

**MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF NURSING
Master Resource Outline**

NRSG 575 Professional Paper/Project

Credits: 4 credits required (maximum 6 credits allowed on official program of study)

Semester Offered: Fall, Spring

Pre-requisite: graduate standing

Policy Guidelines: Policy # D-4 Professional Project and Committee

Course Description: The professional paper/project provides a means for students to demonstrate mastery of graduate level competencies through application of course content. The topic must have been mutually agreed upon by the student and his or her major advisor and graduate committee. A professional paper or project in nursing addresses a relevant health care issue and results in a meaningful or substantive contribution to nursing practice.

Course Objectives

The student will (in consultation with chairperson and committee):

1. Plan and organize activities for the professional paper or project.
2. Analyze and synthesize appropriate information and/or data.
3. Describe the significance of the professional paper or project to nursing.
4. Evaluate method(s) in relation to the outcome(s).
5. Generate ideas for nursing practice, education, or research based on the project outcome(s).
6. Defend before a committee the methods used as well as the outcome(s) for the selected paper/project.

Approved by GAAC: 12/9/13

Approved by Faculty: 1/7/14

Reviewed by Faculty: 8/18/94

Human Subjects Review

Montana State University and College of Nursing students and employees are committed to protection of human subjects. Data collected on human subjects does not begin until the University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approves a student's study. See <http://www2.montana.edu/irb/index.html> for instructions.

Components of the Professional Paper or Project

Components can be found on the Graduate School website at <http://www.montana.edu/etd/>. If exceptions to the format requirements outlined in the governing documents are anticipated, the Graduate School should be contacted well ahead of the deadline. If the exceptions are appropriate, they will be considered for approval at that time and will facilitate final approval by the Graduate School. Failing to obtain approval could delay graduation and cause unnecessary expense. Students can be directed to the Graduate School for advice if their Chairperson deems appropriate.

Examples:

1. Clinical Project

A clinical project is an in-depth analysis of a clinical nursing problem. The project may focus on policies and procedures, systems of care, or nursing practice that influence patient care or the health care delivery system directly. The clinical project commonly includes a needs assessment and statement of how the project will improve health care.

Examples of a clinical project include:

- Development of an informational brochure or pamphlet
- Development of an evidence-based nursing practice policy
- Presentation to professionals about an area of clinical practice
- Development of a specialty clinic (for example, congestive heart failure, diabetes, pain management)

2. Teaching Project

A teaching project reflects mastery of graduate level competencies as well as knowledge of current, best evidence in teaching and learning. It may focus on clients or professional colleagues and includes an evaluation component. The target audience may be a specific nurse population, patient population, or an individual patient/family with very complex teaching needs. A graduate level teaching project will be developed in greater breadth (comprehensive, broad audience) or depth (focus, complexity, longitudinal) than an undergraduate level teaching project. The graduate student's committee determines whether a proposed teaching project has sufficient depth and breadth. The project may or may not include a needs assessment. The student is expected to articulate the rationale for all aspects of the project in the professional paper describing the project.

Examples of teaching projects include:

- Create an online or written self-instruction module
- Plan, fund, and coordinate a workshop (may or may not teach part of the workshop)
- Conduct monthly continuing education programs for staff development
- Address teaching needs for a complicated patient or family situation

Essential components for a teaching project include:

- A teaching plan for a specified audience
- Rationale and evidence for the teaching plan including the mode of delivery, selected content, and method of evaluation
- Implementation of the teaching plan
- Evaluation of learning
- Evaluation of the project overall

3. Integrative Literature Review of an Important Nursing or Health Care Topic

An integrative literature review is a specific method that summarizes past empirical and theoretical literature. Although there are many types of literature reviews that contribute to nursing science (for example, meta-analyses, systematic reviews, qualitative reviews), integrative reviews use the broadest types of literature allowing simultaneous inclusion of experimental and non-experimental research.

Integrative reviews can have a wide range of purposes including:

- defining concepts
- reviewing theories
- reviewing evidence
- analyzing research methods

Students considering this activity are encouraged to read the following article: Whitehorse, R., & Knafl, K. (2005). The integrative review: Updated methodology. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 52(5), 546-553.

Professional Paper Format

Students preparing a professional paper will be guided by two sources with respect to issues of format. They are:

- ETD Style and Composition Guide - for the mechanics of publishing the professional paper (for example, font, margins, spacing, specific types of pages, required order of assembly, headings) and
- Publication Manual of the APA, 6th edition - for general format and editorial style (Introduction, Review of Literature, paragraphs and indentation, spacing with punctuation, quotations, etc.).

Some additional notes: The title page should say "... submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Nursing" (not a Master of Science in Nursing or Master in Nursing). Do not include CNL on the title page.

In terms of general appearance, the main body of the document will resemble a published journal more closely than a manuscript. The sequence of material at the end of the document should be as follows: reference notes come before the reference section. Footnotes should be avoided if at all possible. All appendices are placed at the very end of the document.

Directions on how to construct and label figures, graphs, or illustrations are referred to in the ETD Style and Composition Guide and Publication Manual of the APA, 6th edition. Figures, tables, and/or illustrations prepared for the professional paper should be of professional quality. Those who are not graphic artists are advised to have any needed art work done by a professional.