Doctor of Nursing Practice Project Guidelines

2024-2025

Doctor of Nursing Practice

Project Guidelines

Introduction

Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) students will complete a project that demonstrates synthesis of advanced theoretical and clinical knowledge and skills. The focus of the DNP project is the translation of existing evidence into practice. Students will identify a healthcare problem or issue for the DNP project, conduct an evidence search and evaluate the evidence for practice implementation. Interventions based on best evidence will be implemented into practice and an evaluation of the implementation will be conducted. Students will have the opportunity to explore various methods for dissemination of their project findings.

Projects may be related to direct patient care, health care system changes, administration, information systems or policy. Students may also develop knowledge tools such as clinical guidelines based on research evidence. Below is a list of foci appropriate for DNP projects.

- Implementation of innovations based on research evidence
- Implementation of changes in care delivery models
- Implementation of evidence-based practice guidelines
- Implementation of existing tools into practice
- Development of new knowledge tools
  - Clinical practice guidelines
  - Toolkits
  - Algorithms
- Improve processes
  - Lean
  - Sigma six
  - Patient Centered Medical Home
- Development and/or implementation of healthcare policy
- Program development and evaluation
- Development of a business plan for new program innovation or existing program improvement.
- Implementation of new technologies
  - Patient portals
  - Web sites
  - Cell phone applications
  - Tele-communications for healthcare delivery

- Quality improvement projects

Doctor of Nursing practice projects are focused on the implementation of existing research. The discovery of new knowledge is not an appropriate focus for the DNP project. There must be sufficient research evidence related to the project focus.

DNP Project Courses

The DNP project courses are designed to guide the student through the process of project identification, development, implementation, analysis and dissemination. The courses are completed in the last four semesters of the DNP program.

DNP Project Identification (3 credits)

The first DNP project course is focused on identification of a DNP project focus. Students will explore the feasibility of a topic that is relevant to the current practice environment and/or healthcare policy. The scope of the project must be in keeping with the need to complete all phases of the project in four semesters. An important aspect of DNP Project identification is determining if sufficient evidence exists to support the project.

If identifying a DNP project focus that will be implemented at a practice site, an essential preliminary activity is to meet with decision makers from the site. This is done to determine if the project is consistent with the site's needs and if the site is willing to collaborate with the student to implement the project. Students are encouraged to collaborate with the practice site to assess the practice environment for barriers and facilitators that will impact the DNP project. Interprofessional collaboration between disciplines is also expected. This can be in the form of nurses, physicians, information technology, respiratory, school health, administration, policy makers, finance, etc as this list is not comprehensive.

Once the student determines that sufficient evidence exists to support the project and has an agreement from a practice site, if applicable, the student must receive approval from faculty. The course faculty, home school DNP Program Director/Coordinator and the appropriate Concentration Coordinator will approve the project and work with the student to identify a project chair. The student will then conduct a literature review to identify current evidence and best practices. The available evidence related to the project will be obtained and critiqued. Students will rate and grade the evidence and summarize research findings in an evidence table. The evidence table will be a resource for the literature review.

The project chair must be a doctorally prepared ETSU/TTU faculty member with expertise in the subject matter of the proposed DNP project. The student and faculty project chair will identify an additional project team member, which may be an individual at the site in which

the project is implemented. In some instances an additional team member(s) may be included if additional expertise is required. However, most students will have two team members.

Students are required to complete TTU CITI IRB Training at [Citi Training](#) for TTU home students and ETSU CITI IRB Training at [ETSU IRB CITI Training](#) for ETSU home students and submit the certificate of completion to D2L by the end of the semester they are enrolled in the Project Identification course. The training is mandatory and must be completed prior to IRB submission, which will occur at the end of the following semester when students are enrolled in Project Development.

DNP Project Development (3 credits)

The second DNP project course is focused on the development of a project proposal. Students will write sections of the proposal with a complete proposal developed by the end of the semester. Once all sections of the proposal are written, the student and the project chair will schedule a date and time for a defense of the project proposal. This will not be scheduled until the student, chair and team member(s) agree that the student is ready to present the proposal.

It is the faculty member's responsibility to request a room for the proposal and web conferencing assistance if needed for a project team member unable to attend the presentation in person. The student will notify other team members of the scheduled proposal. Once the proposal is successfully presented the student will submit an IRB form 129 for Institutional Review Board human subjects' protection review. The IRB decision will guide need for further human subjects review via entry of the project as an x form. Students will work closely with the project chair when developing the IRB application. The IRB submission should occur at the end of the semester in which the student is enrolled in DNP Project Development.

DNP Project Implementation (3 credits)

During the third DNP project course students will implement the DNP project. This will occur after IRB and faculty approval. Students will meet with their team to begin the implementation process of their project. This will include interprofessional collaboration with all involved to get the project implemented. Students will collect data as appropriate for the individual project. Project implementation must be completed or near completion before students are enrolled in Project Analysis and Dissemination.

DNP Project Analysis and Dissemination (3 credits)

The first task of the final project course is analysis of the project findings. Students will focus on applying statistical tests as appropriate and drawing conclusions from the project

results. The next activity is completion of the DNP project proposal. Projects results and discussion about the findings will be included. Additionally, students will develop various methods to disseminate the project findings.

DNP Project Procedures

Process	Timing	Form	Submission
Project Team Student identifies two team members and submits the Appointment of an Advisory Committee form and the CVs of any non-faculty members to the home school DNP Program Director/Coordinator .	By the middle of the semester in which the student is enrolled in DNP Project Identification.	Appointment of an advisory committee	6801 Course Dropbox
Project Team (optional) Student identifies a need to change a project committee member and submits the application for change and CV for any non-faculty members to the DNP Director.	Anytime during the project that committee members may need to be changed, added, or replaced.	Application for change in graduate advisory committee	DNP Project Course Dropbox
Project Team Student identifies project goals and objectives each semester.	First two weeks of project course and evaluation at end of course	DNP Project Goals and Objectives	DNP Project Course Dropbox
Project Team Student identifies non-precepted hours to complete to enhance knowledge surrounding the DNP project	Prior to attending non-precepted hours	DNP Residency Practicum Non-precepted Hours	DNP Project Course Dropbox & ePortfolio (match to DNP Essential)

Project Team All BSN to DNP students will complete the minimum of 40 clinical hours each semester. All MSN to DNP students changing concentrations (ex. FNP-PMHNP) will complete the minimum of 40 clinical hours each semester.	During each semester	Follow NP Clinical Placement Guidelines to secure a clinical preceptor. Complete a Clinical Rotation Plan—submit to chair Complete documentation of hours and patient experiences in Project Concert/ Medatrax Preceptor completes an Evaluation in Project Concert/ Medatrax Faculty completes an evaluation in Project Concert/ Medatrax	 DNP Course Dropbox Project Concert/Medatrax Project Concert/Medatrax Project Concert/Medatrax
Project Team Tracking DNP hours	Each time hours are completed toward the DNP Project	Complete documentation in Project Concert/ Medatrax And DNP Residency Hours Log	Project Concert/Medatrax DNP Course Grade Book
Project Team Student completes a total of 500 hours toward the DNP project (125 hours each semester)	At the end of the semester the students hours are verified by the project chair	Complete documentation in Project Concert/ Medatrax And DNP Residency Hours Log	DNP Course Grade Book
DNP Project Proposal • Student develops project proposal with review by faculty project chair of all proposal components • Student makes any revisions recommended	During DNP Project Development		DNP Course Dropbox

Process	Timing	Form	Submission
by faculty project chair • Student emails proposal to team member(s) • Student makes further revisions if suggested by team members in consultation with the faculty project chair • Faculty project chair communicates with the student and team members to reach consensus regarding the student's readiness to present the proposal.			
Presentation of the DNP Project Proposal • Student, faculty project chair and committee member(s) identify a date for the presentation. • The faculty project chair schedules a location and time (2 hour window) for	Near end of semester		

student's presentation. (Arranges for web conferencing, if necessary.) • Project is presented and the team provides the student with feedback and suggested revisions. • Once the presentation is completed and any revisions recommended are complete, the team completes the Results of Examination Form (Proposal Defense) • The chair keeps the Results of Examination form in their records to complete for the final defense.	At the end of the Project Development semester, when the proposal is completed.	[Results of Examination, Residency Requirements and DNP Project Defense](#)	6802 DNP Course Dropbox
IRB Submission • After receiving approval from the project committee, the student submits a 129 form or X-Form as deemed appropriate by	At the end of the semester of the Project Development course.	[129 Form](#) or [X form](#)	IRB@etsu.edu

the project team to the IRB.			

Project Implementation • After IRB approval the student consults with the project faculty and project chair then begins project implementation	Project Implementation, including data collection should be completed by the end of the semester students are enrolled in Project Implementation.		
DNP Project Dissemination • The student proposes a date and time for the project presentation to the project team. • The student provides the project team with a copy of the project paper including results and discussion, at least four weeks prior to the date for the scheduled presentation. • The student makes any recommended revisions. • The date of the presentation is confirmed and the faculty project chair obtains a room	During the semester in which students are enrolled in Project Analyses and Dissemination.		

for the presentation • The student provides an abstract of the project to the faculty project chair.			
• The students are encouraged to display their scholarly work on the WHSON/[CON website.](#)	Complete by July 20 of final semester. (optional)	[Abstract](#) [Instructions to display work on CON/School of Nursing websites.](#)	Email to mullinscm@etsu.edu
• The faculty project chair sends the home school Graduate Programs Administrative Assistant the abstract and announcement of the presentation (including the time date and room) for distribution to faculty and students • The student presents the project to the team and any faculty and peers attending the presentation.			
• After successful presentation of the completed project the student and	Once the students successfully defends the DNP project, usually in the later	[Results of Examination, Residency Requirements and DNP Project Defense](#)	DNP Director who submits to the School of Graduate Studies

faculty sign the Results of Examination, Residency Requirements and DNP Project Defense Form, and committee chair and DNP Director maintain copies. The original is sent to School of Graduate Studies.	part of the semester.		

Appendix A

Link to All Forms in Document

Form	URL
Link to forms in this Document	https://www.etsu.edu/nursing/graduate_students/default.php

Kinds of Activities and Clinical/Practicum Experiences that can be Proposed for Residency/Immersion Hours:

Following is a listing of the kinds of activities that can typically be expected within the NRSE 6801, 6802, 6803, 6804 Residency clinical residency/immersion experiences:

☐ Meetings with consultants and content experts to learn about approaches for addressing the DNP Project problem

☐ Presentations to or facilitating work groups related to the DNP Project, e.g. planning and project development

☐ Carrying out the project

☐ Poster, podium, workshop, or conference presentations related to the DNP Project

☐ Workshop or conference attendance when directly related to the DNP Project

☐ DNP Project grant preparation or funding proposals

☐ Manuscript preparation and submission

☐ Policy work

☐ Project-relevant tool development

☐ Other creative or residency/immersion activities with direct relationship to the DNP Project as negotiated with the NRSE 6801, 6802, 6803, 6804 Residency faculty member

☐ Residency credit for literature review on the DNP Project topic is limited to no more than 10 hours. These hours may be divided through the four residency courses with approval of DNP Project chair or given as a total of 10 hours in Residency NRSE 6801.

☐ Review courses for Nurse Practitioner national certification exams are limited to no more than 10 hours

In all cases for Residency courses, the appointed DNP Project chair approves the specific clinical residency/immersion experiences that focus on the student's DNP Project topic/ project. Residency/immersion activities may be disqualified if not substantively related to the DNP Project, at an appropriate level for doctoral work, or consistent with the DNP Essentials. Residency hours must be documented and submitted. A record of the residency hours is kept in the student's official academic file and ePortfolio. All students are required to demonstrate accomplishment of the DNP Essentials through their residency experiences. Final determination of satisfactory demonstration of the DNP Essentials is made by the faculty member for the 4th semester NRSE 6800 Residency course.

For BSN-DNP NP students, in addition to the above activities, 40 hours of each semester in residency will be directed toward practice in their role preparation area (Family Nurse Practitioner, Adult/Gero Acute Care Nurse Practitioner, Psych/Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, Pediatric Nurse Practitioner-Primary Care, Women's Health Care Nurse Practitioner) to achieve and maintain specialty competencies. These hours of residency require separate, formal placement in a clinical

agency and supervision by an appropriately credentialed DNP faculty member who serves as a DNP Project committee member (i.e., with appropriate role preparation, certification, and population focus). For NP students in regard to this aspect of residency, all policies from the NP Preceptor Guidelines for clinical practice apply.

In order for students to progress through residency, satisfactory completion of all prior semester requirements is needed.

Note: Every effort has been made to ensure the documents and instructions in the Guide are clear and up-to-date. Students will be notified via email and/or website postings of any changes that may need to be made during the year. Students are encouraged to seek clarifications with their home school DNP Program Director/Coordinator, their Concentration Advisors, and/or their DNP Project Chairs.