making approaches, fiscal accountability, effective working relationships, and systems perspectives.
- ‘ Assimilates nursing knowledge and expertise through research utilization,

informatics literacy, and generates educational, leadership, or clinical approaches to advance professional nursing practice.

- ‘ Utilizes information technology to communicate effectively, manage knowledge, mitigate error, and support decision-making.
- ‘ Designs evaluation strategies for nursing care outcomes to assess, manage, and determine resource allocation for evaluation of nursing care outcomes.
- ‘ Evaluate methods, tools, performance measures, and standards related to quality improvement within a healthcare organization.
- ‘ Applies research outcomes within the practice setting to resolve identified practice problems.
- ‘ Organizes interventions at the health care system level utilizing policy development processes, economic principles, and employing advocacy strategies to influence health and health care services for individuals, families, aggregates/identified diverse populations and communities.

Description of the Culminating Experience

Course work in the MSN program is designed to give you the skills and knowledge necessary to successfully complete the culminating experience. During your last semester in the graduate program, you will enroll in a 3-unit course, NURS895. This course is designed to give you one-on-one support from your first and second reader as you complete the final written paper.

You will demonstrate achievement of expected program learning outcomes by writing a final paper. This written document integrates advanced nursing scholarship such as an education plan, intervention plan, grant proposal, business plan, clinical protocol, or analysis paper. The culminating experience (CE) demonstrates achievement of advanced practice nursing competencies. It draws upon knowledge generated from the course work and reflects growth in knowledge and skills required of advanced practice nurses. The CE contains both formative and summative evaluation components, which are demonstrated in the final paper. Each student must address the same specific requirements for the CE (outlined below) but there are options for you to choose. This handbook is

designed to provide you with guidance regarding the CE expectations and completion.

Formative Evaluation

Beginning with your core nursing courses in the graduate program, you will complete course assignments that require mastery of various competencies as described in the *Essentials of Master's Education for Advanced Practice Nursing* (AACN, 2011), *Statement on Clinical Nurse Specialist Practice and Education* (NACNS, 2016), and *Core Competencies for Nurse Practitioners* (NONPF, 2017). By completing all the courses in the MSN curriculum, you will be able to integrate content and concepts from individual courses into your final paper. For example, you will integrate the following concepts and/or content into your culminating experience:

1. Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Model:
 - a. What theories are commonly used in nursing practice and/or research?
 - b. How can you use theory in your current or future work settings?
 - c. What theoretical framework supports your proposed topic?
2. Research and Evidence-based Practice:
 - a. How is research integrated with theory to influence practice?
 - b. How will you identify practice discrepancies in your work setting?
 - c. What are the criteria for evaluating the credibility of the evidence?
 - d. What evidence supports your proposed topic?
3. Epidemiology:
 - a. How have epidemiological methods or studies been used to address the topic of your culminating experience?
 - b. What broad ecological, global, and social determinants of health may influence patient care outcomes?
 - c. What is the role of epidemiology in policy development and program planning?
4. Health Systems Management:
 - a. What organizational systems need to be considered to assure

successful implementation of your proposed topic?

- b. What impact will your proposed topic have on safety and/or quality of care?
- c. What are the political, legal or ethical issues influencing the care setting or patient population?
- d. What quality improvement strategies would be appropriate to implement in your care setting to improve patient outcomes?

5. Policy:

- a. What are the overarching policy issues involved in this topic?
- b. How has political process or political environment been implicated in causing/maintaining/solving this problem?

6. Program Planning:

- a. How do the principles of program planning assist you to understand programmatic barriers or solutions to the problem?
- b. Which finance principles are key to successful implementation of your proposed topic?

Summative Evaluation

The final paper will need to meet the following requirements:

1. Meets graduate-level writing proficiency standards for the SoN.
2. Demonstrates integration and application of expected program learning outcomes as described above.
3. Includes the core graduate nursing concepts as described above
4. Involves an in-depth examination of the topic, with a minimum of 10 peer- reviewed publications within the past 5 years in the body of the paper to support the evidence.

Successful completion of the culminating experience includes:

1. A written paper of 25-30 pages (at discretion of 1st reader) excluding title page, table of contents, references, tables/figures, and appendices.

2. Submission of final paper to Turnitin (<10%, *excluding* student's previously submitted paper(s) and references)
3. Final review and approval by the first and second readers
4. Three bound copies of final paper (One for each reader and one for the student)
5. Faculty committee members will sign and file the electronic Report of Completion with Graduate Studies.
6. Credit/No credit will be assigned to your transcript as a final grade

Options for the Culminating Experience Paper

The Culminating Experience project options have been designed as broadly as possible to allow flexibility in choosing a topic and format that works best for you. You may choose from:

1. A grant proposal: The proposal requests funding for additional services.

Methods sections for a grant proposal include details about sampling or target audiences, instruments, procedures, data analysis, budget, and timeline.

Submitting parts of a grant proposal may be negotiated with the first reader if the project is beyond the scope of the CE, especially if the student is working alone.

Example: Applying for a grant to provide internet service to a village in Kenya

2. An intervention plan: This plan proposes a theoretically guided evidence-based nursing practice intervention plan supported by a literature review. The theoretical framework guiding the intervention will be presented along with a synthesis of relevant literature a detailed methods section focused on the setting, pertinent stakeholders, implementation steps, and evaluation of the intervention.

Example: New graduate transition program;

Develop and implement an evidence-based sepsis bundle in oncology units

3. A business plan: This is a written document that describes in detail how a business is going to achieve its goals. A business plan lays out a written plan from a marketing, financial and operational viewpoint. The plan design incorporates the steps necessary

to develop a successful business venture. This includes an executive summary, business description, market analysis, organization and management, service or product line, marketing and sales, funding strategy and financial projection. Submitting parts of a business plan may be negotiated with the first reader if the project is beyond the scope of the CE, especially if the student is working alone.

Example: Developing a business plan for an airport clinic

4. An analysis plan: An analytical paper is a formal paper that demands the writer take a subject and break it apart into sections, analyzing each one, to summarize and reach an overall conclusion. The paper summarizes theoretical discussion and significant accomplishments in the literature, presents discussion congruent with the reviewed articles and appropriate to the topic and purpose. The analysis does not necessarily have to break completely new ground, but it should extend previous knowledge in a useful way, or alternatively refute existing knowledge. Describes the relationship between major findings and identifies gaps in literature, and further research. Formulates pertinent, researchable questions, propositions, and hypotheses based on the synthesis of findings/gaps. Discusses implications and significance for advanced nursing practice.

Appropriate subject matter may include, an historical perspective, policy, legislation, procedure, treatment, quality improvement, enhancement of medical services, health care system analysis with other systems, improving population health, social and economic equity, intervention (individual, social, and environmental).

Example: Incivility in nursing;

Opioid epidemic

5. A clinical protocol (for NP students only): Assuring that quality, patient-centered care is provided is dependent on the development of evidence-based clinical protocols. This format requires you to complete a literature review and a detailed clinical protocol including assessment, treatment plan and evaluation criteria.

Example: Contraception management in Latina adolescents;

Gout management in African American elderly males

6. An education plan: This plan identifies the need for an educational program or teaching activity and presents a theoretically guided evidence-based educational plan, the setting, pertinent stakeholders, teaching strategies and evaluation tools (short and long-term). Examples of settings that students may choose can be their place of employment or their volunteer organization. Students can choose other settings as long as: 1) an educational issue is identified; 2) a presentation and evaluation can take place; and 3) their first readers approve of the setting.

Example: Development of an education plan for pediatric intensive care nurses on the use of augmentative and alternative communication.

The guidelines for each of these formats for the culminating experience are included later in this document. The final culminating experience is to be submitted using the MS Word template available at <http://grad.sfsu.edu/content/thesis-dissertation-word-template>

The Role of the First and Second Reader

You will select your first reader for your culminating experience and submit the Proposal for Culminating Experience-895 Field Study or Applied Research during the semester before the semester you intend to graduate. Selection of your first reader is based on the focus of your field study and discussion with your advisor and faculty teaching N794. It is recommended that you begin your field study work in N794. As part of the selection process, you should interview faculty members that could be potential first readers based on their expertise, interest, and availability. You will determine the best format for your culminating experience from those listed above in collaboration with your first reader. Selection of your second reader is made in collaboration with your first reader. At the beginning of the semester in which you are enrolled in NURS895, you must meet with your first reader to develop a timetable (See below) with specific deadlines for completion of the final paper. The first reader will review all written work as you write your final paper including outlines, drafts of the paper, abstracts, etc. After the first reader has completed the comprehensive review, the

second reader will review the paper and often acts as an additional resource for evidence-based content and the overall quality of the paper. Expect and allow time for revisions based on recommendations from both readers. The second reader should receive your paper at least 3 weeks prior to the start of final exams – allowing the second reader 2 weeks to review the paper, and the student one week to make any final revisions. Communication between the readers (both first and second reader) and the student is of paramount importance for the successful completion of the paper. You will not be eligible to graduate if you do not get final approval from both your first and second reader. You must complete your editorial changes in a timely manner or you will jeopardize your chances of graduating on time and participating in pinning and commencement activities. After the final approval of your CE, all CE committee members and the SoN will sign and file the report of completion with the Division of Graduate Studies. Your first reader can guide you through these final steps.

Selecting a Topic and Format

You have the freedom to choose a topic that is interesting to you, but it must be related to nursing. The biggest challenge will be to identify a project that is narrow enough to complete within the timeframe, but broad enough to keep you interested in it. You will spend many hours on your final paper, so choose the topic wisely.

First you will want to start with a general idea of what your topic will be. Most often, you will start with a broad topic area. The table below demonstrates how a broad topic can be narrowed to a specific project idea.

<i>Broad Topic</i>	<i>Specific project ideas</i>
Diabetes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intervention plan to increase exercise in school-aged children 2. Educational plan for elders who were recently diagnosed with diabetes to prevent neurological and circulatory disorders 3. Clinical protocol for the management of patients who have consistent HgA1c levels that are elevated

Health promotion	1. Grant proposal for a community organization to implement a program to use lay health workers to do outreach into the community
Health disparities	1. An analysis paper that identifies political, social and economic barriers to health and wellness in a specific community 2. A grant proposal focused on increasing access to care for members of a specific target population.

You should start identifying your topic by jotting down 4-5 broad topic areas that you find interesting using the template below. Once you have identified broad topic areas, start listing possible project ideas.

<i>Broad Topic</i>	<i>Specific project ideas</i>

Evaluating Your Project Ideas

Before you start working on your culminating experience you should evaluate your specific project ideas using the following guidelines:

1. Passion/Enthusiasm for the project
 - a. How strongly do you feel about this project?
 - b. Are you excited about the project?
 - c. How interested are you in knowing more about this topic area?
 - d. Is this a topic you may be working with for years to come?
2. Relevance of the idea
 - a. Is the topic of high significance to nursing?
 - b. Does the project encompass the core graduate nursing competencies of patient-centered care and cultural appropriateness, evidence-based practice, health promotion and disease prevention, advanced practice nurse competencies, health disparities and social equity?
 - c. Will the skills you learn doing this project help you in your nursing practice?

- d. Will conducting this project help you apply the knowledge and skills you learned in your coursework?

3. Practicality of the idea

- a. Can you do this project in a reasonable amount of time (3-4 months)?
- b. Can you do this project with limited or no financial resources?
- c. Is the project concrete and narrow enough to accomplish?

Note on practicality. By the time you start on your project, you could only have 3-4 months to complete it. Keep in mind what your other commitments are and choose a project that will not be too stressful or does not extend your time in school. Of course, you may choose to take longer to do the culminating experience and complete it after you complete all the other graduate nursing courses. Be advised that faculty guidance will not be available to you during the summer or winter break, as most faculty members are not available during those times.

Rate each of your project ideas on these three criteria, giving a score of 0 to 10 to each criterion, whereby 0 = very low and 10 = very high on the criterion.

<i>Idea #</i>	<i>Passion/Enthusiasm</i>	<i>Relevance</i>	<i>Practicality</i>
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

Building the Case for the Specific Project Idea

The format you choose for our culminating experience will determine the language used to build the case for the importance of the project. For example, if you are developing a program plan or an educational program, you will have a goal statement. If you are writing a grant or business plan, you will have a problem statement based on a needs assessment. If you are doing an analysis paper, you will have a hypothesis or research question. This one-sentence statement is critical to developing a clear and concise proposal. Everything else will flow from this sentence.

Choose the two ideas that you rated the highest in the last exercise and turn these into a one-sentence statement that fully describes the purpose of the project. The statement describes what you want to do in a concrete fashion. Using some of the project ideas in the example above, a one-sentence statement that describes the project could include:

1. Intervention plan to increase exercise in school-aged children.

Example: The proposed intervention will increase physical activity among 3rd and 4th grade students by providing a structured after school regimen.

2. Clinical protocol for the management of patients with consistently elevated HgA1C levels.

Example: Effective management of patients with consistently high HgA1C levels through the use of a clinical protocol decreases the likelihood of adverse sequelae from diabetes.

3. A grant proposal focused on increasing access to care for members of a specific target population.

Example: The purpose of this grant proposal is to increase access to primary care services for low-income seniors living in the Tenderloin.

Try to create at least two statements for each project idea you rated highest (for a total of 4 statements). Now review these research questions in terms of enthusiasm, relevance, and practicality. Can you select the focus area for your culminating experience yet? If not, repeat the process as many times as it takes to come up with an

idea that meets the criteria.

Recommended Outline for Each Option

Now that you have a topic idea, you need to choose a format for the project. This section provides more detail about the formats to aid you in selecting one that best fits your project idea.

Grant Proposal

The written proposal should be formatted using the following outline:

1. Face Page. (Do this **after** you complete all the other parts)
 - a. Title of project
 - b. Name and affiliation of applicant(s)
 - c. Funding agency (proposed or actual)
 - d. Dates of proposed period of support (*from MM/DD/YY thru MM/DD/YY*)
 - e. Costs requested for initial budget period
 - f. Costs requested for proposed period of support
 - g. Applicant organization
 - h. Type of organization

2. Project Summary (maximum 2 pages)
 - a. A brief statement includes:
 - i. Problem
 - ii. Goals and objectives
 - iii. Methods to achieve results
 - iv. Expected results/impacts
 - b. Relevance
 - c. Project/performance site location(s)

3. Narrative (maximum 20 pages, excluding sections e, f, h, and i)
 - a. Introduction
 - i. Starts with a clear, explicit statement of the problem and target population
 - ii. Presents background of the specific problem relative to the community (problem(s) expressed as needs of the community, *not the applicant's*)
 - iii. Relates to goals/purposes of funding agency
 - iv. States the relevance of the problem: supported by statistical evidence/expert opinion; is brief and interesting to read; appropriately targeted to identified funding source(s).
 - b. Specific Aims
 - i. Clear, unambiguous statement of overall goal(s)

- ii. Objectives reflect overall goal(s)
 - iii. Timeframe for accomplishment of objectives
 - iv. Aims stated in quantifiable, measurable terms
- c. Review of the Body of Knowledge (include 10 peer-reviewed publications within the last 5 years)
 - i. Exhibits understanding of the conceptual basis for the problem and the intervention
 - ii. Identities targeted population
 - iii. Presents key existing studies/interventions
 - iv. Uses primary sources for references
- d. Methods and Procedures (based on the work plan)
 - i. Provides a brief description of the methods (intervention)
 - ii. Defines important terms and, if necessary, operationalizes terms
 - iii. Explains procedures, activities, and instruments that method(s)/intervention(s) entail
 - iv. Has a logical flow from goal(s) and objectives
 - v. Selected methods and instruments appropriate for the problem and objectives
 - vi. Briefly describes organizational structure within which the activity is to be carried out
 - vii. Presents brief chronological description of activities
 - viii. Presents a plan for evaluating accomplishment of objectives
 - ix. Presents a plan for evaluating and modifying methods over the course of the intervention
 - x. Defines criteria for success in terms of quantifiable/measurable products (or, if qualitative, in terms of interpretation)
 - xi. Tells who will be responsible for the evaluation
 - xii. Defines when and how often evaluation will take place
 - xiii. Planned activities are sequenced logically
 - xiv. Logistic consideration (e.g. transportation, coordination of sites, hiring) are addressed for each activity
 - xv. Responsibility for activities are delineated in terms of personnel, agencies, or institutions
- e. Data Safety Monitoring Plan

Describes how data will be handled

 - Collection: identify specific data that will be collected and timelines.
 - Processing
 - Analysis: reflects methods described in the methods section of the narrative
 - Confidentiality of records (if appropriate)
- f. Work Plan

Includes a table showing timelines for completion of activities
- g. Qualifications of the applicant/organization

- i. Describes the agency resources, personnel, capabilities, programs in service that will support accomplishment of the goal(s) of the proposed program
- ii. Delineates experience and accomplishments of the agency which will establish its expertise and creditability relevant to this project
- h. Qualifications of principal investigators and key personnel, including:
 - Training
 - Education
 - Area of expertise
 - Experience and accomplishments related to the project
- i. Interagency cooperation and coordination (if applicable)
 - Reflects participation and cooperation among participant agencies
 - Includes plan for continuity: What would happen if there are changes in personnel?

4. Budget Information

a. Budget

i. Personnel

- Salaries and wages including units of time required to complete activities (e.g. % of effort or number of hours needed)
- Fringe benefits
- Consultants and contract services

ii. Non-personnel

- Space costs

Intervention Plan

1. Abstract (150-250 words)
2. Introduction
3. Background
 - a. Problem statement
 - b. Operational definitions
 - c. Project purpose and objectives
 - d. PICO(T) question
4. Conceptual/Theoretical Framework
 - a. Synopsis of the theory/framework (Examples - The Health Belief Model, Orem, Watson, Leininger)
 - b. Application to the intervention plan
5. Literature Review: Literature review supports the need for the intervention, method of implementation and evaluation. Minimum 10 scholarly articles
 - a. Search strategy
 - b. A Synthesis of relevant literature
 - c. Summary

6. Implementation Plan
 - a. Description of intervention
 - b. Including personnel, time, setting, resources
 - c. Feasibility
 - d. Marketing/Dissemination
 - e. Key management personnel
 - f. Targeted clients
 - g. Sustainability – benefits and barriers
 - h. Proposed timeline
 - i. Proposed budget
7. Evaluation: Short and long-term
 - a. Type of measurement (Survey, Existing tool)
 - b. When and how administered
 - c. Components of intervention and reliability/validity of tool used
 - d. Short-term evaluation of intervention
 - e. Long-term evaluation of intervention
8. Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations
9. References: Majority from scholarly journals published within past 5 years
10. Appendices
 - a. Intervention plan
 - a. Consent/Assent or Collaboration agreement (if applicable)
 - b. Pre- and Post-test (if applicable)
 - c. Budget
 - d. Timeline
 - e. Evaluation
 - f. Marketing materials

Business Plan

1. Executive Summary
 - a. Briefly tell your readers what your company is and why it will be successful. Include Mission Statement, your product or service, basic information about your company's leadership, team, employees and location. You should include financial information and high level growth plans if you plan to ask for financing.
2. Mission Statement & Company Description
 - a. A clear statement of your company's long-term mission. Try to use words that will help direct the growth of your company, but be as concise as possible.
3. Survey of the Industry
 - a. Overview of the present situation
 - i. Who are the consumers of your product or service at the present?
 - ii. Who are the providers at present?
 - iii. Where is the primary source of financing coming from at present?
4. Market Research Analysis
 - a. Market: past, present, & future:

- i. Description of the competition, market size and industry trends, identification of target populations, market share and projected sales
- 5. Competition
 - a. Summarize competition
 - b. Outline your company's competitive advantage
- 6. Opportunities
 - a. Problems and opportunities:
 - i. State consumer problems, and define nature of product/service opportunities created by those problems.
 - ii. Be specific! Generalities such as "better quality of care" will not translate to successful operations, but "reduction in inpatient readmissions within 72 hours" will
- 7. Business Concept
 - a. Summarize key technology, concept or strategy on which your business is based
 - b. Be specific! Does your company intend to provide a better
 - i. Product?
 - ii. Service?
 - iii. Information Management?
 - iv. Outcome?
- 8. Goals & Objectives
 - a. Five-year goals
 - i. State specific measurable objectives
 - ii. State market share objectives
 - iii. State revenue/profitability objectives
- 9. The Management Team
 - a. List CEO and key management by name
 - b. Include previous accomplishments to show these are people with a record of success
 - c. Summarize number of years of experience in this field
- 10. Resource Requirements
 - a. Technology requirements
 - b. Personnel requirements
 - i. Includes attorneys, accountants, bankers, insurance agents
 - c. Resource requirements
 - i. Financial, distribution, promotion, etc.
 - d. External requirements
 - e. Products/services/technology required to be purchased outside company
- 11. Operations Plan
 - a. Linear timetable for startup
 - b. Include parallel development tasks
 - c. Include chain of command
 - d. Plan should dovetail with projected financial milestones
- 12. Research & Development

- a. What needs to be developed before project can move forward?
 - b. Examples:
 - i. Cost management of product production
 - ii. Plans for intellectual property like copyright or patent filings
 - iii. Government regulation, e.g., Federal Toiletries and Cosmetics, FDA, OSHA, Bureau of Transportation, etc.
13. Key Timing Issues
- a. Near term
 - i. Isolate key decisions and issues that need immediate or near term resolution
 - b. Long term
 - i. Isolate issues needing long-term resolution
 - ii. State consequences of decision postponement
 - c. If you are seeking funding, state specifics
14. Risks & Rewards
- a. Risks
 - i. Summarize risks of proposed project
 - b. Addressing risk
 - i. Summarize how risks will be addressed
 - c. Rewards
 - i. Estimate expected pay-off, particularly if seeking funding
 - d. Troubleshooting
 - i. Internal and external threats to the business
15. Financial Plan
- a. High-level financial plan that defines financial model, pricing assumptions, and reviews yearly expected sales and profits for the next three years. (quarterly scales)
 - b. Use several pages and diagrams or tables to cover this material appropriately. (include income statements, balance sheets, cash flow, capital expenditure budget)
16. Proposed Financing
- a. Be very specific (debt or equity)
 - b. Who is funding how much at what time?
 - c. At what intervals is the funding to take place and what triggers the next round of funding?
 - d. Give detailed description of how you will spend the funds.
17. Legal Structure & Regulation
- a. The legal entity: Subchapter S, C Corp, LLC, etc.
 - b. What regulatory agencies must be cleared?
 - c. What is the ownership distribution? Stock?
 - d. Organizational chart
18. Percentage ownership?
- a. Who is legally responsible for company?
 - b. Errors and Omission Insurance
 - c. Bonded employees

- d. Copyright & Trademark
 - e. Protection of IP -Patents
19. Appendices
20. Supporting Documents
- a. Credit History
 - b. Resumé
 - c. Literature bibliography
 - d. Tables
 - e. Charts
 - f. Photographs
 - g. Testimonials, letters of reference
 - h. Permits, patents, legal documents & contracts

Analysis Paper

1. Abstract (150-250 words)
2. Introduction
3. Problem statement: Define the concept of interest
 - a. Clear and concise explanation of the problem, purpose, setting, and target population
 - b. Significance of the problem on the target population
 - c. State hypotheses/research question
 - d. Operational definitions
 - e. Objectives: SMART, no more than 3 objectives
4. Conceptual/Theoretical Framework
 - a. Synopsis of a related theory framework
 - b. Application to the Analysis
5. Review of literature: Minimum 10 scholarly articles
 - a. Present the state of the science on the issue
 - i. Uses reliable and valid sources of information
 - ii. Presents key existing studies/interventions/theories
 - b. Will involve the discovery of the attributes of the theoretical or conceptual framework
 - i. Is conducted to generate a picture of what is known and not known about a particular situation
 - c. Refers to relevant sources that are important in providing in-depth knowledge
 - i. To provide evidence for concept analysis
 - ii. Gain a broad background or understanding of the information that is available related to a problem
 - iii. Provide a range of evidence-base perspectives
 - d. Synthesize the literature
6. Thesis Statement: Delineation of your perspectives on the issue based on the literature
7. Recommendations

- a. Provides a discussion of recommended intervention(s) to address specified concerns. Discuss all options including research, education, training, and
- b. Qualifications of key personnel: area of expertise
- 8. Evaluation: (Short term and long term outcomes should be discussed)
- 9. Summary
- 10. References
- 11. Appendices (as appropriate)

Clinical Protocol (Standardized Procedure)

- 1. Introduction: Brief description, background, and significance of the health issue.
- 2. General policy component for SPs
 - a. Development, Approval, Revision, and Review of the protocol (How often? By whom?)
 - b. Scope and Setting of practice
 - c. Supervision of NPs using the protocol
- 3. Protocols
 - a. Definitions of the diagnosis and any related terms to include specific population if protocol is written for a particular group.
 - i. Data base:
 - 1) Subjective; health history to include HPI, pertinent PMH, SH, FH, SH, medications, and allergies
 - 2) Objective Physical exam: Specific parts of the PE for the diagnosis, critical observations
 - b. Differential diagnoses considered
 - c. Diagnostic criteria
 - Pertinent lab/X-rays/EKG/testing necessary for diagnosis
 - d. Plan of Care: Evidence based medical treatment plan
 - i. Management
 - 1) Recognition of emergencies requiring immediate referral
 - 2) Non-Pharmacologic:
 - a) Physical therapy?
 - b) Diet/Exercise?
 - c) Further lab or x-ray studies
 - 3) Pharmacologic: Medications furnishing/formulary. Please give all medications and dosages that may be used for this diagnosis. Included alternatives for patients with allergies.
 - ii. Patient conditions requiring consultation (with physician or specialist)
 - iii. Education- patient/family

- iv. Follow-up recommendations
 - e. Record keeping
 - i. Charting
 - ii. HIPAA
- 4. NPs authorized to perform procedures/protocols at the clinic:
 - a. Qualifications for NPs using the protocol
 - i. Nurse practitioner education program/specialty
 - ii. Advanced level training
 - iii. Experience as an NP
 - iv. National Certification in area of specialty
 - v. Method of initial and continuing evaluation of competence using the protocol
- 5. References (At least 10 current references within the past 5 years)
- 6. Appendix
 - a. Protocol outline from N804
 - b. BRN scope of practice for NP
 - c. NP/MD Collaborative agreement
 - d. General Policies Page
 - e. Development and approval of the Standardized Procedure
 - i. Method: (Title 16, CCR Section 1474 (a))
 - ii. Review schedule
 - iii. Signatures of authorized personnel approving the SPs and dates
 - 1) Nursing
 - 2) Medicine
 - 3) Administration

Education Plan

1. Abstract (150-250 words)
2. Introduction: Identify issue and educational needs
3. Background (Literature review supports the issue and avenues to resolve the issue. Minimum 10 scholarly articles)
 - a. Identification of educational problem
 - b. Goal statement
 - c. Operational definitions
 - d. Project purpose and objectives
 - e. Setting
 - f. Audience/Stakeholders
4. Educational Theory:
 - a. Synopsis of the theory/framework (Examples – Bandura, Bloom, Knowles, Kolb, Freire)
 - b. Application to the educational plan and type of learners
5. Plan Content: Supported by current literature

- a. Explain rationale for education plan selected
 - b. Detailed description of education plan
 - c. Recruitment/marketing
 - d. Time involved (eg. 1 hour power point, ½ hour simulation, role-playing)
 - e. Qualifications of educator
 - f. Participants
 - g. Setting
 - h. Consent process if applicable
 - i. Cost (Supported with budget in Appendix)
 - j. Timeline (Supported with timeline in Appendix)
6. Teaching Strategies:
- a. Learning objectives -listing 3-5
 - b. Address different learning styles
 - c. Specific educational strategies used (role playing, simulation, etc)
 - d. Instructional materials
 - e. How strategies align with organizational mission
7. Evaluation: Short and long-term
- a. Type of measurement (Survey, Existing tool)
 - b. When and how administered
 - c. Components of overall education received and reliability/validity of tool used
 - d. Short term evaluation of presenter and program by participants
 - e. Self-evaluation by educator
 - f. Long term impact of education on issue
8. Conclusion, Implications and Recommendations
9. References: Majority from scholarly journals published within past 5 years
10. Appendices
- a. Education Plan Materials (if applicable)
 - b. Pre- and post-test (if applicable)
 - c. Budget
 - d. Time-line
 - e. Evaluation tools
 - f. Marketing plan

Developing Your Final Paper

When you have decided on the topic and format of your final paper, you will want to meet with your first reader to go over your plan. It may be helpful to have an outline of your final paper ready to focus the discussion. It is best to do this in the semester prior to the semester in which you intend to graduate. Once you have reached agreement regarding the final paper with your first reader, contact your second reader so that you can discuss your plan. In collaboration with your first reader develop a

plan for completion of your final paper. This should include timelines for completion of key portions of the paper and developing a method of communication that meets both your needs. You will want to share this information with your second reader. Next, you will want to begin work on the final paper. You can work on your final paper during your last 2 semesters of the graduate program. Do not wait until the last moment to get started or you risk not completing the final paper within the last semester of your nursing course work and extending your time in the nursing program.

Do I Need Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval?

It is your responsibility to determine if your project needs IRB approval or not. To determine if your project needs IRB approval check with the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at: http://research.sfsu.edu/protocol/require_review. If after reading this information you still have questions regarding whether your project needs IRB approval or not, contact your first reader.

Searching for Information and Interpreting Research Articles

Through your nursing course work you will develop the skills necessary to conduct a comprehensive literature review. All formats of the culminating experience require you to review and critique at least 10 peer-reviewed scholarly works. The most commonly used databases used in nursing are PubMed, Cumulative Index of Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), Web of Science, and PsycINFO. You will be oriented to each of these databases at various points in the graduate program.

An important aspect of success in writing a comprehensive review of the literature is being able to critique the research by determining its significance to the discipline and assessing reliability and validity of the study and study methods. Most students benefit from building a table that aids in summarizing each of the studies reviewed. It may be beneficial for you to develop a table similar to the one below to help you organize the studies you're reading.

Taking Notes from Research Sources:

Complete citation in APA style (7 th edition) (save yourself work at the end by carefully recording citations as you read)
Purpose and type of research (Quantitative or qualitative; experimental or descriptive; longitudinal or cross-sectional, etc): (record the kind of information you will need for your literature review)

When it is time to write your literature review, it is easier to organize the review if you have a stack of single page summaries of the sources you have read instead of a lot of articles and reports.

Writing the Literature Review

The literature review that is required in the final paper is much more detailed than those in most published research articles. The goal of the literature review is to synthesize and critique the most current research to support your project. You are required to review and critique a minimum of 10 peer-reviewed scholarly works (journal articles, etc.) in your literature review. However, your topic area may require that you review more than 10 articles to provide the reader with an understanding of the state of the knowledge. Most of the topics of papers in graduate school will be subjects with hundreds of potential sources, including books, articles, chapters, monographs, government reports, and other sources of information to inform the paper. Literature reviews are rarely exhaustive of the entire literature unless that literature is sufficiently small.

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