



**Samuel Merritt  
University**

THE FAMILY NURSE  
PRACTITIONER PROGRAM  
STUDENT HANDBOOK  
2022-23

## MESSAGE FROM THE FNP PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Dear Graduate Student,

Welcome to the Samuel Merritt University Family Nurse Practitioner Program. Over the next several months the FNP faculty will provide you with the foundation for your professional future as a Family Nurse Practitioner.

This handbook has been prepared to ease your transition into our graduate program and to provide guidance throughout your entire period of enrollment. In addition to this document, you should be familiar with the *Samuel Merritt University Catalog and Student Handbook*. An electronic copy of the *Catalog and Student Handbook* can be accessed via the University website.

We look forward to providing you with the best academic experience to prepare you for your profession.

Again, the faculty welcomes you to our program.

Sincerely,



Shelitha R. Campbell, DNP, MSN, BSN, APRN, FNP-BC, PHN  
Co-Director, FNP Graduate Program



Tal Sraboyants, DNP, FNP-C, CHFNP, PHN  
Co-Director, FNP Graduate Program

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## GRADUATE ACADEMIC CALENDAR

	<b>2021/2022</b>	<b>2022/2023</b>	<b>2023/2024</b>	<b>2024/2025</b>
<b>FALL TERM</b>	<b>FALL 2021</b>	<b>FALL 2022</b>	<b>FALL 2023</b>	<b>FALL 2024</b>
Classes begin	9/7/2021	9/6/2022	9/5/2023	9/3/2024
Add/drop period	9/7 - 9/17	9/6 - 9/16	9/5 - 9/15	9/3 - 9/13
Registration deadline	9/17/2021	9/16/2022	9/15/2022	9/13/2022
Spring term advising	11/1 - 11/12	10/31 - 11/11	10/30 - 11/10	11/4 - 11/15
Spring term registration	11/15 - 11/19	11/14 - 11/18	11/13 - 11/17	11/18 - 11/22
Thanksgiving break	11/24 - 11/26	11/23 - 11/25	11/22 - 11/24	11/27 - 11/29
Commencement	Please see SMU Commencement page for details			
Last day of Fall term classes	12/10/2021	12/9/2022	12/8/2023	12/6/2024
Final examinations	12/13 - 12/17	12/12 - 12/16	12/11 - 12/15	12/9 - 12/13
Grades due in Registrar's Office	12/24/2021	12/23/2022	12/22/2023	12/20/2024
<b>SPRING TERM</b>	<b>SPRING 2022</b>	<b>SPRING 2023</b>	<b>SPRING 2024</b>	<b>SPRING 2025</b>
Classes begin	1/3/2022	1/3/2023	1/2/2024	1/6/2025
Add/drop period	1/3 - 1/14	1/3 - 1/13	1/2 - 1/12	1/6 - 1/17
Registration deadline	1/14/2022	1/13/2023	1/12/2024	1/17/2025
Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday	1/17/2022	1/16/2023	1/15/2024	1/20/2025
President's holiday break	2/21 - 2/23	2/20 - 2/22	2/19 - 2/21	2/17 - 2/19
Summer term advising	3/7 - 3/18	3/6 - 3/17	3/11 - 3/22	3/10 - 3/21
Summer term registration	3/21 - 3/25	3/20 - 3/24	3/25 - 3/29	3/24 - 3/28
Last day of Spring term classes	4/8/2022	4/7/2023	4/5/2024	4/11/2025
Final examinations	4/11 - 4/15	4/10 - 4/14	4/8 - 4/12	4/14 - 4/18
Grades due in Registrar's Office	4/22/2022	4/21/2023	4/19/2024	4/25/2025
<b>SUMMER TERM</b>	<b>SUMMER 2022</b>	<b>SUMMER 2023</b>	<b>SUMMER 2024</b>	<b>SUMMER 2025</b>
Classes begin	5/2/2022	5/1/2023	5/6/2024	5/5/2025
Add/drop period	5/2 - 5/13	5/1 - 5/12	5/6 - 5/17	5/5 - 5/16
Registration deadline	5/13/2022	5/12/2023	5/17/2024	5/16/2025
Commencement	Please see SMU Commencement page for details			
Memorial Day holiday	5/30/2022	5/29/2023	5/27/2024	5/26/2025
Independence Day holiday	7/1 - 7/5	7/3 - 7/5	7/3 - 7/5	7/2 - 7/4
Fall term advising	7/11 - 7/22	7/10 - 7/21	7/8 - 7/19	TBA
Fall term registration	7/25 - 7/29	7/24 - 7/28	7/22 - 7/26	TBA
Last day of Summer term classes	8/5/2022	8/4/2023	8/9/2024	8/8/2025
Final examinations	8/8 - 8/12	8/7 - 8/11	8/12 - 8/16	8/11 - 8/15
Grades due in Registrar's Office	8/19/2022	8/18/2023	8/23/2024	8/22/2025

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## FNP PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The MSN FNP and post-prelicensure ELMSN-FNP curriculum consists of 49 semester units over 5 semesters for full time. A part time option lasting 6 semesters is available for MSN FNP students. The DNP FNP curriculum consists of 65 semester units over 9 semesters. The MSN and DNP curriculum include interdisciplinary core courses, FNP specialty courses, clinical practical, and internship. The DNP FNP curriculum consists of project courses in which a translational research project will be designed and implemented. For MSN FNP, a minimum of 630 clinical hours is required, while for the DNP FNP a minimum of 525 clinical hours is required. The curriculum and clinical sites reflect the track's emphasis on serving multicultural and underserved populations and focus the student's clinical time on Primary Care, Women's Health and Pediatrics. Students will work with a MD, DO, PA or NP "preceptor" who will supervise and mentor them through the clinic experience.

The FNP program is offered on a year-round basis with admission at various points for each track. The course sequencing is slightly different in the MSN FNP and ELMSN-FNP programs.

The MSN FNP online program admissions occur every semester in January, May and September. The online program offers an opportunity to admit students from other states. The curriculum is consistent with the highest national standards, including guidelines established by the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing.

The Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) program focuses on preparing family-oriented primary care providers for multicultural and underserved populations. FNPs are advanced practitioners of nursing with a specialty in primary healthcare. They provide ongoing comprehensive care to individuals, families, and communities. FNPs are responsible for health promotion and maintenance, diagnosis, treatment, and management of health problems, consultation with other healthcare providers, and referral as indicated. FNPs function independently and interdependently with other providers of healthcare. Practice is based on concepts of family health nursing research and theory, as well as concepts from other related disciplines such as medicine and pharmacy. Upon completion of program requirements students are awarded a Master of Science in Nursing or Doctor of Nursing Practice (depending on specific program completion) and are eligible for state and national certification.

### FAMILY NURSE PRACTITIONER STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon graduation the student will be able to...

- Provide family-oriented primary healthcare:
- Elicit a detailed and accurate history,
- Perform the appropriate physical exam, record pertinent data, and develop and implement plan of care.
- Perform and/or order and interpret relevant diagnostic studies.
- Perform appropriate office procedures.
- Provide health promotion and disease prevention.
- Integrates cultural considerations in the provision of primary care.
- Consult and refer within an interdisciplinary practice model.
- Collaborate with patients and families to provide evidence- based primary care that is theoretically sound.
- Assume a leadership role in the profession at local, state, national and international level.
- Produce quality work that demonstrates graduate level scholarly work and can withstand peer review.

## MSN-FNP CURRICULUM & COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Links to University Catalog Below

[MSN-FNP Full-Time CURRICULUM](#)

[MSN-FNP Part-Time CURRICULUM](#)

[MSN-FNP COURSE DESCRIPTIONS](#)

## DNP-FNP CURRICULUM & COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Links to University Catalog Below

[DNP-FNP CURRICULUM](#)

[DNP-FNP COURSE DESCRIPTIONS](#)

## Samuel Merritt University - FNP Program Policies

### ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

Students are expected to participate in all coursework and classroom activities and complete all assignments by the posted due date and time.

The faculty recognizes that events may occur that interfere with participation and/or the completion of coursework by the assigned due date. It is imperative that students communicate with the course faculty as soon as they are aware of any conflict that interferes with the above stated expectations (*preferably PRIOR to due dates*).

### ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Academic integrity is expected of all faculty, staff and students in order to promote a productive and safe environment for learning. Key components of academic integrity are communication and mutual respect among the members of the Samuel Merritt University community. Faculty, staff, and students are expected to abide by the codes of conduct and ethics of this University, as well as the code of ethics of their respective professions, which includes reporting misconduct to the appropriate authorities. Lack of academic integrity includes, but is not limited to, plagiarizing, cheating, deception, breach of confidentiality, failure to report a clinical error, falsifying research results, and failure to confront and/or report misconduct of others.

Faculty members reserve the right to evaluate individual cases of academic dishonesty by a student and to take appropriate action, which may include failure on a paper or exam or failure in the course. Faculty may also recommend censure, probation, suspension or dismissal to the Academic Vice President. A written report of any action will be placed in the student's file in the Office of the Registrar.

If the student’s status in the program is affected, a permanent notation will be made on his/her transcript.

Regardless of any action taken by the course faculty member, lack of academic integrity constitutes grounds for suspension or dismissal from Samuel Merritt University through the Office of the Academic Vice President.

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY AND PLAGIARISM POLICY**

*Individual Assignments* – graded assignments that are the students’ original work. No portion of any assignment submitted may be the work of any other student in this course, or any other course.

*Group Assignments* – graded assignments that are the work and collaboration of a group of students (as assigned by instructor), that cumulatively is submitted as one assignment and will be graded based on the submission of the group. No portion of any assignment submitted may be the work of any other student in this course, or any other course. Group assignments must have a page added to the submitted assignment that indicates the students’ names and the work designated and completed by each student in the group.

*Collaboration* – students speaking with one another, or otherwise working on assignments together, in discussion settings. Collaboration is allowed only on a case-by-case basis, as allowed by the instructor. All students involved in any collaboration will be named on all assignments submitted.

*Cross-course collaboration* – no students will be allowed to work together on assignments between courses, i.e., ELMSN-Hybrid-MSN ONL. Because each individual course is taught by different SMU faculty, there will be no cross-course collaboration allowed based on multiple faculties involved in teaching courses.

*Course expectation* – all assignments will be either individual or group (please refer to syllabus). Collaboration is allowed at the Instructors discretion and with clear instruction to students, otherwise all students must work individually or in their group. No student may submit any assignment that is not original, and completely their own work. Please refer to SMU Academic Student Handbook and Course Policies regarding academic dishonesty and plagiarism.

### **FNP COMMUNICATION CHAIN**

For efficiency in addressing questions/concerns in the Graduate Department, please use the following guide:

Question Type	Sample Topics	Contact
Course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Grade concerns</li> <li>○ Assignment clarification</li> <li>○ Incomplete Status</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Course Faculty of Record</li> <li>2. Course Lead</li> <li>3. Program Director</li> </ol>
General/Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Registration of classes</li> <li>○ Degree plan review/changes</li> <li>○ Leave of Absence</li> <li>○ Withdraw</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Academic Leadership Advisor</li> </ul>
Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Future career path interests as Faculty</li> <li>○ Advocacy efforts to advance the program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Program Director(s)</li> </ul>



## Academic Leadership Advisors

Consult your academic advisors for any degree plan concerns:

Program	Advisors
MSN-FNP DNP-FNP	A-F: Dr. Tal Sraboyants G-O: Dr. Catherine Tanner P-Z: Dr. Shelitha Campbell

### COMMUNICATION, PROFESSIONALISM AND CONDUCT

SMU assigned email is the official form of communication at the University, and students are **required** to access and manage their SMU email on a frequent and regular basis. Students are encouraged to communicate with SMU faculty and staff from their SMU email account. For help accessing email, students should contact the ITS Helpdesk at [service@samuelmerritt.edu](mailto:service@samuelmerritt.edu). (Reference: <https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog/university-policies>, University Policies, SMU Email Requirement).

We recognize that students in the FNP program have overcome many challenges to get to this level in their education. It is our desire to support you in your learning processes and to support the reputation and quality of the SMU FNP program at the highest caliber. We further recognize that our FNP students are mature, responsible, competent at studying and learning, and are hard-working adults with many duties and responsibilities outside of the SMU FNP experience. In order to support you and ensure the mutually beneficial reputation of the SMU FNP program, we will clarify expectations between us.

#### *As your FNP administration, faculty and staff, you can expect:*

1. We will strive to be current in our academic, political, and professional knowledge in advanced practice nursing.
2. We will be prepared for your learning in all FNP courses and clinical rotations.
3. We will show up for FNP courses and FNP clinical rotations with an “I am here to learn with you” attitude, on time, and as scheduled.
4. We will “set the bar high” in our expectations of you in the FNP student role.
5. We will strive to communicate effectively, orally and in writing, in a timely manner.
  - We will strive to provide feedback on papers and assignments to you within 7 days of receiving them.
  - We will strive to answer your emails and phone calls to us **within 72 hours**.
  - If we are unavailable to you during these time frames for any reason, we will contact you at a minimum of two weeks in advance and inform you either through Canvas or email and provide the name of a reliable contact person that can return your emails and phones in our absence.
  - We will use graduate level wording, and proper English composition, spelling and grammar in our communications to you.
5. If we change our class, lab or schedule in a way that impacts your classes or your clinical rotations, except in an extreme emergency, we will give you a minimum of a two-week notice.
6. We will strive to be FNP role models for you.
7. We will work together to see every adverse or challenging situation as an opportunity to learn.
8. Whenever possible, we will provide a minimum of a two-week notification of your upcoming clinical rotation sites.

### As SMU FNP students, we expect:

1. You will be prepared when coming to FNP theory and clinical rotations. This means, you have read the required material, when appropriate, and have a positive, “I am here to learn with you” attitude, will commit to show up on time, be engaged, and attend and participate during the full time scheduled.
2. You will demonstrate an effective meaningful professional communication manner, both orally and in writing, in a timely manner. You will use graduate level wording displaying appropriate composition, spelling and grammar in your communications to us. When you receive any email or written communication from the administration, faculty or staff, written acknowledgement of the communication is expected ***within 72 hours.***
3. We expect an acknowledgement of that communication in a timely manner written within 72 hours.
4. You will strive to “set the bar high” in your expectations of us in FNP administration, faculty and staff roles.
5. If you change your attendance schedule to a class, lab, clinical or other University based activity, except in an extreme emergency, you will give us a minimum of a two-week notice, and if you are going to miss in a clinical site where multiple SMU FNP students are in practice, we expect you to find a replacement for you in your absence.
6. You will strive to be role models and mentors for other FNP students.
7. You will strive to see each adverse or challenging situation as an opportunity to learn.
8. You will keep your clinical hours current and documented and respond rapidly to requests related to potential or current clinical sites timely.

### LATE SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS

Up to 50%-point deduction will occur for assignments submitted late. Assignments are not accepted beyond the fifth day past the due date, unless *prior* arrangements are made with the course faculty.

A student who does not attend required course meetings/activities will receive a lower grade for the course.

### GRADING POLICY

Graduate students of nursing are required to attain a cumulative score of 80% in order to pass a course and the program. The grade scale is as follows and found in all course syllabi:

94 - 100% = A

90 - 93% = A -

87 - 89% = B+

83 - 86% = B

80 - 82% = B-

\*\*\*< 80% = unsatisfactory completion of the course and/or program

75 - 79% = C

72 - 74.9% = C-

69 - 71.9% = D

<68.9% = F

If a student does not pass a course with an 80% or higher, they have one opportunity to repeat the course to pass. If two or more courses are not passed at 80% or higher in a semester, then this is considered a failure and thus removal from the program. Two or more courses not passed during the program will result in dismissal from the program. Please see the general academic policy regarding progression in the SMU catalog: [https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/academic affairs/catalogs](https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/academic%20affairs/catalogs).

### FNP PROGRAM GRADE APPEAL POLICY

#### General Information:

The primary authority of the instructor in the assignment of grades must be respected. An instructor's evaluation of a student's work and performance in that instructor's course must not be over-ridden merely because of a difference of opinion or evaluative judgment, provided it is formed in accordance with the generally accepted canons of the relevant discipline and academic institution. The university presumes that every instructor wants and tries to be non-prejudicial, objective, and consistent in the assignment of grades. This presumption, however, may be over-ridden by weight of evidence to the contrary.

#### Steps of the Appeal Process:

1. The burden of proof rests on the student and can only concern the final grade. The appeal process must be completed within a two-week time frame from the final submission date for the grade.
2. Within two days of final grade submission, the student must submit an appeal in writing to the instructor who submitted the grade. The student must use the form supplied and document supporting proof of why the grade needs changing.
3. The instructor in question must respond within two days of the submitted paperwork.
4. If the student remains dissatisfied with the decision, then the student must submit the appeal to the program Director within 48 hours.
5. If the student remains dissatisfied with the decision, they must submit to the Dean of the College of Nursing within 48 hours of denial for change.
6. If the student continues to feel dissatisfied with the decision, they may appeal the denial of the grade change following the guidelines of the grievance process in the University catalog. This is in accordance with Samuel Merritt University Academic Policy on Grade Changes found in the University catalog. [https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/academic affairs/catalogs](https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/academic%20affairs/catalogs)

### FNP INCOMPLETE GRADE POLICY

A grade of "I" or "incomplete" may be agreed upon between the faculty member and student when the student's work is substantially complete yet incomplete due to circumstances beyond the student's control. **"Substantially complete" in the FNP program means 80% of the work is completed.** A petition for an incomplete is **initiated by the student** and **approved in writing** by the faculty member and/or program director. This is completed **two weeks** prior to the end of the semester. *It is not the responsibility of the faculty member to petition for an incomplete grade*, but an instructor may assign an incomplete grade if the student is unable to do so and has specifically requested an incomplete grade from the instructor. The petition must include the reason for the incomplete grade, the coursework to be completed, and the deadline for submitting the work. The student must satisfactorily complete the work prior to the end of the next semester. Once the petition is approved, the Registrar enters the Incomplete as the grade for the student.

Students completing incomplete course work in the following semester and who have not registered for any other semester courses are enrolled in a zero-unit course on Canvas. The student will register for this course under guidance by the Registrar. If the student is completing incompletes as well as carrying the normal course load for the following semester, they do not register for the course but must have a specific completion plan determined by the faculty granting the incomplete as well as the Director/Assistant Director of the program.

Upon completion of the coursework, the instructor may submit a change of grade form to the Office of the Registrar. An incomplete grade not changed by the due date becomes an "F." An incomplete grade, even when cleared, is part of the student's academic record. Please see the general policy for Incomplete grades in the SMU catalog: [https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/academic\\_affairs/catalogs](https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/academic_affairs/catalogs).

### **FNP REMEDIATION POLICY FOR RETURN FROM LOA**

Students who take a Leave of Absence (LOA) are vulnerable to the loss of important and salient content required to be effective, safe, and good FNP's. To establish a plan for program success, a remediation plan is determined based on the length of time of the LOA and the courses completed prior to taking the LOA.

Students who take an LOA for any period of time and have successfully completed Advanced Physical Assessment (didactic and lab courses) and either Advanced Pathophysiology and/or Advanced Pharmacology will be required to participate in a refresher course to demonstrate knowledge of the 3P courses that were previously taken. The refresher course is designed to be completed in 2 weeks. Students have the option to start and complete this refresher course while on LOA (if not restricted by a medical leave) but after their intent to return from LOA form is approved by FNP leadership. A student must complete this course by week 2 of the returning semester. Successful completion of the course includes passing every assignment with at least 80%. If a student does not pass the refresher course, a subsequent refresher plan may be required which can include mandatory auditing of the 3Ps and a delay in progression to clinical courses and/or graduation.

In addition, students who take an LOA for 2 or more semesters cannot register for a clinical course (N678/778L, N679/N779L, or N680/N781L) in the semester that they return, unless approved by FNP leadership team.

The student is still held accountable to SMU's Leave of Absence policy, which is found in the University Catalog [https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/academic\\_affairs/catalogs](https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/academic_affairs/catalogs)

### **SPECIFIC FNP POLICIES**

#### **For All Courses**

- Students are expected to maintain professional communication with staff, faculty, and peers at all times.
- Online students are expected to participate on time in Discussion Boards and other assigned activities.

#### **For Theory Courses**

- It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with all course requirements.

- Students are expected to be attentive to classroom activities and NOT spend time on personal email or other unrelated activities while class is in session.

### For Clinical Courses

The University requirement for MSN FNP and ELMSN-FNP clinical hours is a minimum of 630 over the final 3 semesters.

The guidelines for dividing clinical hours for the 3 clinical semesters are as follows: The minimum clinical hours are: N678L - 210 hours, N679L - 210hours, N680L - 210 hours over the course of the 15-week semester.

The University requirement for DNP FNP clinical hours is a minimum of 525 over the final 3 semesters. The guidelines for dividing clinical hours for the 3 clinical semesters are as follows: The minimum clinical hours are: N778L - 175 hours, N779L - 175hours, N781L - 175 hours over the course of the 15-week semester.

Clinical hours are accrued as either direct patient care hours or simulation hours. Of the minimum 630 hours (MSN FNP and ELMSN) or 525 hours (DNP FNP) required for program completion, a minimum of 500 hours must be direct patient care hours. Simulation hours are approved by the program. Simulation experiences may include group discussions and presentations about medical conditions encountered with specific patient diagnosis and management while in practice. The following do not count towards the FNP Program clinical hour requirement: travel to and from the clinical assignments, professional conferences, CEUs, your lunch break and research related to general patient diagnosis and management outside of the clinic.

It is of mutual understanding that the FNP Program Policies include the following:

- Students are expected to arrive at class and/or clinical site meetings on time, appropriately attired, wearing SMU nametag, and adequately prepared.
- Students cannot precept in the same work unit where they are employed, unless previous approval has been made by the Program Director.
- Preceptorships with a relative, friend or anyone with whom they have a relationship requires program approval.
- The majority of hours for the program must be in Family Practice or Primary care setting.
- Students can spend limited time in specialty practices approved by the FNP Program.
- If the student decides not to accept a clinical assignment, they must sign the FNP Program site declination form.
  - A student might be required to find their own clinical site.
- The program's focus is Primary care and although most of your clinical hours will be in primary care settings of family practice, pediatrics or women's health, we do support some specialty rotations that cross over.
- These may include but are not limited to Dermatology, ENT, and Oncology, Cardiology, hematology, podiatry, orthopedics, urgent care, occupational health, pain management and psychiatry. Very specialized settings, such as aesthetics, outpatient surgery center and travel medicine to name a few may be arranged through your faculty and clinical coordinator. However, no more than 1/4 of your clinical hours for that semester may be in a specialized setting.
- Students are expected to attend clinical days as if it were their place of employment. Therefore, students must notify the clinical faculty, preceptor, and clinical site as soon as possible if they cannot attend clinical, will be late, or there is a change in hours.

- If a student fails to contact the faculty/preceptor for a missed day, within 24 hours prior to clinic without approval, the student is put on 'tentative fail' of the clinical course. He/ she will have to make up those clinical hours with another clinic day by the deadline established. The 'tentative fail' is lifted once an agreement has been met/ clinical hours made up.
- An absence of more than one day of clinical during the semester jeopardizes meeting competencies and must be discussed with the clinical faculty for remediation.
- Students are expected to provide the names and contact information of their preceptors to their clinical instructor at the beginning of the semester and throughout the rotation.
- For faculty sites, students are expected to participate in pre- or post- clinical conferences and complete their documentation and tasks by the end of clinic day.
- Students at risk in clinical are expected to:
  - Meet with their clinical faculty to review expectations as soon as possible.
  - A learning contract will be initiated.
  - At any time during the student's clinical rotation, a learning contract can be initiated as soon as concerns or problems are noted.
  - A midterm student self-evaluation, along with a learning contract will be initiated for review during the student's final evaluation.
  - Complete a plan for remediation, including learning goals. This midterm evaluation or when concerns are first noted will be completed in writing.

### Policy for Completing Assigned Hours in Clinical Courses

1. Each student must complete each requirement below by the **last day of the semester (last day of week 15)** in order to **pass** the clinical course (N678/778, N679/779, & N680/781):
  - a. Obtain **at least 210 hours (MSN FNP or ELMSN-FNP)/175 hours (DNP FNP)** per clinical course
  - b. Complete **100%** of contracted preceptorship hours for **each site**. If due to an unforeseen circumstance 100% completion is not possible, **greater than 80%** of the **contracted hours** assigned for **each site** must be completed.
  - c. Submit a preceptor evaluation for each site
  - d. Complete all course assignments and course specific objectives with an overall grade of greater than 80%.
2. It is the **students'** responsibility to track all clinical hours throughout the semester to reflect all completed hours and adherence to meeting minimal contracting hours. In the case of **extraordinary** and **unforeseen** circumstances that prohibit a student from obtaining at **least 80% of their contracted preceptorship hours**, it is the student's responsibility to contact their course faculty to determine if the circumstance warrants an exemption from this policy. Policy exemptions **will not be given** for **work-related** circumstances. Policy exemptions will require proof of the unforeseen event (I.e medical provider's attestation).
3. A student is **only** able to obtain an **incomplete** in the course if they are in "good standing." This means that they have completed all other requirements above (1a – 1d) **except** obtaining the minimum 210 hours (MSN FNP)/175 hours (DNP FNP) by the end of the semester.

## DESCRIPTION OF CLINICAL SITES FOR THE FNP PROGRAM

**The main goal of Primary Care is to provide patients with a broad spectrum of preventive and curative care over a period of time and coordinate all of the care that the patient receives and facilitate continuity and integration of health care services.**

**Primary Care Family Practice:** a person, adult or child seeks care here for routine (well check- ups, paps, family planning, school physicals, disability paperwork, DMV physicals), minor acute issues (e.g. cold or ankle sprain) and chronic conditions (e.g. diabetes or high blood pressure). Patients are established here as their medical home, are seen for chronic management (like diabetes) and are referred out to specialists (like Physical Therapy) from here.

Goal: birth to older ages seen, screen, prevent disease, educate, immunize, diagnose, manage chronic diseases, refer to specialty.

**Urgent Care:** stand alone or hospital based, outpatient setting where patients are seen for acute care conditions that are not life threatening (e.g. minor cuts, injury, sprains, falls, colds, coughs, burns). This site could be or not be affiliated with patients' medical home clinic. Often used when patients' primary care clinic is not open, like evenings or weekends - or they cannot access a last-minute appointment. They are not managing chronic conditions here.

Goal: stabilize this 1 thing and have patient return to primary care clinic; sees all ages.

**Outpatient Pediatrics:** Stand alone, outpatient primary care for just pediatric aged patients. Medical home for pediatric patients. All acute and chronic management of different conditions seen as well as routine visits (well checks, immunizations, asthma, rashes, colds, coughs, etc.). Referrals made to specialty from here (like Rheumatology).

Goal: Birth to age 18 years, well or sick (non-urgent or emergent care).

**Women's Health Clinic:** Outpatient reproductive health clinic and perinatal care (and sometimes primary care). Routine paps, breast exams, STI screening, birth control, family planning, some procedures such as LEEP, colposcopy, abortions, and sterilization. Pregnancy management. High risk pregnant teens.

Goal: Routine, acute and chronic ob/gyn conditions. Sees ages 13 and up.

**Specialty:** any clinical site that focuses on management of one system (e.g. dermatology or cardiology) or treats only selected acute diagnoses/ conditions without follow up or management (Urgent Care, Minute clinics [Retail Clinics]).

**Transgender Care Clinic:** Primary care may take place here along with transgender-specific care.

## REQUIREMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CLINICAL PLACEMENTS

1. Samuel Merritt University's FNP Program requires three full semesters for clinical experiences.
2. Samuel Merritt University will collaborate with students to identify clinical sites and preceptors to provide the appropriate clinical experiences to meet the course learning outcomes of each clinical course. All sites are reviewed/approved by the Director of Clinical Placement prior to students attending.

3. Students are expected to be able to travel up to 100 miles from the program campus (ELMSN program) or current residence listed with university (MSN FNP & DNP FNP programs). Students are responsible for maintaining an accurate residence in SMURF.
4. Students are expected to attend a minimum of two clinical days per week to meet the minimum clinical hour requirements per semester. Clinical days may vary during the week depending on the availability of the site and/or preceptor.
5. The offering of all clinical sites is to be viewed as a great opportunity as the procurement of each clinical rotation requires great collaboration between the clinical coordination team and our clinical partners. As such, students are expected to balance each placement with work/life schedules as much as possible. In situations when a placement cannot be accepted by a student, a signed site declination form is required.
6. Due to the multi-step process to secure a clinical site, students are expected to respond to SMU emails within 48 hours during the clinical placement timeline. Failure to respond timely to emails regarding clinical placement could result in a missed opportunity and delayed placement.
7. If students are terminated from a clinical site due to unprofessional behavior including frequent absences, tardiness, or other unprofessional behavior risk failing the course and/or loss of clinical site placement.

## CLINICAL CONTRACTS

For New Contracts (with Uncontracted Facilities), or Renewal Contracts (or contracts expiring before/during your clinical rotation) – A Clinical Contract Request Form (CCRF) must be submitted at least 90 days/60 working days prior to the start of the semester. If submitted after this, the Clinical Coordination team cannot guarantee that the contract will be processed in time for the upcoming semester.

## SAFE AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE IN CLINICAL SETTINGS

### **Policy**

A student whose pattern of behavior is found to be unsafe and/or unprofessional may be excluded from a clinical practicum at any time and could receive a failing grade in the course. The student is referred to the program director and may be subject to further disciplinary action.

### **Guidelines**

The student will demonstrate patterns of healthcare professional behavior which follow the legal and ethical professional codes; promote the well-being of clients, healthcare workers, and self in the biological, psychological, sociological, and cultural realms; demonstrate accountability in preparation, documentation and continuity of care; and show respect for the human rights of individuals.

**Indicators to be used as guidelines for evaluating safe and professional practice are:**

### ***Regulatory***

The student practices within the boundaries of the applicable State Practice Act, the guidelines and objectives of the department, and the rules and regulations of the healthcare agencies. Examples of safe and/or professional practice include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. notifying the agency and/or instructor of clinical absence.
2. adhering to the dress code.
3. presenting for clinical practicum free from the influence of un-prescribed psychoactive drugs, including alcohol.



4. demonstrate accountability by making up missed clinical experiences, as designated by faculty member.
5. arriving promptly for clinical assignments.
6. meeting obligations in a timely manner.

### ***Ethical***

The students practice according to the relevant professional association's Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice, and the State Practice Acts. Examples of safe and/or professional practice include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. accepting assignments in keeping with the University's policy of non-discrimination.
2. appropriately performing any activity related to clinical practice.
3. reporting unethical behavior of other healthcare providers, including other students.
4. demonstrating honesty in all aspects of clinical practice.

### ***Biological, Psychological, Social, and Cultural Realms***

The student's practice meets the needs of the human from a biological, psychological, sociological and cultural standpoint. Examples of safe and/or professional practice include, but are not limited to the following:

1. displaying stable mental, emotional and physical behavior.
2. following through on referrals or interventions to correct own areas of deficiency in clinical practice which, if ignored, may result in harm to others.
3. building interpersonal relationships with agency staff, coworkers, peers and/or faculty that result in clear, constructive communication, promoting quality client care and/or unit functioning.
4. being physically capable of carrying out essential procedures.

### ***Accountability***

The student's practice demonstrates accountability in the responsible preparation, documentation and promotion of continuity in the care of clients. Examples of safe and/or professional practice include, but are not limited to the following:

1. communicating concisely both orally and in writing.
2. documenting client behavior accurately and comprehensively.
3. reporting questionable professional practices.
4. undertaking activities with adequate orientation, theoretical preparation and appropriate assistance.
5. demonstrating honesty in all aspects of practice.

### ***Dress code***

Students are expected to dress professionally in appropriate clothing for their clinical setting. The following serves as a guideline for the FNP-program and is in conjunction with the clinical agency's expectations.

1. It is expected that compliance with the dress code of each individual clinical agency will be respected.
2. Appropriate attire and a neat personal appearance are required when interacting with faculty and peers in classroom situations.
3. Appropriate attire and a neat personal appearance are required during interactions with patients and clinical colleagues.
4. Lab coats should be worn with SMU name tags during every clinical rotation.

5. Attire to be worn under lab coat should be either causal professional or more formal professional attire depending on the setting.
6. Scrubs are **not** proper attire for most nurse practitioners, unless they are consistent with other practitioners in the assigned clinical setting or are covered with a lab coat.
7. Ties for men are optional.
8. Closed toed and low-heeled shoes should be worn in clinics (clogs are the exception but no high-heeled mules). Shoes should be appropriate for the clinical setting (No flip-flops, sandals or open toes).
9. Hair should be arranged so as not to interfere with patient care and safety.
10. Nails should be clean, short and maintained to ensure patient safety. Artificial nails are not permitted for patient care.
11. Perfumed or scented products should not be worn, as many patients are intolerant.
12. Jewelry should not interfere with patient care or safety.

### **CLINICAL PERFORMANCE**

The Clinical Coordinator will help prepare you for clinic by providing a clinical guide, set up training to learn our Clinical Database, and work with you on Clinical Placements.

#### **FNP Student Expectations**

1. Attend all prearranged clinical conferences in a timely manner. Notify preceptors promptly if you are unable to be at clinical.
2. Share with clinical faculty and clinical coordinator regarding strengths, weaknesses and learning needs and preferences.
3. Provide clinical faculty and preceptor with written personal objectives that are consistent with overall course objectives.
4. Participate in self-evaluation as well as preceptor and faculty evaluation.
5. Participate appropriately in the clinical agency in relation to dress, demeanor, nametag, confidentiality and use of resources.
6. Develop collaborative and considerate working relationships with all client and staff colleagues in the clinical agency.
7. Advocate for clients'/families' rights for appropriate care and self-determination above the student's learning needs.

### **INPLACE/EXXAT STUDENT CLINICAL PLACEMENT AND TRACKING SYSTEM**

The FNP Program utilizes the web-based clinical student tracking system developed and maintained by InPlace or Exxat (depending on the student's current clinical course). Full transition to Exxat will be complete by 2024. This secure, password protected software application has multiple functions related to the general management of the FNP clinical curriculum as well each student's self-management of their individual data-- professional profile, documentation of required credentials, and completed clinical cases.

Every student is fully oriented to the use of InPlace/Exxat during the second semester (just prior to first clinical rotation, N678L/N778L); thereafter it is the student's responsibility to maintain their account as directed during the orientation. The Clinical Coordinator and clinical instructors are responsible for monitoring and maintaining designated components of the site.

At the end of every semester, the Clinical Coordinator will send a summary of hours to each preceptor. It is crucial that you accurately reflect time spent with each preceptor and that each site location documented accurately reflected of the day you spent at clinic.

Each student's account provides program or clinical agency administrators with access to any necessary credential or regulatory document whenever required for the purposes of ascertaining compliance with accreditation standards or policies. **The importance of maintaining all documents up to date on InPlace/Exxat cannot be overemphasized. Additionally, students are required to maintain current documents as soft copy on a USB (aka jump- or flash-) drive at all times when physically present at any clinical agency.**

**Specific requirements regarding student documentation for use of InPlace/Exxat can be found in the clinical course syllabus pertinent to the use of this system.**

### COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT

OSCE - An Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) is a type of examination often used in health sciences to test clinical skill performance and competence in skills such as communication, clinical examination, procedures and interpretation of results.

For ELMSN-FNP students, An OSCE usually comprises a circuit of short station/s, in which each student is examined on a one-to-one basis with one or two impartial examiner(s) and standardized patients (actors) or faculty. Each station has a different examiner, as opposed to the traditional method of clinical examinations where a student would be assigned to an examiner for the entire examination. Students rotate through the stations, completing all the stations on their circuit. In this way, all students take the same stations.

As the name suggests, an OSCE is designed to be:

- *Objective* - all students are assessed using exactly the same stations with the same scoring scheme. In an OSCE, students get points for each step that they perform correctly which therefore makes the assessment of clinical skills more objective rather than subjective, where one or two examiners decide whether or not the student fails based on their subjective assessment of their skills.
- *Structured* - stations in OSCEs have a very specific task. Where simulated patients are used, detailed scripts are provided to ensure that the information that they give is the same to all students. Instructions are carefully written to ensure that the student is given a very specific task to complete. The OSCE is carefully structured to include parts from all elements of the curriculum as well as a wide range of skills.
- *Clinical Examination* - the OSCE is designed to apply clinical and theoretical knowledge. Where theoretical knowledge is required (for example, answering questions from the examiner at the end of the station) then the questions are standardized, and the student is only asked questions that are on the scoring sheet.

## **Simulation**

Patient encounter simulations are conducted throughout the FNP curriculum beginning in Advanced Physical Assessment and continuing into Clinical Practicum. To realistically reproduce a patient encounter, standardized patients (SPs) are sometimes utilized. These SPs portray patients during an interview and physical examination with the student. These SPs report their symptoms to the student and the student, in turn, conducts the patient interview and performs a physical examination. Through these interviews, students learn how to communicate with patients in certain medical situations, followed by the appropriate physical assessment.

## **Oral Exams**

In the final semester of the program, students undergo oral examinations with two faculty members. These exams are conducted to assess students' foundation of knowledge and their ability to critically think through three clinical case scenarios, one each in pediatrics, women's health, and internal medicine.

## **Online OSCE and Oral Examination**

The OSCE experience for the MSN FNP and DNP FNP students is embedded in the 3 clinical courses using an online methodology. Each clinical course has 3 evaluation experiences in the final weeks of the semester. The first experience is a medical decision-making scenario based on a case study, the second evaluation is a telephone triage experience, and the final experience is a video-taped patient evaluation using a standardized patient scenario. In addition, in the second clinical course (N679L or N779L) students participate in a 3-day intensive on the Sacramento campus in which patient scenarios are used to assess clinical knowledge.

MSN FNP and DNP FNP students participate in the culminating evaluative experience referred to as the oral exams using a web-based format. See the previous description of the oral examination.

MSN FNP and DNP FNP students may be required to come to campus for an in person OSCE assessment by FNP faculty. This is dependent on the recommendation of their faculty for the clinical and health assessment-based courses and is in consultation with the Director of the FNP program. The visit to campus is at the student's expense.

## **Mandatory Intensives (MSN FNP and DNP FNP curriculum only)**

The in-person Intensive seminars ("Intensives") are designed to provide additional clinical practice opportunities for online students to improve advanced physical assessment and clinical procedural skills.

## **EVALUATION**

### ***Student Outcome Evaluation/Program Evaluation:***

All students are required to complete evaluation instruments assessing the outcomes of their educational program. Ongoing evaluations are conducted in all programs to assess and ensure quality educational experiences. The evaluation instruments are collected each semester and/or during the final term prior to graduation. Failure to complete the instruments may result in a hold (Stop List) on the academic record.

Students are required to complete and submit an evaluation each semester reviewing the current clinical site (non-faculty practice), preceptor (non-faculty) and Clinical Faculty Evaluation. The electronic evaluation will be submitted through the SMU clinical database.

### **GRADUATE PROGRESSION AND GRADUATION**

All students must satisfactorily complete all required prerequisite courses to progress in the major. In order to matriculate into the final semester of the FNP program. The MSN FNP, DNP FNP or ELMSN-FNP student must successfully complete the curriculum as outlined in the current catalog and pass a standardized assessment test as determined by the School of Nursing at the prescribed passing score.

Graduate students in any of the FNP programs must achieve satisfactory academic performance, including: a minimum grade of “B-” in all required courses; a grade of “S” on all clinical experiences; and a cumulative grade point average 3.0. Graduate students are also required to complete evaluation instruments assessing their learning experiences, including clinical coursework, at periodic intervals.

Students are expected to complete their programs in no more than six years from the date of matriculation.

*Copy Revised: 12/2022 sc/ts*