SON OP 40.711: Doctor of Nursing Practice Professional Mentor Policy

PURPOSE: The purpose of the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Professional Mentor Policy is to describe the process for students to establish clinical or practicum experiences and to identify and approve professional mentors who can facilitate clinical or practicum experiences. Clinical or practicum experiences with a professional mentor provide students with an opportunity to develop as a DNP leader by participating in one-to-one professional learning activities with an expert.

REVIEW: All policies in the Graduate Program Manual shall be reviewed by the Graduate Program Associate Dean/Department Chairs by December 1 of even numbered years in collaboration with the Graduate Program Council. Final approval of the Graduate Program Manual is by the Dean.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1.0 Policy

To achieve student learning outcomes and meet program clinical/practice hour requirements, various DNP courses require students to spend time in clinical/practice experiences working with professional mentors to guide and facilitate the students’ advancement in a specific area and as a DNP leader. The purpose of providing students with the opportunity to work with professional mentors is to achieve course objectives through a meaningful educational experience with an individual identified as an expert in a particular area. The DNP faculty members recognize that DNP students are highly skilled practitioners and nursing leaders when they enter the program and thus benefit greatly from working with professional mentors to facilitate their advanced leadership and practice development in the DNP role. Individuals who serve as professional mentors for DNP students should meet the following qualifications:

a) Formal education and professional experience as required for the professional role and practice area, preferably, an earned graduate degree or its equivalent in a specialty area of practice.

b) Clinical practice expertise derived from practical and theoretical preparation for individuals in clinical practice roles.

c) Administrative or management expertise derived from practical and theoretical preparation for individuals in administrative or public health positions.

d) Commitment to assist students to develop unique aspects of a particular role and meet defined learning objectives as established by the program of study.

Learning objectives are designed to guide the students’ clinical/practice experience while working with the professional mentor. Clinical/practice experiences for students in the DNP program may include direct or indirect patient care experiences; observational experiences; interviews; participation in community events or local, state, and national meetings relevant to the learning objectives; activities related to developing, implementing, and completing the DNP Project; or other unique learning opportunities from which the student can achieve defined learning objectives. Students may meet with professional mentors virtually or face-to-face.

The preferred professional mentor has regional, national, or international expertise. Clinical/practice experiences may take place in the student’s place of employment only if the experience clearly provides a unique opportunity to achieve specified learning objectives and/or to develop, implement and complete the DNP Project. School of Nursing faculty may serve as professional mentors.
Course faculty must approve all professional mentors and student learning objectives for the clinical/practice experience. Faculty approve professional mentors based on the criteria identified in this section as well as students' learning needs and course and program objectives. The clinical/practice experience and professional mentor approval process is detailed in Section 2.0 below.

2.0 Procedure

1. DNP students, with support from course faculty (and if applicable, the DNP Project Advisor) identify potential professional mentors who will meet the student’s individual learning and development needs and who meet the qualifications for professional mentors.
2. Professional mentors and student learning objectives are approved by course faculty (or if applicable, the DNP Project Advisor) prior to the start of the professional mentor relationship.
3. Students will complete and submit one form for each professional mentor to the DNP Program Coordinator prior to the start of the professional mentor relationship.
4. The DNP student will document, reflect upon, and evaluate clinical/practice experiences, guided by learning objectives, using the DNP Clinical/Practice Hour eLog.
5. The course faculty and/or the DNP Project Advisor maintain contact with the student’s professional mentor(s) as needed. Faculty members are available to the professional mentor via phone and e-mail.
6. The DNP Program Coordinator maintains a database of individuals who serve or have served as professional mentors for DNP students. The database of professional mentors includes name, title, credentials, highest academic degree, and institutional affiliation.
Appendix A
Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center School of Nursing
Doctor of Nursing Practice Professional Mentor Form

Professional Mentors in the DNP Educational Journey

Purpose and Qualifications
The purpose of providing students with the opportunity to work with professional mentors is to achieve course objectives through a meaningful educational experience with an expert who can facilitate students’ advancement as a DNP leader in a specific focus area. The preferred professional mentor has regional, national, or international expertise. Individuals who serve as professional mentors for DNP students should meet the following qualifications:

a) Formal education and professional experience as required for the professional role and practice area, preferably, an earned graduate degree or its equivalent in a specialty area of practice.

b) Clinical practice expertise derived from practical and theoretical preparation for individuals in clinical practice roles.

c) Administrative or management expertise derived from practical and theoretical preparation for individuals in administrative or public health positions.

d) Commitment to assist students to develop unique aspects of a particular role and meet defined learning objectives as established by the program of study.

Procedure
1. DNP students, with support from with the course faculty (and if applicable, the DNP Project Advisor) identify potential professional mentors who will meet the student’s individual learning and development needs and who meet the qualifications for professional mentors.
2. Professional mentors and student learning objectives are approved by course faculty (or if applicable, the DNP Project Advisor) prior to the start of the professional mentor relationship.
3. Students will complete and submit one form for each professional mentor to the DNP Program Coordinator prior to the start of the professional mentor relationship.
4. The DNP student will document, reflect upon, and evaluate clinical/practice experiences, guided by learning objectives, using the DNP Clinical/Practice Hour eLog.

Professional Mentor Information to the DNP Program Coordinator

Name and credentials:

Highest academic degree:

Institutional affiliation:

Position:

Address:

Phone number:

Email address:

Learning objective(s) related to experiences with professional mentor: