Wellstar

Nursing Student Projects Guide

Center for Nursing Excellence
Nursing Research & EBP Department
Version: May 2026

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SECTION I

SECTION II

Purpose

To provide a clear, detailed guide that facilitates compliance with organizational credentialing and nursing project approval processes and alignment of academic requirements with site improvement priorities.

Overview

Approval is required for all nursing student projects conducted in Wellstar Health System (WHS) facilities. Clinical placement approval does not constitute approval to conduct scholarly projects such as quality improvement (QI), evidence-based practice (EBP), and nursing research. Students should work with their academic faculty to design an appropriate project, complete the required materials, and submit their documentation through the student projects approval process. Project activities such as interventions or data collection may not begin until Nursing Innovation Council (NIC) and Wellstar Research Institute (WRI) approvals are obtained.

IMPORTANT – Before project development (e.g., conducting the literature review), students should confirm alignment of the project topic with current department/site priorities.

Scope

This guide is for:

- Nursing students (employees and non-employees) conducting QI, EBP, or nursing research projects
- Wellstar-affiliated clinical sites and academic partner institutions
- Nursing students who are completing projects either with or without clinical/practicum hours

Eligibility

Students must meet the following criteria to conduct EBP/QI projects or research studies:

- EBP/QI – Attending an affiliated academic institution
- Research - Attend an affiliated academic institution and a Wellstar employee **OR** have WHS executive approval

For all projects:

- Have ACEMAPP rotation approval
- Receive project support from both a school advisor and an identified Wellstar site sponsor
- Receive support from the NIC and approval from the academic institution and WRI
- Agree to share project results with the NIC via a formal presentation within 60 days of completion

Roles & Responsibilities

Student – Develops project, completes/submits documents, gains approval before starting, completes/presents project

Academic Advisor - Guides project design, reviews proposal packets for completeness, signs Student Projects Application

Wellstar Site Sponsor - Supports feasibility/priority alignment, helps with site access/logistics, may sign site authorizations

Nursing Innovation Council (NIC) - Reviews, supports proposals, routes for WRI review

Wellstar Research Institute (WRI) - Makes research vs. non-research determination, routes for IRB review if applicable

Key Contacts:

WHS Nursing EBP/QI/Research Dept/Nursing Innovation Council – nursingresearch@wellstar.org

Wellstar Research Institute – research@wellstar.org

WHS Office of Academic Affairs - students@wellstar.org

[Note: If you need site or preceptor identification support (for clinical or project), email students@wellstar.org for assistance]

Project Categories

EBP/QI: Implementation of well-supported tools/processes to improve care or workflow. Typically involves the use of existing data. May include foundational work (e.g., gap analyses) and education-based/teaching-focused projects.

Research: Systematic investigation that may include interventions, interviews, surveys, or original data collection to contribute to a broader understanding of a topic that may not be thoroughly described in the literature or may not be currently supported by standard practice.

Required Documents

Nursing Evidence-Based Practice/Quality Improvement:

- Completed student projects application[1]
- Completed EBP/QI proposal form[1]
- CV or resume for student
- Data collection tool
- Any relevant project documents (tools, flyers, etc.)
- Site support letter[1]
- Approval letter from student's university[2]

Nursing Research:

- Completed student projects application[1]
- Completed nursing research proposal form[1]
- Completed Wellstar IRB Initial Review Submission Application[1]
- CITI training certificates for entire research team[3]
- CV or resume for entire research team
- Any relevant study documents (surveys, flyers, tools, consent, etc.)
- Site support letter[1]
- IRB approval letter from student's university[2]

1 - To obtain these forms, go to **https://www.wellstar.org/for-providers/nursing**
Scroll down to the Helpful Information section and click on the tab that says, "Nursing Research & Evidence-Based Practice". You can click on the documents included under "Key Resources" to download them.

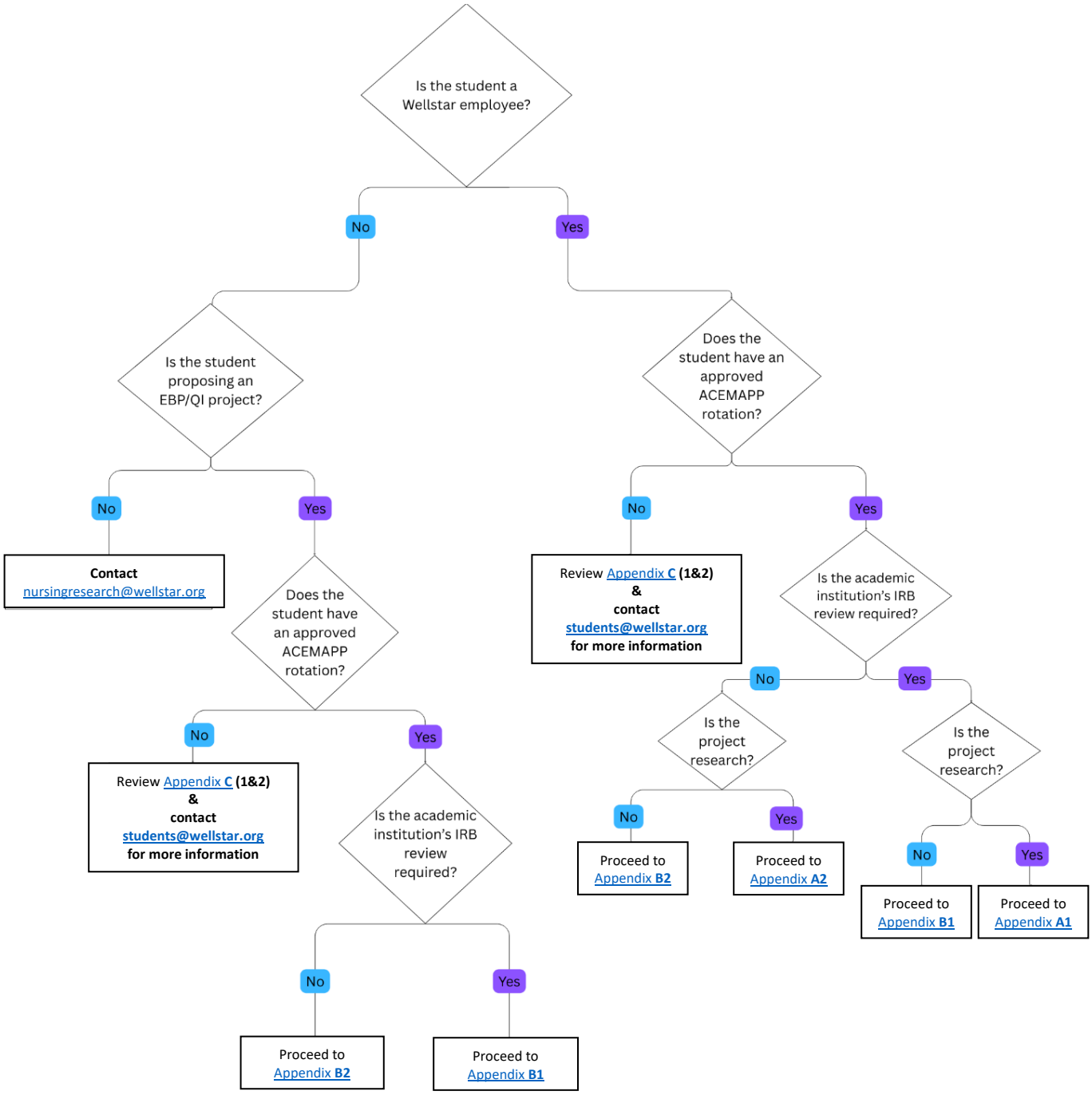
2 - If applicable; See flowchart on page 4 to determine

3 - See Appendix J for instructions

Note: Final project categorization is determined by the Wellstar Research Institute (WRI). All documents must be uploaded to IRBNet (Appendix K).

Nursing Student Project Submission Pathway

The flowchart below outlines the process for determining the appropriate project pathway for nursing student project submissions. This visual is designed to help students and faculty/advisors clearly understand the required actions and documents to ensure timely, aligned, and compliant execution.



Important!

Confirm the project topic with the Nursing Professional Practice Leader (PPL) or equivalent leader at the intended project site before drafting any documents. They will ensure that the topic is aligned with facility priorities.

Appendix A
Research Submission Instructions

This appendix provides detailed guidance for submitting nursing student projects that are considered research. Projects in this category typically involve primary data collection (e.g., surveys, interviews, observations, testing), the use of study interventions not already supported by established evidence, or activities intended to contribute to generalizable knowledge. All nursing research study submissions have specific project documentation requirements. See page 3 for a list of required documents for research studies.

Two submission pathways are outlined below based on your school's Research Dept./Institutional Review Board (IRB) involvement. Follow the directions in the appropriate section based on the guidance from the flowchart on page 4.

A1 – Pathway: Research + Academic Institution Research Dept./IRB Review is Required

Student obtains topic approval from site sponsor and ACEMAPP approval → Student prepares research documents (see page 3) → Student uploads documents to IRBNet/Share with the NIC (see Appendix K)→ NIC conducts review/provides feedback→ Student completes/uploads revisions to IRBNet (if applicable) → NIC provides support → Student submits documents to Academic Institution's IRB → Student uploads academic IRB approval document to IRBNet and emails nursingresearch@wellstar.org to advise of IRB approval → NIC submits study documents to the WRI → WRI provides final acknowledgement/approval → Study can begin!

Note: Students with review/approval requirements from their academic institution's IRB have the option to use their academic institution's research protocol template/scope of work in lieu of the WHS Research Protocol template. It is important that students submit the template to the NIC before submitting for school IRB approval.

A2 – Pathway: Research + Academic Institution Research Dept./IRB Review is Not Required

Student obtains topic approval from site sponsor and ACEMAPP approval → Student prepares research documents (see page 3) → Student uploads documents to IRBNet/Share with the NIC (see Appendix K)→ NIC conducts review/provides feedback→ Student completes/uploads revisions to IRBNet (if applicable) → NIC provides support → NIC submits study documents to the WRI → WRI provides final acknowledgement/approval → Study can begin!

Appendix B
EBP/QI Project Submission Instructions

This appendix provides instructions for submitting nursing student projects that fall under Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) or Quality Improvement (QI). These projects focus on applying current best practices to improve care processes, safety, efficiency, or outcomes within Wellstar facilities. They do not typically involve the generation of generalizable knowledge or activities considered research by regulatory standards. All nursing EBP/QI project submissions have specific project documentation requirements. See page 3 for a list of required documents for EBP/QI projects. See Appendix H for specifics regarding teaching-based (In-Service) projects.

Two submission pathways are outlined below based on your school's Research Dept./Institutional Review Board (IRB) involvement. Follow the directions in the appropriate section based on the guidance from the flowchart on page 4.

B1 – Pathway: EBP/QI + Academic Institution Research Dept./IRB Review is Required

Student obtains topic approval from site sponsor and ACEMAPP approval → Student prepares project documents (see page 3) → Student uploads documents to IRBNet/Share with the NIC (see Appendix K)→ NIC conducts review/provides feedback→ Student completes/uploads revisions to IRBNet (if applicable) → NIC provides support → Student submits documents to Academic Institution's IRB → Student uploads academic IRB approval document to IRBNet and emails nursingresearch@wellstar.org to advise of IRB approval → NIC submits study documents to the WRI → WRI provides final acknowledgement/approval → Project can begin!

Note: Students with review/approval requirements from their academic institution's IRB have the option to use their academic institution's scope of work template in lieu of the WHS EBP/QI Proposal template. It is important that students submit the template to the NIC before submitting it to the school's Research Dept. for approval.

B2 – Pathway: EBP/QI + Academic Institution Research Dept./IRB Review is Not Required

Student obtains topic approval from site sponsor and ACEMAPP approval → Student prepares research documents (see page 3) → Student uploads documents to IRBNet/Share with the NIC (see Appendix K)→ NIC conducts review/provides feedback→ Student completes/uploads revisions to IRBNet (if applicable) → NIC provides support → NIC submits study documents to the WRI → WRI provides final acknowledgement/approval → Project can begin!

Appendix C
ACEMAPP Guidance

C1: Instructions for Getting Started with ACEMAPP (Academic Program Administration)

School User Guide

Welcome to ACEMAPP

ACEMAPP is a secure, online, clinical rotation matching, student on-boarding, and document storage solution for clinical sites, schools and consortia.

Your role as a school coordinator requires a few major steps before students/faculty may begin their rotation(s).

Getting Started

Log in to ACEMAPP to view the following step-by-step guides:

1. Request partnership(s) with clinical site(s)
Request partnership(s) for rotations: acemapp.org/kb/133

2. Create student/faculty accounts
Create accounts: acemapp.org/kb/20

3. Request rotations
Create new: acemapp.org/kb/135
Add rotations: acemapp.org/kb/14
Replicate rotations: acemapp.org/kb/65

4. Assign students/faculty to roster
Students: acemapp.org/kb/29
Faculty: acemapp.org/kb/101

5. Review student/faculty requirements
Student upload documents: acemapp.org/kb/60
Schools manage student requirements: acemapp.org/kb/22

6. Monitor student compliance with reporting
Rotation preparedness report: acemapp.org/kb/75

7. Verify "roster sent"
Keep track of upcoming rotations: acemapp.org/kb/31

Students and faculty will only be asked to complete requirements once they are assigned to their rotation in ACEMAPP, unless you have worked directly with the ACEMAPP team to set up requirements for your school. Please reach out to us if you haven't done this, but would like to.

Requesting Support

Our team is happy to provide support by phone at 844-223-4292 or by email at support@acemapp.org. You may also request support directly from your ACEMAPP account. Follow these simple steps to request support anywhere, anytime:

1. Log In
Go to acemapp.org and log in to your account.

2. Click "My Support"
Click on your user name in the upper right hand corner and then click "My Support".

3. Submit New Ticket
Enter any information pertaining to your question or comment and click "submit". We will contact you as soon as possible.

acemapp

www.acemapp.org

C2: Instructions for Getting Started with ACEMAPP (Students)

Note: For updates regarding your ACEMAPP approval status or assistance with identifying an available site/preceptor, please contact students@wellstar.org.

acemapp collaboration

Student User Guide

ACEMAPP is an online document management, learning and certification system. It is your responsibility to stay up to date with your ACEMAPP account, including checking your inbox for reminders and alerts.

The following steps are meant to provide general guidance and may vary by your school and/or clinical site's specific process.

1. Locate your welcome email from ACEMAPP
Once your school has created your account, you will receive an email from ACEMAPP containing a link to set your password.

2. Log in to your ACEMAPP account
Navigate to acemapp.org and log in with your school email address and password. When you log in, you will be asked to agree to the FERPA consent, the Honesty Pledge and the Terms and Conditions.
Log in: acemapp.org/kb/53
Dashboard navigation: acemapp.org/kb/293

3. Complete each component of your student profile
This information is shared with administrators at your university. Please keep this information up-to-date.
Profile guide: acemapp.org/kb/176

4. Complete modules & assessments
Your requirements may include documents, courses, assessments, and more.
Learning materials: acemapp.org/kb/148

5. Manage rotations
Viewing your assigned rotation: acemapp.org/kb/317

Contact your clinical coordinator with any additional questions.

Requesting Support

Our team is happy to provide support by phone at 844-223-4292, by email at support@acemapp.org, or on the web at acemapp.org/contact. You may also request support directly from your ACEMAPP account by creating a support ticket.

Appendix D

Wellstar HEALTH SYSTEM

Nursing Student Projects Application

Student Information

Student Name and Credentials _____ Date _____

Email address _____

School _____ Degree Pursuing _____

Wellstar Role and Work Location _____

Project Administration

Wellstar Site Sponsor Name _____

Proposed Facility and Unit(s) _____

ACEMAPP rotation number _____ Approved rotation dates _____

IRBNet ID _____ Project timeframe _____

School Advisor/Mentor/Chair Name and Email Address _____

Project Outline and Scope

☐ Evidence-Based Practice or Quality Improvement (project is focused on implementing a tool or process strongly supported by research).

☐ Nursing Research (project includes surveys, tests, patient interactions, interviews, observations, other primary data collection, use of interventions not thoroughly described in literature).

Project Title _____

Required Documents Checklist

EBP/QI:

- ☐ Student project application
- ☐ Site support letter
- ☐ Completed EBP/QI proposal form (can be the school's designated form)
- ☐ Approval letter from student's school (if applicable)
- ☐ Student's CV or resume (Project lead if multiple students)
- ☐ Data collection tool (Excel sheet labeled with headers indicating data points to be collected)
- ☐ Any relevant project documents (surveys, syllabi, tools, etc.)
- ☐ ACEMAPP approval confirmation

All documents must be uploaded to IRBNet

Nursing Research:

- ☐ Student project application
- ☐ Site support letter
- ☐ Completed nursing research proposal form (can be the school's designated form)
- ☐ IRB approval letter from student's school (if applicable)
- ☐ CV or resume (all research study team members)
- ☐ CITI training certificates (all research study team members)
- ☐ Any relevant project documents (consent form, surveys, flyers, syllabi, data collection tools, recruitment materials)
- ☐ ACEMAPP approval confirmation

All documents must be uploaded to IRBNet

School Attestation

To be completed by the student's academic mentor, advisor, or chair:

I have read the proposal documents submitted in this application. I agree that the focus and methods described are appropriate for nursing research or evidence-based practice/quality improvement. I am in support of this project and will be monitoring my student's progress and reviewing any changes made to the project. I will be available to discuss any concerns related to this project.

Academic Administrator Signature _____ Date _____

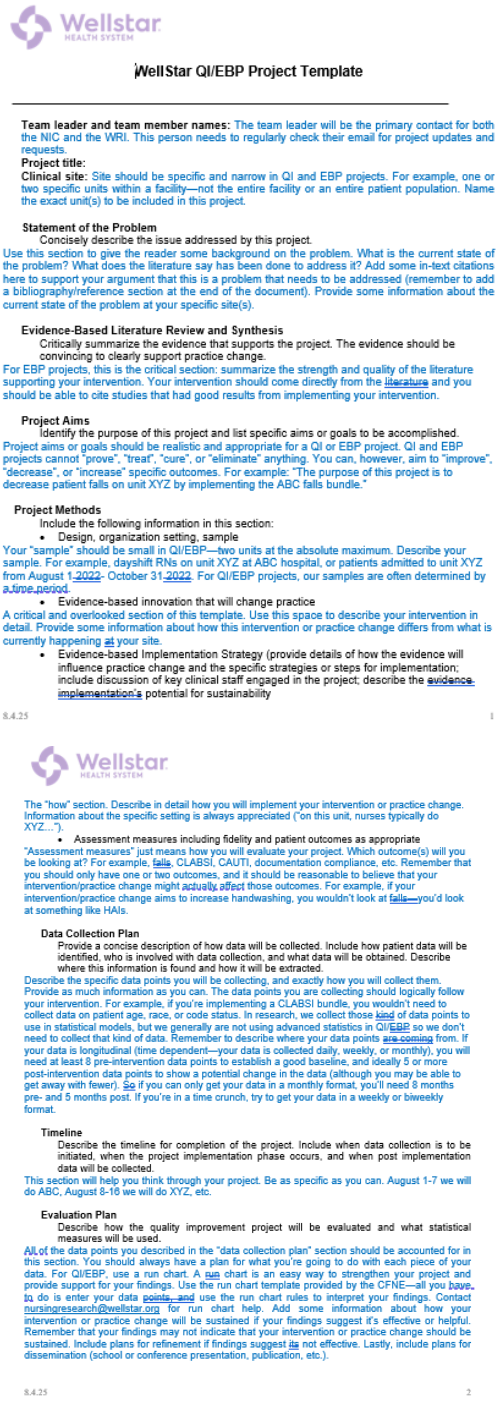
Title and Department _____

WHS Contact: Center for Nursing Excellence – nursingresearch@wellstar.org

(Rev. 7/30/2025)

Appendix E
EBP/QI Proposal and Research Protocol Templates Overview

This appendix provides a visual of the Wellstar-approved proposal templates for EBP/QI projects and research studies. You are required to use these templates unless your school's Research Dept./IRB requires its own review and approval. In this case, you may use your school's scope of work or proposal template. Students using their school's project templates must ensure that they include all elements included in the Wellstar-approved templates. Editable versions of the templates may be requested by contacting nursingresearch@wellstar.org.



WellStar QI/EBP Project Template

Team leader and team member names: The team leader will be the primary contact for both the NIC and the WRI. This person needs to regularly check their email for project updates and requests.
Project title:
Clinical site: Site should be specific and narrow in QI and EBP projects. For example, one or two specific units within a facility—not the entire facility or an entire patient population. Name the exact unit(s) to be included in this project.

Statement of the Problem
Concisely describe the issue addressed by this project.
Use this section to give the reader some background on the problem. What is the current state of the problem? What does the literature say has been done to address it? Add some in-text citations here to support your argument that this is a problem that needs to be addressed (remember to add a bibliography/reference section at the end of the document). Provide some information about the current state of the problem at your specific site(s).

Evidence-Based Literature Review and Synthesis
Critically summarize the evidence that supports the project. The evidence should be convincing to clearly support practice change.
For EBP projects, this is the critical section: summarize the strength and quality of the literature supporting your intervention. Your intervention should come directly from the literature and you should be able to cite studies that had good results from implementing your intervention.

Project Aims
Identify the purpose of this project and list specific aims or goals to be accomplished.
Project aims or goals should be realistic and appropriate for a QI or EBP project. QI and EBP projects cannot "prove", "treat", "cure", or "eliminate" anything. You can, however, aim to "improve", "decrease", or "increase" specific outcomes. For example: "The purpose of this project is to decrease patient falls on unit XYZ by implementing the ABC falls bundle."

Project Methods
Include the following information in this section:
- Design, organization setting, sample

Your "sample" should be small in QI/EBP—two units at the absolute maximum. Describe your sample. For example, dayshift RNs on unit XYZ at ABC hospital, or patients admitted to unit XYZ from August 1, 2022- October 31, 2022. For QI/EBP projects, our samples are often determined by a time period.
- Evidence-based innovation that will change practice

A critical and overlooked section of this template. Use this space to describe your intervention in detail. Provide some information about how this intervention or practice change differs from what is currently happening at your site.
- Evidence-based Implementation Strategy (provide details of how the evidence will influence practice change and the specific strategies or steps for implementation; include discussion of key clinical staff engaged in the project; describe the evidence implementation's potential for sustainability

8.4.25 1

The "how" section. Describe in detail how you will implement your intervention or practice change. Information about the specific setting is always appreciated ("on this unit, nurses typically do XYZ…").
- Assessment measures including fidelity and patient outcomes as appropriate

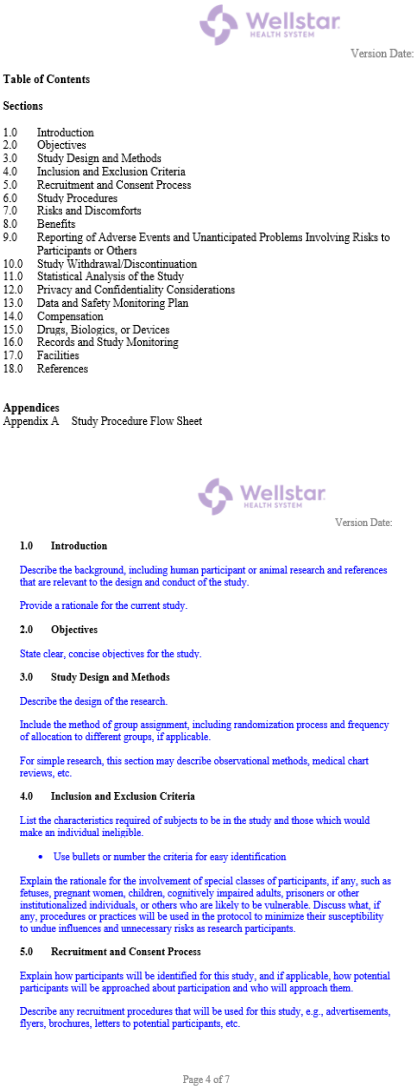
"Assessment measures" just means how you will evaluate your project. Which outcome(s) will you be looking at? For example, falls, CLABSI, CAUTI, documentation compliance, etc. Remember that you should only have one or two outcomes, and it should be reasonable to believe that your intervention/practice change might actually affect those outcomes. For example, if your intervention/practice change aims to increase handwashing, you wouldn't look at falls—you'd look at something like HAIs.

Data Collection Plan
Provide a concise description of how data will be collected. Include how patient data will be identified, who is involved with data collection, and what data will be obtained. Describe where this information is found and how it will be extracted.
Describe the specific data points you will be collecting, and exactly how you will collect them. Provide as much information as you can. The data points you are collecting should logically follow your intervention. For example, if you're implementing a CLABSI bundle, you wouldn't need to collect data on patient age, race, or code status. In research, we collect those kind of data points to use in statistical models, but we generally are not using advanced statistics in QI/EBP so we don't need to collect that kind of data. Remember to describe where your data points are coming from. If your data is longitudinal (time dependent—your data is collected daily, weekly, or monthly), you will need at least 8 pre-intervention data points to establish a good baseline, and ideally 5 or more post-intervention data points to show a potential change in the data (although you may be able to get away with fewer). So if you can only get your data in a monthly format, you'll need 8 months pre- and 5 months post. If you're in a time crunch, try to get your data in a weekly or biweekly format.

Timeline
Describe the timeline for completion of the project. Include when data collection is to be initiated, when the project implementation phase occurs, and when post implementation data will be collected.
This section will help you think through your project. Be as specific as you can. August 1-7 we will do ABC, August 8-16 we will do XYZ, etc.

Evaluation Plan
Describe how the quality improvement project will be evaluated and what statistical measures will be used.
All of the data points you described in the "data collection plan" section should be accounted for in this section. You should always have a plan for what you're going to do with each piece of your data. For QI/EBP, use a run chart. A run chart is an easy way to strengthen your project and provide support for your findings. Use the run chart template provided by the CFNE—all you have to do is enter your data points, and use the run chart rules to interpret your findings. Contact nursingresearch@wellstar.org for run chart help. Add some information about how your intervention or practice change will be sustained if your findings suggest it's effective or helpful. Remember that your findings may not indicate that your intervention or practice change should be sustained. Include plans for refinement if findings suggest its not effective. Lastly, include plans for dissemination (school or conference presentation, publication, etc.).

8.4.25 2



Wellstar Research Protocol Template

Version Date:

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Sections

Appendices
Appendix A Study Procedure Flow Sheet

Version Date:

1.0 Introduction

Describe the background, including human participant or animal research and references that are relevant to the design and conduct of the study.

Provide a rationale for the current study.

2.0 Objectives

State clear, concise objectives for the study.

3.0 Study Design and Methods

Describe the design of the research.

Include the method of group assignment, including randomization process and frequency of allocation to different groups, if applicable.

For simple research, this section may describe observational methods, medical chart reviews, etc.

4.0 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

List the characteristics required of subjects to be in the study and those which would make an individual ineligible.

- Use bullets or number the criteria for easy identification

Explain the rationale for the involvement of special classes of participants, if any, such as fetuses, pregnant women, children, cognitively impaired adults, prisoners or other institutionalized individuals, or others who are likely to be vulnerable. Discuss what, if any, procedures or practices will be used in the protocol to minimize their susceptibility to undue influences and unnecessary risks as research participants.

5.0 Recruitment and Consent Process

Explain how participants will be identified for this study, and if applicable, how potential participants will be approached about participation and who will approach them.

Describe any recruitment procedures that will be used for this study, e.g., advertisements, flyers, brochures, letters to potential participants, etc.

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Appendix F
Site Support Letter Template

Student Name:

School Name/Academic Program:

Date:

Dear [**STUDENT'S NAME**],

I appreciate the opportunity to support the implementation of the project titled [**"INSERT PROJECT TITLE"**] at [**INSERT SITE**] during [**INSERT TIME PERIOD**]. As I understand it, the project consists of [**INSERT SUMMARY OF PROJECT**].

I am glad to provide permission to you as the [**INSERT TITLE OF INDIVIDUAL SIGNING**]. Please note that this letter serves only to provide initial support for this project and does not constitute Nursing Innovation Council (NIC) or Wellstar Research Institute (WRI) approval.

Sincerely,

[**Name**]
[**Title**]
[**Location**]
[**Contact information**]

Appendix G
Crosswalk: Preceptor vs. Site Sponsor (Nursing Students' Facility Support)

The crosswalk below outlines the similarities and differences between a **Preceptor** and a **Site Sponsor** in the context of supporting students who are completing nursing program requirements. This crosswalk includes key roles, responsibilities, typical qualifications, and engagement expectations to help clarify and distinguish their functions within Wellstar Health System.

CATEGORY	WS PRECEPTOR	WS SITE SPONSOR
Primary Role	Directly supervises and evaluates nursing students during clinical/practicum experiences	Serves as a liaison and navigation support for students conducting non-clinical projects at the site
Main Focus	• Clinical skill development • Patient care delivery • Application of advanced nursing practice	Organizational orientation, project feasibility, and facilitating access/coordination (as appropriate) for project work
Eligibility	Clinical nurse with credentials at or above the student's program degree level	Facility nursing leadership - PPL or above; May also require CITI training
Typical Activities	• Provides bedside instruction • Observes clinical performance • Provides feedback • Validates competencies	• Connects students with appropriate departments/personnel • Clarifies site processes and policies • Ensures project alignment with site priorities • Potentially complete additional academic program documents (e.g., site authorization form)
Student Engagement	Frequent, direct, one-on-one engagement throughout clinical hours; Duration is dependent on rotation/practicum length	Low to moderate frequency, check-ins to ensure student has what they need for project support; Duration is dependent on project length.
Evaluation Responsibilities	Completes evaluations of clinical/practicum performance and signs off on hours and competencies	No formal evaluation of student work; May provide feedback on project feasibility or outcomes
Credentialing Requirements	Must meet credentialing and licensure requirements; often requires ACEMAPP or other onboarding compliance	Typically, does not require additional credentialing
Support Provided	Coaching, mentoring, role-modeling, skills validation	Organizational insight, system navigation, access to data or contacts as appropriate
Documentation Required	Clinical logs, evaluations, competency checklists	May review or cosign project approval forms or site support documentation

Hospital Preceptor = Clinical expert and mentor focused on hands-on clinical training.
Site Sponsor = Organizational guide who ensures local project support/alignment with facility priorities.

Contact – nursingresearch@wellstar.org with any questions

Appendix H
Guidance for Nursing Students Conducting Teaching-Based (In-Service) Projects

This document provides expectations for nursing students who are proposing the implementation of a teaching-based project within Wellstar Health System. Student-led educational initiatives are welcomed; however, they must comply with organizational policies and procedures.

Scope for Teaching-Based Projects

A teaching-based nursing project is defined as a project, designed and led by a nursing student, with the primary aim of informing or instructing staff on a healthcare-related topic. These projects are distinct from research, evidence-based practice, and quality improvement projects and are not intended to measure patient care outcomes, test hypotheses, or influence system-level change.

*Students conducting teaching-based projects **are** expected to:*

- Use only evidence-based content from reputable sources (e.g., peer-reviewed journals, clinical practice guidelines)
- Coordinate scheduling with preceptor and unit leadership to minimize disruptions to workflows
- Deliver a brief educational session on an evidence-based healthcare topic
- Use and collect anonymous, voluntary evaluations of the teaching session only (e.g., feedback on content clarity, presenter effectiveness)

*Students conducting teaching-based projects **are not** permitted to:*

- Assess knowledge, skills, or practice outcomes
- Mandate attendance for any staff or personnel
- Use teaching sessions to collect data on behavior change, patient outcomes, or nursing practice
- Implement any component that could be perceived as research, EBP, or QI without appropriate approvals from the Wellstar Research Institute and nursing leadership

Required Submission Process

To propose teaching-based projects, students will need to complete the EBP/QI project proposal process (same process for traditional EBP/QI projects). See the “Nursing Students Project Guide” for more information.
In addition to the documents required for the traditional EBP/QI project track, the following supporting documents are required for teaching-based projects:

- Syllabus/Outline for the educational session
- Copy of the teaching evaluation

Contact:
Please direct all inquiries about teaching-based nursing projects to nursingresearch@wellstar.org

Appendix I
Wellstar IRB Initial Submission Application Overview

The Wellstar IRB Initial Submission Application must be completed and submitted for all research studies, along with the study protocol and all other required research documents. This form does not replace other required approvals, such as the site support letter and the Nursing Innovation Council concurrence letter.

WELLSTAR IRB INITIAL SUBMISSION APPLICATION

Number	Effective Date	Page
RS-13-02	03.23.26	1 of 4

NOTE: YOUR PROJECT MAY NOT BEGIN UNTIL THIS APPLICATION HAS BEEN REVIEWED BY THE IRB

Researcher Information

1. **Principal Investigator:**
   Email Address:
   Department:
   List the study staff that will be involved in this project (a CV and CITI training certificate(s) must be submitted for each person listed below):

Name

Project Information

2. **Project Title:**
3. **Anticipated Project End Date:** **Anticipated Project End Date:**
4. **Has this project been reviewed by another Institutional Review Board?** **Yes ☐ No ☐**
5. **Is this project federally funded? Yes ☐ No ☐**

   If yes, provide the information below:
   Name of Funding Agency:
   Grant, Contract, Cooperative Agreement or Award Number:
6. **Is this a student project (nursing, pharmacy, graduate medical education)? Yes ☐ No ☐**

   If yes, please attach a letter of concurrence/approval.
7. **Briefly describe the proposed project. Discuss the purpose of the project, the rationale for the project, the research design, and procedures to be performed.**

WELLSTAR IRB INITIAL SUBMISSION APPLICATION

Number	Effective Date	Page
RS-13-02	03.23.26	3 of 4

13. **Will participants be paid for participating? Yes ☐ No ☐**

    If yes, list the amount and timing of payments.
14. **Describe the provisions to protect the privacy interest of participants and to maintain the confidentiality of data (e.g., the method for secure storage of records).**

Consent

15. **Will informed consent be obtained from participants? Yes ☐ No ☐**

    If yes, describe the informed consent process and attach the proposed consent document.

    Indicate the person who will conduct the consent interview, the person who will provide consent or permission, the location of the consent discussion, any waiting period between informing the prospective participant and obtaining consent, steps that will be taken to minimize the possibility of coercion or undue influence, the language that will be used by those obtaining consent, the language understood by the prospective participant or the legally authorized representative, and the information that will be communicated to the prospective participant or the legally authorized representative.

Conflicts of Interest

16. **Does the investigator or other research staff have financial or other interests in the research (refer to the policy RS-04 Conflicts of Interest in Research for detailed requirements and definitions)? Yes ☐ No ☐**

    If yes, complete and submit the Significant Financial Interest Disclosure Form with this application. Email the IRB office at research@wellstar.org to request this form.

WELLSTAR IRB INITIAL SUBMISSION APPLICATION

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8. **Describe the risks and potential benefits of the project to participants.**

9. **List the locations where the project will be conducted:**

Name of Facility	Address of Facility

Subject Information

10. **Will this project involve vulnerable participants (i.e., children, prisoners, pregnant women, neonates, or fetuses, students, employees, individuals with impaired decision-making capacity, economically or educationally disadvantaged persons)? Yes ☐ No ☐**

    If yes, additional safeguards must be included in the protocol to protect the rights and welfare of these participants.
11. **Is this project related to health equity, health disparities, health inequities, bias, or social determinants of health? Yes ☐ No ☐**
12. **Describe the selection (inclusion/exclusion) of participants. Address participant recruitment methods and enrollment procedures.**

WELLSTAR IRB INITIAL SUBMISSION APPLICATION

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As the principal researcher, I agree to uphold professional and ethical standards and practices and adhere to all applicable federal regulations, state/local laws, and Wellstar's standard operating policies and procedures, regarding the conduct of research and the protection of human participants.

I certify that I and all research staff have the appropriate qualifications and expertise to conduct this project. I confirm that I have the resources including space, equipment, time, and personnel to conduct this project.

Signature of Principal Investigator **Date:**

Name of person completing this application: **Date:**

Please submit the completed application and all applicable supporting documentation (e.g., protocol, data collection sheet/form, surveys/questionnaires, interview guides, informed consent form, recruitment materials, other study instruments, CV, CITI training certificates) to the Wellstar IRB at research@wellstar.org

Appendix J
CITI Training Instructions

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) training is a requirement for all projects that meet the definition of research as determined by the Wellstar Research Institute (WRI). This training ensures that research team members understand ethical principles, regulatory requirements, and best practices in conducting human subjects research.

If your project involves focus groups, interviews, surveys, or any original data collection not considered routine quality improvement or evidence-based practice, you are likely intending to conduct research and are required to complete CITI training. The training must be completed by all research team members prior to project approval. The instructions below will guide you through the registration and completion process.

- Go to citiprogram.org
- Click “Register”
- Start typing Wellstar into the “Select your org” bar. WHS will pop up. Click it.
- Click “Continue to create your CITI username and password”
- Create your account
- Answer the Wellstar-specific questions about your role and curriculum. When asked for your role, select “Principal Investigator.” For question 1, select “group 2.” For question 2, select “not at this time.” Ignore question 3. For questions 4, 5, 7, 11, 12, and 13, select “not at this time.” For question 6, select “GCP- Social and Behavioral.” For question 8, select “Conflicts of Interest.” For question 9, select “Responsible Conduct of Research.” For question 10, select “Group 1.”
- Complete registration. Be sure to complete the “basic course” for Group 2 Social and Behavioral Research first. Upload your CITI training certificates to IRBNet along with your other project documents.

Note: If your academic institution has a research institute/IRB and requires CITI training, you may upload the CITI training certificates you complete for your academic approval process, if the training includes Group 2 Social and Behavioral Research.

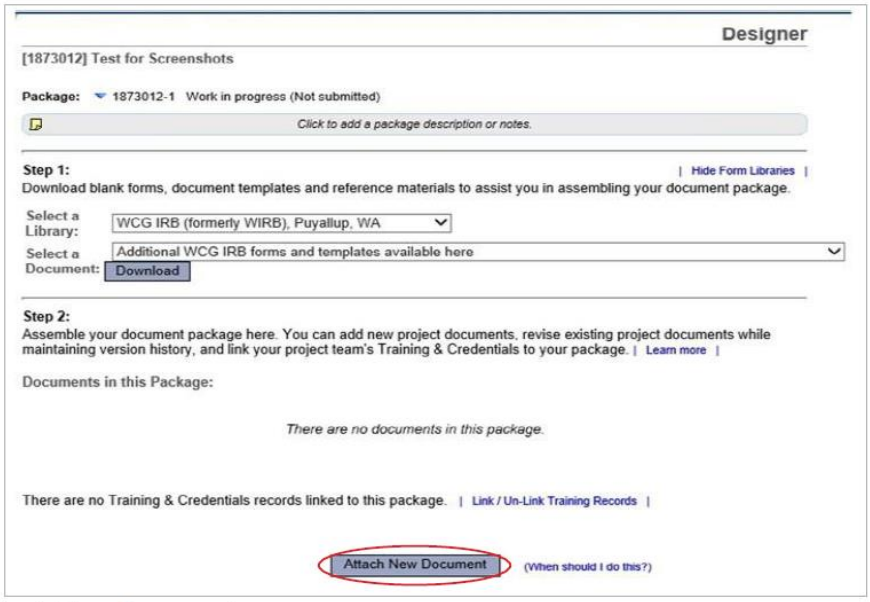
Appendix K
IRBNet Registration & Upload Instructions

Registration

- Navigate to IRBNet.org
- Look for the login box in the upper right corner of the website
- Click on New User Registration
- Fill in information necessary to create your account
- Click continue and accept the Terms of Use
- Enter account recovery information
- Complete the verification and registration process.

Create/Share a Project

- Log into IRBNet.org
- On the left side of the page, select **Create New Project** under "My Projects".
- Enter the project title and your name
  Note – The "Sponsor" box is for listing the funding source for a project and not the Site Sponsor's name.
- Click **Continue** to get to the Designer page.
- Click **Attach New Document**.
- Attach all required project documents as separate documents and label them.
- Once all required documents have been uploaded, you will need to **share** this project with the Nursing Innovation Council.
- Select **Share this Project** tab on the left side of the page.
- A new screen will appear, select the top option: **Share**
- Search for and highlight **Wellstar Health System** for the "Select an Organization" section.
- Click "Select Organization"
- Once the organization is selected, search for the specific user. In this case, **Nursing Innovation Council**.
- Once Nursing Innovation Council is found, **grant full access**. Within

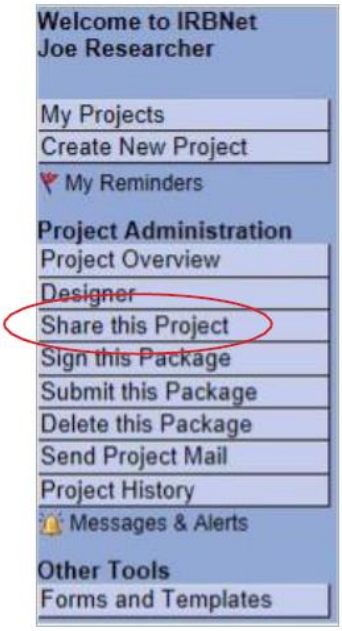


the comments, you can enter any additional comments; these will be included in the email to the Nursing Innovation Council, which notifies them of their new access to your project package.

- Click **Save**
- Once you have shared the project with the Nursing Innovation Council (NIC), no further action is needed at that time.
- **Do not** click Submit this Package.

Note: You can also use the **Share** feature to share your project with other project team members, including your preceptor and academic advisor. They must have a registered account with IRBNet to have a project shared with them.

Contact nursingresearch@wellstar.org with questions or concerns regarding IRBNet.



Appendix L
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Who is eligible to submit a student project at Wellstar?
A: Nursing students who are Wellstar employees or enrolled at an affiliated academic institution. However, there are restrictions for student-led research studies. Contact nursingresearch@wellstar.org for details.

2. Can I start working on my literature review before receiving site sponsor support?
It is not recommended. Students should receive support from the site sponsor (PPL level or above) before beginning project development to ensure the project topic is aligned with the facility's priorities. Failure to do so may result in delays or denial of site approval.

3. Who should I contact if I need help identifying a preceptor, clinical site, project topic, or site sponsor?
Email students@wellstar.org for site and preceptor identification support. Email nursingresearch@wellstar.org for assistance with sponsor identification or project scoping.

4. What documents do I need to submit for project approval?
Document submission requirements are determined by the project pathway. See page 4 of this guide.

5. Can I use my school's proposal template?
Yes, but you must ensure the inclusion of all required elements outlined in the Wellstar proposal templates.

6. Where and how do I submit my project for review?
All projects must be uploaded to IRBNet following the steps in Appendix K.

7. Do I need to complete ACEMAPP before starting my project?
Yes. All students (including employees) must complete ACEMAPP credentialing prior to project implementation. See Appendix C (C1 & C2). Contact students@wellstar.org for more information.

8. How long does the review process take?
NIC Review: ~10-14 business days; WRI Review: 2–4 weeks; Additional time may be needed if revisions are requested. We recommend that projects are submitted at least 6–8 weeks before the anticipated start date.

9. What happens if my project is determined to be research, but my proposal was for EBP/QI?
The Nursing Innovation Council will send you feedback to advise on the recommended revisions to align your project with approved EBP/QI methods. If you decide to maintain research methods, you will need to complete all requirements for proposing research (See page 4 and Appendix A). Once NIC support is received, the WRI will route your project for IRB review. You must wait for IRB approval before starting the project.

10. What if my school doesn't require IRB review because my project is not research?
You must still follow Wellstar's process. The WRI will make a final determination on project classification.

11. Do I need to complete CITI training for my project?
Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) training is required only for research team members. Instructions for completing this training can be found in Appendix J.

12. Can I collect data from patient records or unit reports if I already have access for work or clinical?
No. Having access to patient data or internal reports does not grant permission to use the data for a student project. All data collection, analysis, and dissemination plans must be clearly outlined in your proposal. You must receive formal approval through the submission process before collecting or analyzing any data.

13. Am I expected to share the results of my project with Wellstar?
Yes. Within 60 days of project completion, students must formally present their project results to the Nursing Innovation Council. Dissemination (e.g., posters, presentations, publications) is also encouraged but must be approved in advance. Discuss dissemination plans with your sponsor and include them in your proposal.