Course Number and Title: DNP 511: DNP Practicum

Number of Credits: Variable: 1-6 semester hours

Meeting Schedule: Scheduled with preceptor

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Pre-requisites: DNP 501, DNP 502

Course Description:

Theory, evidence, and the systematic translation of research into practice serve as the foci for DNP practicum experiences across the program of study. Students investigate clinical problems and refine their clinical translational capabilities within the context of the broader health care system. Clinical learning is directed toward systematic application of knowledge and scientific discovery in resolving new or persistent problems affecting the safety and quality of patient care. Mentored clinical application of evidence-based knowledge and skills, as well as independent investigation and evaluation of outcomes, supports integration of the DNP role into the complex circumstances of contemporary nursing practice. Leadership, consultation, advocacy, fiscal accountability and interdisciplinary collaboration serve as core competencies to effect organizational change.

Course Description:

Upon successful completion of all course requirements, DNP students will be able to:

1. Develop practice innovation based on integration and application of findings from nursing and other health sciences to pressing practice problems and dilemmas;
2. Apply cost-effective approaches to clinical implementation science, accounting for both risk and outcomes improvement;
3. Develop evidence-based practice guidelines that promote accurate, timely, effective, and efficient care delivery;
4. Evaluate quality of clinical services in a defined area using data extracted from practice information systems and databases;
5. Advocate for scientifically defensible health policy in local, regional and national arenas;
6. Lead inter-professional teams in analysis and resolution of complex practice and organizational issues;
7. Use epidemiological, biostatistical and other scientific data to support health promotion and disease prevention efforts in organizations and communities;
8. Mentor other nurses to achieve excellence in clinical nursing practice.

Teaching methods:

This variable credit practicum course strongly emphasizes the attainment and refinement of skills required by the DNP student. The practicum consists of supervised experiences with assigned preceptors in a variety of clinical/organizational settings selected to optimize attainment of course outcomes. Each student meets with the DNP 511 faculty member and their preceptor to determine practicum activities relevant to the course outcomes that meet the student’s learning needs.

Students can choose to focus on specific course outcomes (e.g., quality, evidence-based practice guidelines) in a semester, and clinical experiences may unfold so that students find themselves meeting additional course outcomes.

Practicum hours are completed sequentially over four semesters. Students register for a specific number of credit hours each semester based on their anticipated time in practicum. One semester hour is equal to 56 clock hours of supervised clinical experiences. Students will receive an incomplete if hours are not completed by the end of the semester. Additional hours cannot be counted toward the following semester without prior approval from the DNP 511 faculty member. Students also cannot begin accumulating practicum hours prior to the start of the semester without faculty approval.

Learning takes place through mentored clinical experiences with designated preceptors. Clinical activities must meet program outcomes; and students, in collaboration with their advisor and the DNP 511 faculty member, identify clinical experiences based on the DNP 511 course outcomes. Practicum experiences are supervised by faculty through onsite visits and/or teleconferences with the student and preceptor. Students receive faculty feedback on clinical logs. DNP 511 seminar discussions are held during the Immersion Weekends.

Students will work with their academic advisor to select a clinical site and a preceptor for each practicum experience. Preceptors are expected to be experts capable of guiding students in the selection of appropriate learning experiences consistent with the highest level of nursing practice. Moreover, preceptors facilitate student involvement in professional meetings, projects, and networking opportunities related to the focus area.

Preceptors might be advanced practice nurses or other healthcare professionals with graduate preparation and recognized expertise, physicians with experience in a student’s
area of interest, or administrators of healthcare organizations. Preceptors facilitate access to stakeholders, decision-makers, and clinical services necessary for achievement of course outcomes.

Practicum experiences are selected within the state the student is licensed. A formal affiliation agreement between the Loyola University Marcella Niehoff School of Nursing and the organization is required for practicum placements.

**Evaluation:**

Students must complete the following for DNP 511:

- A record of clinical hours counted toward practicum
- Logs that relate practicum activities to course outcomes
- An academic ePortfolio

The DNP 511 faculty member provides oversight of the practicum experience. They meet in person or by teleconference with the student and preceptor prior to or toward the beginning of each semester’s practicum. The faculty member is available for onsite visits or teleconferences throughout the semester. Student logs are to be submitted for every 16 hours of practicum and serve as the student’s self-evaluation of how course outcomes were met. Upon completion of each semester’s practicum, the faculty member, with input from the preceptor, assigns a letter grade for the course. **A grading rubric for the clinical experience is posted as an attachment on Sakai under “Syllabus.”**

**Student Logs:**

Student logs should be written in a succinct and professional manner. They are to be submitted as Word attachments in the ePortfolio. Each log must detail the date(s) that practicum hours were completed during that time period, the number of hours completed each day, a clear description of the day’s activities, and reflections on how the activity met a specific course outcome. These reflections provide an opportunity to apply content from DNP theory courses (e.g., population health, epidemiology, leadership, translational research, policy) to clinical experiences. Although every student brings a wealth of clinical experience and expertise to the practicum setting, the student is expected to demonstrate application of new knowledge. Since the logs serve as the student’s self-evaluation, clear coverage of the aforementioned areas facilitates grading. Students are encouraged to post supporting documents (ex: quality improvement plan) in the ePortfolio; however, these documents are not substitutes for the logs.

**Practicum Seminar:**

DNP 511 seminars may be scheduled for the Fall and Spring semester Immersion Weekends. Course outcomes are used as the framework for discussion of clinical
experiences. Students are expected to arrive prepared for discussion of their own work and to provide others in the group with feedback.

**Academic Portfolio:**

The student will develop an academic electronic portfolio that will expand with each semester’s DNP 511 practicum. The portfolio presents evidence that course outcomes have been met. In addition to work completed during practicum, the portfolio can be used to document professional achievements separate from the DNP program (e.g., presentations, conferences, continuing education, leadership of professional organizations).

**Course evaluation expectation:**

It is a professional expectation that all students participate in course evaluations to guide ongoing program improvement.

**Academic integrity statement:**

Academic honesty is an expression of an ethic of interpersonal justice, responsibility and care applicable to Loyola University faculty, students and staff which demands that the pursuit of knowledge in the university community be carried out with sincerity and integrity.

(refer to Academic Policies of the DNP Program in the DNP Student Handbook)