



**UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY**

Faculty of Nursing

Master's Project Manual
For Faculty Supervisors and Students

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Faculty of Nursing Master of Nursing Program Projects

Nursing 633 & Nursing 634

Overview of the Revised MN Streams in Relation to Project:

The University of Calgary, Faculty of Nursing Master of Nursing (MN) Program can be tailored to meet specific career goals of graduate students. Built-in flexibility in program design allows students entering the MN program to select between four routes of study: research (thesis), advanced practice, education, or health care organization and policy. Completion of the MN program requires a final project tailored to the student focus of study within the selected stream.

The *research stream* is intended to prepare students for advanced practice in a focus area of study and requires completion of a supervised research project (thesis). The *advanced practice route* is intended to prepare students for advanced practice as a Masters prepared Nurse Practitioner or Advanced Practice Nurse in their chosen area and requires completion of a supervised practicum practice project. The *education route* is intended to prepare students for advanced practice in a teaching and learning focus of study and requires completion of a supervised teaching and learning project. The *health organization and policy route* is intended to prepare students for advanced practice in leadership, policy, and practice issues from a systems/organization perspective and requires completion of a supervised health organization and policy project.

All students entering the MN program must complete six core courses and a project in their chosen stream (N 633 and 634). Two additional graduate option courses specific to the focus of study are required for the practice, education, and health organization and policy routes. These courses including the options must be completed whenever possible prior to or some alongside of the practicum projects. There may be full time students taking some courses along side of Nursing 633, however it is advised because of time constraints that students complete most courses before starting Nursing 633. The thesis route does not include additional required graduate option courses although most thesis students' complete additional courses specific to the proposed research study.

The required courses are: NURS 605 (Philosophy of Nursing); NURS 611 (Substantive Theory in Advanced Practice); NURS 609 (Applied Stats); NURS 621 (Quantitative Research Methods); NURS 683 (Qualitative Research Methods); NURS 627 (Scholarly Writing and NURS 629 Evidence Based Nursing both $\frac{1}{4}$ courses) and, **NURS 633** (Advanced Practice Project 1).

Students in the practice, education or health organization and policy routes are required to complete **NURS 634** (Advanced Practice Project II) and two graduate option courses intended to support the student focus of study. For students in the research route, NURS 633 is a launching course for the proposed research project and subsequent completion of a thesis. NURS 634 is not required for students in the research specialty route.

The Specialty Route Projects: NURS 633 (H 3S-8) and NURS 634 (F 1S-8)

The advanced practice projects are designed and guided by the University of Calgary, Faculty of Nursing Graduate Programs Curriculum Framework. As such, the intended outcomes of the projects, including the thesis project are advanced knowledge and practice in the selected specialty focus of study.

Suggested Goals For Each Stream:

The following are examples of goals that students may consider in developing their ideas related to their projects.

Health Systems Leadership/Policy Stream

- Develop an understanding of how healthcare delivery systems are organized and financed and how this affects patient care
- Interpret relationships between social, cultural, political, economic issues and the health care system
- Assume a leadership role in effectively implementing patient safety and quality improvement initiatives within the context of the interprofessional team using effective communication skills
- Use quality processes and improvement science to evaluate care and ensure patient safety for individuals and communities
- Design and implement systems change strategies within that improve the care environment

Education Stream:

- Analyze critically the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of conventional and alternative pedagogies that inform best practices in nursing practice (clinical) education
 - Grounds teaching strategies in educational theory and evidence based teaching strategies

- Explicate his/her personal philosophy of nursing education, linking how it would be enacted in their teacher-learner relationships in nursing practice settings
- Articulate teaching learning strategies to promote integration of theory into practice, critical thinking, and safe competent decision making in nursing practice
- Advances knowledge of curriculum design and evaluation of program outcomes

Direct Practice Stream:

- Apply the best available evidence from nursing and other sciences as the foundation for practice.
- Use information and communication technologies to advance patient education, enhance accessibility of care, analyze practice patterns, and improve health care outcomes, including nurse sensitive outcomes.
- Use leadership skills to teach, coach, and mentor other members of the healthcare team.
- Use knowledge of health promotion, illness and disease management to provide evidence-based care to populations, perform risk assessments, and design plans or programs of care.
- Apply theories and evidence-based knowledge in leading, as appropriate, the interdisciplinary care team to design, coordinate, and evaluate the delivery of care.
- Establish therapeutic relationships to negotiate patient-centered, culturally appropriate, evidence-based goals and modalities of care.

The Importance of Projects based on Evidence Informed Knowledge

Research and research utilization are integral parts of evidence-informed nursing practice in the revised Master of Nursing Curriculum. At the baccalaureate level, graduates are prepared to be able to apply research results to their practice (micro and meso level). At the doctoral level, graduates are prepared for entry into a career that involves conducting independent research. Master's prepared graduates should understand the importance of evidence-informed practice in nursing and be able to lead evidence -informed nursing in their own practice. Master's level advanced practice nurses often bridge the gap between the production of knowledge and the clinical application of knowledge. Master's prepared nurses are frequently expected to lead the development and implementation of clinical nursing standards and guidelines for their

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current setting that reflect current research findings, help develop policy guidelines, use informed evidence for safety and quality care of health systems, evaluate organizational models for practice units, evaluate curriculum, and play an important role in supporting research and helping to integrate research activities in their practice setting. Many masters prepared nurses also participate as members of a research team or conduct small research utilization projects.

As a Master's Prepared Nurse, graduates should be able to:

- Analyze and use high quality research to support evidence-informed practice (i.e., identification of answerable practice questions and the ability to access and assess the literature to answer or further investigate through research, synthesis)
- Develop, critique, and support best practices
- Contribute to the development of nursing knowledge
- Critically review, assess quality, and integrate a body of research around a specific concept or issue, and derive implications for practice
- Advance nursing research in their own practice setting, and
- Participate as a member of a research team.

Purpose of Master of Nursing Practice Project

The Master of Nursing Practice Project is an alternative to a thesis. The project provides evidence that the graduate student has engaged in scholarly and creative work in his/her practice environment. In the Faculty of Nursing, University of Calgary, the project is expected to address a problem relevant to nursing. The discussion below is intended to assist faculty in the guidance of a project that is consistent with excellence in scholarship expected of a graduate student in the Master of Nursing program at the University of Calgary.

In the revised curriculum starting in September 2013, training in research/inquiry will involve completion of two research courses, and an applied statistics for nursing research course prior to initiating the practicum project. Over three semesters, the student will engage in developing and completing the project with a supervisor and project team. Seminar led courses in Nursing 633 and 634 will occur alongside the practicum projects to guide the students' application of the theory and process of nursing research, knowledge utilization, and translation to practice including critical appraisal, quality assessment of the literature and the development of a high degree of skill in accessing the evidence to answer practice questions.

The goal of the Faculty of Nursing Master's project is to allow the student to demonstrate critical thinking, nursing scholarship, and advanced nursing competencies, while addressing an issue or problem in nursing practice. The process of scholarly inquiry includes conceptualization of the topic, critical review of the literature, and

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linking the project to nursing knowledge related to the students chosen stream of advanced practice, education, or health/organizational systems. It involves the integration of philosophical, theoretical, and methodological knowledge. Each practicum course will focus on particular elements of the project. In the first practicum (may be within an agency or with Faculty Supervisor research team) (NURS 633) the student will address the literature review and development of the project. In the second practicum (NURS 634), the student will implement the project, by gathering and interpreting findings with relevance to nursing practice. In the final practicum (NURS 634), the student will focus on opportunities for dissemination of findings that *may* include: a paper submitted for publication, a final report, an abstract for presentation at a conference, a teaching or evaluation tool, or a unit policy guideline. The final oral examination to exit the program will provide the student with an opportunity to “defend” the summative project that demonstrates the students’ knowledge in their field of study and the ability to apply that knowledge.

Types of Master’s Projects

There are several different types of master’s projects that would facilitate the above goals. For all types of projects the student/faculty supervisor/practice agency will identify a research problem or practice issue, review, and summarize the literature related to the problem area and refine a problem statement. For the MN/NP students the project will take the form of an E-Portfolio. In Nursing 633 the student will build on their E-Portfolio described as an “album of a variety of scholarly works which are interconnected” (Then & Rankin 2015). One of the major scholarly outputs (like other MN students) will be a manuscript for publication. The E-Portfolio will be examined in the MN defence. The following would be approaches that all student(s) with their faculty/agency team may consider:

- ***Integrative review of the literature.*** Performing a critical analysis and synthesis of the literature in a focused topic area that results in conclusions about the quality and quantity of knowledge development in the area. Some examples of literature review formats are seen in SQUIRE or PRISMA guidelines.
- ***Research utilization project.*** Developing a detailed plan for evaluating and incorporating research findings into a specific practice setting, such as reviewing and updating a practice protocol, developing an in-service for colleagues on the latest research in an area, or reviewing or developing educational materials for a lay audience based on the latest research findings.
- ***Clinical case study.*** Investigating a practice question or problem by synthesizing and analyzing observations, critically appraising relevant literature, making evidence-informed recommendations for practice, and offering a knowledge translation or ‘change’ plan. This can be a single longitudinal case or

multiple related cases (this may be an example where more than one student could do a project).

- **Faculty project.** The student will become a member of a research team with the expectation of: (1) making a contribution to a project such that the contribution would warrant co-authorship, or (2) developing a secondary research question that can be answered using the data to be (or that has already been) collected for the Faculty member's project.

The Difference between a Masters Project and a Master's Thesis

The master's *project* is scholarly work that addresses a theoretical or practice-based problem in nursing today. The culmination of a project can vary (see pg. 4-5). The committee will require a supervisor who will usually be the project lead. The committee may also include individuals from the practice agency that are Master's prepared (clinicians, administrators, educators) and may or may not include another faculty member from the Faculty of Nursing or from another discipline. Ideally, the master's project will involve a significant element of knowledge translation (e.g., publication, presentation, dissemination within the clinical environment); however it is not a requirement for the student's degree. The supervisor however may engage in a contract with the student regarding authorship, agreeing to a reasonable timeline for publication so that the student has an opportunity to be first author (see below).

The master's *thesis* is usually an independent research project that includes designing a study and completing all aspects of the research process. The finished product is a thesis in the traditional "thesis" format or series of research papers. A thesis generally takes more time to complete. Thesis students follow the Faculty of Graduate Studies guidelines and approved thesis format. The Faculty of Graduate Studies approves the committee formally.

The Project Committee

The student's supervisor will act as Project Chair. The chair will be a PhD prepared faculty member who will serve as the major advisor/guide of the project. Two additional doctoral or master's prepared members will be selected with guidance from the chair. At least one of these individuals will be from the project setting/agency. Members (the Committee) are generally selected for their expertise in the topic area, the project methods or the publication process.

Identifying a Topic for the Master's Project

Preparation for a master's project topic will occur early in the students' program. In fact, in the revised curriculum, students must enter the program having chosen a stream to focus their study (education, health systems, or direct practice) prior to entering the program. As presently occurs, students upon admission will be assigned a supervisor
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that will have the topic and /or methodological expertise to guide the student and a project committee to offer the student the guidance they need. Students will require a committee to be formed much earlier in their program as they should know of their project within the first semester if they are full time students and by the end of the first year if they are part time. For full time students, it is essential that the student and supervisor agree on the type of project **within the first semester** so that a Faculty project or Other (Agency) project if not found by the student/faculty member can discuss the situation with the Associate Dean Graduate Programs to see if she has had requests from agencies that may be appropriate for the student in order for the student to proceed to Nursing 633. The Faculty Supervisor is highly encouraged to network within their area of specialty to find a project for the student or have the student work with them on a project within their program of research.

The following considerations should occur for all projects once their project is identified in addition to special considerations for individual projects that need to be communicated to students:

- Clarity of what the student will be doing (research question/project topic) needs to occur prior to the beginning of the first practicum.
- An overall plan of work and time-lines must be followed for completion. Scheduling of regular meetings (once a month) must occur with all members of the team. In addition, more frequent regularly scheduled meeting with the supervisor (weekly/biweekly during the project) should be scheduled. It is the student's responsibility to keep the supervisor informed of the progress.
- Clear evaluation criteria are developed for the proposal (N 633) used for all projects with clear grading criteria and outcomes for each practicum. The supervisor will participate in guiding the student along with the seminar leader of N 633 to complete the proposal. All members of the team will participate in evaluation of the final project. As the project lead, it will be the supervisor's responsibility to guide and orientate other project committee members to the evaluation criteria.
- Depending on the complexity of the project more than one faculty member may be involved.
- Occasionally, a faculty member and a particular project may have special requirements. For example, if data collection is not complete for the larger project and the student is analyzing completed cases, the project may not allow to student to publish results until data collection is complete and the entire sample can be analyzed.
- Students, supervisors, and project team members need a clear understanding about potential publication and authorship. (See Faculty of Nursing authorship guidelines). Faculty supervisors may engage in a written agreement that expects the publication to occur within a year of completion for the student to be first author. If the student has not met this agreement, the

faculty will do the necessary revisions and submit as first author with the student as second followed by other team members. This must be agreed in writing in advance.

Questions to Consider in Choosing a Project Topic:

1. What is the relevance of the proposed project to advanced practice nursing?
2. What is the congruence of the project with their academic and practice interests?
3. What is the scope of the project and the potential in completing it in a reasonable time frame (within the 3 allotted semesters)
4. Does the project involve using human subjects? (If so it will require going through a research ethics board CHREB).

Ethics

The supervisor will seek ethics approval when primary data are collected from individuals groups or health records. The supervisor will seek a modification to an existing project approval with a novel research question is asked of data that are currently being or have already been collected.

Learning and Dissemination of the Project

The overall purpose/end goal of the project for all students (regardless of type of project) is for the student to provide evidence of learning both orally and in writing. It is expected that each student develop and implement a KT plan for each project in order to appropriately enhance the use and uptake of the research/inquiry into practice

- The main goal for a project where research is undertaken (going through ethics) should be for the student to prepare a manuscript for publication, or a presentation to a target group or conference developed with involvement by all project team members.
- An improvement project may take the form of a program or policy development, a presentation to a target group or professional conference, the design of an innovative technique for the delivery of patient care, a paper for publication, or a collaborative effort that effects practice.

PROJECT DEFENCE

Please see criteria for Capstone Project Defense developed and vetted through Graduate Curriculum Committee 2014-15 (and by Nursing 633/634 professors).

Illustration of Course Work Leading to the Project (please note that there will be other seminars offered by Associate Dean Teaching and Learning and Jill Norris throughout the program to enhance skills such as literature search, writing for publication, presenting skills and more.

<i>Course</i>	<i>Potential Project Assignments to prepare students for the project</i>
Nursing 611	Do a concept analysis useful for understanding topic
Nursing 605	Identify a philosophy from which students could frame their topic/useful to understand their topic
Nursing 621	Literature review and proposal writing
Nursing 683	Practical application of qualitative methodology, methods of interviewing, generation and analysis of qualitative data related to students project topic
Nursing 609	Foundational knowledge and application, of statistical tests used in nursing research
Nursing 629	Building on foundations of critical inquiry by emphasizing the evaluation and interpretation of qualitative and quantitative research, students develop an enhanced ability to use systematic reviews and research-based innovations in making evidence based decisions for client care, nursing knowledge and organizational or system improvement.
Nursing 633 Leadership Theory	The course will critically examine theories and principles of leadership and leadership development as it relates to individual leadership practices, leading multidisciplinary teams, and leadership within the broader health system. Students will explore and discuss the influence of

	<p>leaders and leadership on the healthcare workplace, on client /population outcomes, and the health care system. In the practicum project students will utilize evidence to assess their leadership skills and competencies, and how they relate to the development and evaluation of their practicum project.</p>
Nursing 633 Seminar I	<p>Seminars will be held for 1 hour weekly (unless otherwise stated) to discuss content areas relevant to the development of the proposal and to provide students with an opportunity to present and receive feedback on the various sections of their proposal. The final classes will focus on issues related to obtaining ethical review (if not improvement project) and possibly implementing the project</p>
Nursing 634 Seminar II & III	<p>In Practicum Project II & III seminars will focus on issues related to the implementation of the project, writing up and discussion of findings, and dissemination. Advising sessions will provide students with an opportunity to receive feedback on the various sections of their project and practice knowledge translation skills (i.e. development of a poster and presentation of poster to classmates.</p>

Roles and Responsibilities of Project Members

Advising Sessions (Some with Supervisor and some with project team):

- The importance of setting a regular meeting schedule with the student(s), some supervisors will set weekly meeting dates for the entire semester.
- The importance of having the student submit a timeline
- The student should come prepared for subsequent sessions and lead the session, have questions, provide updates, next steps, test out ideas, bring literature and keep a summary of the session.
- Student should send an email after the meeting with points summarizing decisions taken and items for follow-up.
- Purpose of the advising session is to facilitate the discussion, raise questions, provide feedback, but the supervisor should not be taking the lead or directing all of the work. Need to connect student with resource people, key people to speak to etc., as you know the setting.

Role of the Supervisor:

The supervisor works with the seminar leader in N 633 to guide the student

- As discussed above guides and helps student to find a project
- Meet with the students on a regular basis (once per week depending on the stage of the process)
- Indicate preferred way to be contacted (emails pager etc.)
- Set expectations for turn-around (drafts, emails, phone calls)
- Orient the student to the setting and introduce student to key people
- In advising sessions brainstorm with the student, raise questions, issues of feasibility, give feedback
- Provide guidance especially if student is heading off track
- Give feedback on timeline
- Give feedback on drafts of the proposal
- Give feedback on literature review and methods
- Give feedback in the evaluation of the final proposal

Student Responsibilities:

- Come prepared to the advising session and take the lead in the discussion
- Identify their learning needs

- Develop and present their timeline
- Keep the supervisor informed of their activities related to the project
- Send the supervisor a summary of the decisions and points to work on from the advising sessions
- Discuss turn-around times and respect these agreements

Role Course Professor

- Provide content material in theory course (N 633) and seminars (N 633 & 634) and discusses progress with students
- Course professor has set office hours for students
- Available via email, to provide advice to the student and or advisor
- Meet with student and advisor as needed
- Keep the supervisor apprised of any developments with the student affecting the project
- Responsible for marking student submissions within theory/seminar class