Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Project Expectations

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PBA DNP Project Policies

"The product of the DNP Project may take on various final forms depending on the academic institution's requirements and the student's area of advanced nursing practice. Students are encouraged to demonstrate innovation in the design and dissemination of the final project and product to reflect the changing healthcare environment. However, the elements of the DNP Project are the same for all students and include planning, implementation, and evaluation components. As an outcome of the program, students must have the opportunity to integrate all DNP Essentials into practice. However all eight Essentials do not have to be demonstrated in the DNP Project. All DNP Projects should:

1. Focus on a change that impacts healthcare outcomes either through direct or indirect care.
2. Have a systems or population/aggregate focus.
3. Demonstrate implementation in the appropriate arena or area of practice.
4. Include a plan for sustainability (e.g. financial, systems or political realities, not only theoretical abstractions).
5. Include an evaluation of processes and/or outcomes (formative or summative). DNP Projects should be designed so that processes and/or outcomes will be evaluated to guide practice and policy. Clinical significance is as important in guiding practice as statistical significance is in evaluating research.
6. Provide a foundation for future practice scholarship (AACN, 2015, p.4)."

"Practice as a nurse educator should not be included in the DNP practice hours. The focus of a DNP program, including practicum and DNP Project, should not be on the educational process, the academic curriculum or on educating nursing students (AACN, 2015, p.10)."

"The role of the nurse educator is highly valued and diversity of preparation is needed for faculty roles. Graduates of practice doctoral programs will have expertise and preparation of the highest level of nursing practice. DNP graduates are eligible to teach at the collegiate level since they have a terminal degree in the discipline of nursing. Just as graduates of research-focused doctoral programs, it is recommended that graduates of practice-focused nursing programs who aspire to hold a faculty position have additional preparation in the educator role and pedagogies in addition to preparation in an area of advanced nursing practice (AACN, 2004) (AACN, 2015, p.7)."

Activities that are not DNP Projects
- "Integrative and Systematic Reviews: An integrative and systematic review alone is not considered a DNP project and does not provide opportunities for students to develop and integrate scholarship into their practice.
- Portfolios: A student's portfolio is not considered a DNP Project, but rather a tool to document and evaluate professional development and learning or synthesis of student's development and learning.
- Group/Team Projects (AACN, 2015, p.4)"
- Advanced Nursing Practicum II projects: All students (MSN, BSN to DNP) will complete a project as part of their second practicum course. This project is NOT the DNP Project but should serve as a basis (whether for skill development or feasibility) for the DNP Project. The Advanced Nursing Practicum II project is described in the appropriate syllabus, not this Handbook.

Dissemination
a. "Dissemination of the DNP Project should include a product that describes the purpose, planning, implementation, and evaluation components of the project, and should be required for each project.
b. Dissemination of the project outcomes is essential and may include a variety of forms depending upon the focus and area of advanced nursing practice and should be targeted to appropriate audiences to ensure impact (AACN, 2015, p.5)"

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Justification

A committee consisting of all full time graduate faculty (Graduate Committee) will evaluate the DNP Project proposal at the end of Semester 6 for BSN-DNP students and no later than the end of Semester 3 for Post-Master's students. The Justification process consists of the following:

    (1) "Justification for DNP Project" Paper

Justification for DNP Project Paper

The Justification for DNP Project Paper should be a 5-10 page, APA-style, scholarly paper detailing the justification for the student's DNP Project. This paper should include (at a minimum):

    (1) Problem Identification
        a. The problem must be significant to the degree that changes in practice would have a high probability of adoption. Identify why this problem is significant.
        b. Identify the population impacted by your project
    (2) Stakeholder Identification
    (3) Literature Review/Rationale for Innovation/Intervention
        a. A minimum of 10-15 peer reviewed articles should be included here
        b. Synthesize your findings from research related to the practice problem as identified in your literature review. Studies do not need to be replications of previous students but they all should address the same practice problem.
    (4) Description of the Innovation/Intervention
        a. Be sure to include:
            i. Participants in your project
            ii. Activities of the project
    (5) Project Outcomes
        a. How will you collect the data to ensure you are measuring your project outcomes?
    (6) Implementation Plan/Timeline for Scholarly Project Completion
        a. This should include (at a minimum):
            i. IRB submission date (if applicable)
            ii. Meeting dates with stakeholders/faculty/practice mentor
            iii. Project Implementation
            iv. Drafting of Final Scholarly Project Paper
            v. Evaluation of Outcomes
            vi. Drafting of Final Scholarly Project Poster
            vii. Final Scholarly Project Presentation
            viii. Budget (if applicable) for Scholarly Project
            ix. Sustainability Plans
    (7) References

DNP Project Team

The Project Team should be finalized no later than the beginning of Semester 7 for BSN-DNP students and no later than the beginning of Semester 4 for Post-Master's students. The team will guide the student through the planning, execution, evaluation, and dissemination of the DNP project. The team will consist of:

    1. The Student
    2. A Faculty Advisor
        a. The faculty advisor must be a doctorally prepared faculty with expertise related to the DNP Project (AACN, 2015).
    3. A Practice Mentor

    a. The practice mentor or "community mentor" should be a stakeholder at the location where the project is being implemented (AACN, 2015).

Evaluation of the DNP Project

A committee consisting of all full time graduate faculty (Graduate Committee) will evaluate the DNP project during Semester 9 for BSN-DNP (NP tracks) and Semester 8 for BSN-DNP (Executive Leadership track) students and Semester 5 for Post-Master's students. The Evaluation process consists of the following:
- (1) DNP Final Project Paper
- (2) DNP Final Project Presentation
- (3) DNP Final Project Poster

The Graduate Committee will evaluate the final product of the project and recommend graduation. The Committee may refer the project for outside review including peer review and stakeholder review. Each student will present their presentation and poster at the "Scholar Symposium".

DNP Project Paper
The DNP Project Paper should be a 25-40 page, APA-style, scholarly paper detailing the DNP Project. This Paper should include (at a minimum):
- (1) Table of Contents
- (2) Abstract
- (3) Chapter 1
  - (1) Introduction
  - (2) Problem Identification
    - i. The problem must be significant to the degree that changes in practice would have a high probability of adoption. Identify why this problem is significant.
    - ii. Identify the population impacted by your project
  - (3) Stakeholder Identification
  - (4) Objectives/Aims of Project
- (4) Chapter Two
  - (1) Literature Review/Rationale for Innovation/Intervention
    - i. A minimum of 10-15 peer reviewed articles should be included here
    - ii. Synthesize your findings from research related to the practice problem as identified in your literature review. Studies do not need to be replications of previous students but they all should address the same practice problem.
  - (2) Theoretical Framework
  - (3) Translational Framework
- (5) Chapter Three
  - (1) Methodology
    - i. Overview
    - ii. Setting
    - iii. Consent Procedure
    - iv. Sample Population
    - v. Activities of the Project
- (6) Chapter Four
  - (1) Outcomes
    - i. Data Management
    - ii. Data Analysis
      - 1. Evaluate your project outcomes
      - 2. Include statistical analyses
    - iii. Results

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  (7) Chapter Five
    (1) Discussion
    (2) Impact on Practice
    (3) Limitations
    (4) Future Recommendations
 (8) References
 (9) Appendices
    (1) IRB Approval/IRB Exemption Documentation
    (2) Tools/Surveys (if you borrowed a tool, be sure to include a copy of your authorization to use/permission to use the tool/survey with the tool/survey).

DNP Project Podium Presentation
The DNP Project Presentation should be a 20 minute PowerPoint Presentation detailing the student's DNP Project. The student must obtain permission to present, as evidenced by a PASS on the DNP Project Presentation Rubric *(see Appendix B for rubric)* no later than 1 week <u>before</u> the scheduled DNP Project Presentation Time, from their DNP Faculty Mentor/Advisor. It is each student's responsibility to obtain the completed version of this rubric. The final grade for this assignment will NOT be posted until AFTER the DNP Project Presentation has been officially presented, as assigned, which is the last requirement for this assignment. This Presentation should include (at a minimum):
 (1) Problem Identification
   a. The problem must be significant to the degree that changes in practice would have a high probability of adoption. Identify why this problem is significant.
   b. Identify the population impacted by your project
 (2) Stakeholder Identification
 (3) Literature Review/Rationale for Innovation/Intervention
   a. A minimum of 10-15 peer reviewed articles should be included here
   b. Synthesize your findings from research related to the practice problem as identified in your literature review. Studies do not need to be replications of previous students but they all should address the same practice problem.
     i. If borrowing a tool, be sure to include a discussion of your authorization to use the tool and why you selected this tool, over any other available tools.
 (4) Description of the Innovation/Intervention
   a. Be sure to include:
     i. Overview
     ii. Setting
     iii. Sample Population
     iv. Activities of the Project
 (5) Project Outcomes
   a. Evaluate your project outcomes
     i. Include statistical analyses
   b. Discussion on findings
   c. Limitations
 (6) Impact on Practice/Future Directions
 (7) References

DNP Project Poster
The student is required to attend a 50 minute poster session. The student must obtain permission to present, as evidenced by a PASS on the DNP Project Poster Session Rubric (*see Appendix C for rubric*) no later than 1 week <u>before</u> the scheduled DNP Project Poster Session Time, from their DNP Faculty Mentor. It is each student's responsibility to obtain the completed version of this rubric. The final grade for this assignment will NOT be

posted until AFTER the student attends and stands with their poster at the DNP Project Poster Session, as assigned, which is the last requirement for this assignment. The poster should be printed in color with the following dimensions: 36 inches high and 48 inches wide. This poster should <u>not</u> be mounted. This Poster should include (at a minimum):

    (1) Significant/Background to the Problem
    (2) Literature Review/Rationale for Innovation/Intervention
    (3) Project Outcomes
    (4) Impact on Practice/Future Directions
    (5) References

Digital Repository
The School of Nursing will maintain a digital repository of projects, but students should maintain their project on their web presence.

General Policies

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

By supporting the scholarly activities of students, the University aids in scientific and scholastic contributions to society. Under the direction of the Office of the Provost, the Faculty Research Council coordinates University research activities and review of faculty/student research proposals. The Faculty Research Council will serve as the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and as the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). Grants and sponsored research opportunities are available from a wide variety of sources. The Faculty Research Council offers assistance in many phases of proposal development such as locating funding sources, assisting with budget preparation, and guiding the proposal through the internal approval process. Initial research proposals must be approved by the Faculty Research Council (IRB or IACUC) before the research may begin. Research projects lasting more than twelve months must be reviewed annually by the Review Board by the anniversary date (i.e., month and day).

Palm Beach Atlantic University faculty, students, and researchers are required to follow all guidelines specified by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) policy on Protection of Human Subjects (Title 45 CFR, Part 46, revised July 14, 2009) and the Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research April 18, 1979) in all research activities requiring human subjects. This includes all projects regardless of whether the funding is internal or external. All research projects involving human subjects will be reviewed and monitored by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) in accordance with the above mentioned policies. Strict adherence to all regulations is required by law.

Research involving the use of humans as research participants falls under the supervision of the Palm Beach Atlantic University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Here, research is restricted to the systematic investigation of questions designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge, involving the collection of data from or about living human beings. The IRB does not review research utilizing published or publicly available documents or research on elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office. Research involving the use of animals as research participants falls under the review of the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC).

APA

Submit written work on appropriate paper, on-time, and typed neatly in APA style unless otherwise specified. The student must prepare the proposed manuscript consistent with the format of Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (7th ed.), hereafter referred to as the APA manual. All papers, except the final MSN and DNP project papers, should be submitted according to the APA 7 Student Paper Version. The final MSN and DNP project papers should be submitted according to the APA 7 Professional Paper Version. In general, this means that the manuscript must have the components of a title page, abstract, table of contents, table of figures (if any), body with headings and subheadings, reference list, and Appendixes. "The font for the manuscript is recommended to be 12 point Times New Roman. The paper should be double spaced. Margins on all pages should be as follows: left, right, top and bottom 1". The student must adhere to standard rules of grammar and punctuation, most of which are given in the APA manual.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism may occur in many different ways and may present itself intentionally or unintentionally. It's the student's responsibility to avoid plagiarism as this violation may lead to the receiving of an "F" for a course and/or being dismissed from the Graduate Program. Faculty in the graduate program may utilize **Turnitin**, an internet-based plagiarism service, to assist with checking unoriginality of content. To avoid plagiarism, please review the following catalog. Additional information will be made available in eCollege.

Appendix A

NONPF Recommended Criteria for NP Scholarly Projects in the Practice Doctorate Program

1. The project is related to advanced practice in the nursing specialty and benefits a group, population or community rather than an individual patient/
   a. Often arises from clinical practice
   b. May be done in partnership with another entity: clinical agency, school, health department, church, government, voluntary organization or community group, etc.
2. The project leadership may be solo or collaborative depending on scope of the project and university requirements.
3. The scholarly project addresses identified needs.
4. The literature review suggests an evidence base for the project or supports the need for the project.
5. Description of the innovation is adequate for others to use (essential components for success, cost, etc.)
6. A systematic approach is used and data are collected using methods and tools that meet accepted standards.
7. Expected outcomes are defined and measured (quality improvement, cost savings, etc.).
8. The project is conducted according to ethical principles.
9. Dissemination modes are professional and public (peer review is included).

Types of Scholarly Projects include but are not limited to:

This list reflects a range of types of scholarly projects. This is a sample list and is not exhaustive.
• Translate research into practice
• Quality improvement (Care processes, Patient outcomes)
• Implement and evaluate evidence based practice guidelines
• Analyze policy: Develop, implement, evaluate, or revise policy
• Design and use databases to retrieve information for decision making, planning, evaluation
• Conduct financial analyses to compare care models and potential cost savings, etc.
• Implement and evaluate innovative uses of technology to enhance/evaluate care
• Design and evaluate new models of care
• Design and evaluate programs
• Provide leadership of interprofessional and or intra-professional collaborative projects to implement policy, evaluate care models, transitions, etc.
• Collaborate with researchers to answer clinical questions
• Collaborate on legislative change using evidence
• Work with lay and or professional coalitions to develop, implement or evaluate health programs (such as health promotion and disease prevention programs for vulnerable patients, groups or communities).

The scope of the scholarly project is designed to benefit a group, population and /or a community rather than an individual patient. Specific examples are included to illustrate how these projects might be applied in different settings, for various populations and by different nurse practitioner specialties. Some projects focus on existing programs while others address the creation of new programs. The scope of the project would be determined by the university's guidelines, feasibility given time devoted to projects in the curriculum, faculty, funding, and other resources, etc. In some programs the project may evolve through course work in courses on policy and inquiry

eventually culminating in the final design of the proposed project before it is launched. By providing opportunity over a longer duration in which to explore and develop aspects of the projects, students receive feedback regarding alternatives and strategies before project implementation.

Examples of Projects Undertaken in Practice Doctorate Programs

The following includes a list of general topics and the grouping of projects by category. This is not an exhaustive list of projects or of categories.

• Evaluate interventions, innovations in care techniques
• Obtain baseline data, design an evidence based intervention and plan and evaluate
• Collaborate with other NPs or other professional colleagues to compare/ evaluate group visits
• Capture data on common problems and effectiveness of treatments with recommendations for change
• Evaluate management of psychiatric patients (protocols, meds, metabolic monitoring)
• Evaluate peer led support groups and their impact
• Evaluate pain control in palliative care
• Promote patient safety by reducing errors in medications
• Evaluate home care comparing satisfaction with physician and NP care Health Promotion & Community

Health: Epidemiology and Continuity of Care

• Compare strategies for health promotion / disease prevention (community, schools, churches, etc.)
• Identify trends in patient visits, outreach programs
• Launch collaborative new health promotion program in vulnerable community population and evaluate it
• Develop and evaluate monitoring tools or screening programs
• Evaluate screening protocols
• Evaluate programs (care, training volunteers, education)
• Evaluate community responses to disasters
• Develop and evaluate the impact of self-care models
• Develop and test transition protocols to promote continuity of care across settings
• Evaluate high risk patients and develop approaches for risk reduction (child and elder abuse) for policy or care improvement

Policy-Related Scholarly Projects

•Implement new policy collaboratively by designing and evaluating HPV vaccination for 6th grade girls to prevent cancer (partnering with School/ Health Dept., etc.)
• Evaluate or compare nursing home policies for treating chronic pain
• Evaluate students at risk (school dropouts, depressed, substance users, pregnant) and recommend policy change, programs
• Evaluate employer policies regarding health and potential cost savings of new policies
• Evaluate the effect of evidence based policy in NICU
• Evaluate inconsistencies in scope of practice issues and use evidence based knowledge and to recommend changes

Integration of Technology in Care and Informatics Related Projects

• Create a database for monitoring childhood injuries in urgent care and evaluate its impact
• Use technology to improve care (telehealth consultation, interactive "home" visits, etc.) and evaluate results

• Evaluate technology's impact on care (information transfer to point of care, etc)
• Establish protocols that integrate use of technology in patient assessment in urgent care and evaluate their impact

Acknowledgment:
The above examples were developed and generalized from several sources including publications, Web sites, and information shared by deans of various nursing practice doctorate programs. Some examples were common to several schools and others were unique to specific programs. NONPF would like to acknowledge the following schools whose projects are reflected in the list above: Medical College of Georgia; Rush University; Oregon Health and Science University; University of Tennessee, Memphis; University of Arizona; University of Kentucky; and University of Washington. We encourage other programs to share examples of scholarly projects that can be added to the list. We hope that this list will be a useful list maintained in the Practice Doctorate Resource Center on the NONPF Web site. Please send examples to nonpf@nonpf.org.

Appendix B

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Podium Presentation Evaluation Rubric

DNP Faculty Mentor/Advisor's Name: _____

Presenter's Name: _____

Please rate the poster/presenter from 0 to 3 on each of the following (circle one):

1. Overview to Practice Problem
a) Well-explained rationale for the DNP project   0   1   2   3

2. Stakeholders and Literature Review
a) Identified appropriate stakeholders   0   1   2   3
b) Relevant literature thoroughly reviewed   0   1   2   3
c) References are appropriately cited   0   1   2   3

3. Description of the Intervention
a) Clear description of intervention   0   1   2   3
b) Project objectives are clearly defined   0   1   2   3
c) Project population thoroughly described   0   1   2   3

4. Outcomes and Results
a) Figures/tables clearly to present the data   0   1   2   3
b) Findings are presented clearly and accurately   0   1   2   3
c) Analysis is well explained and appropriate to project outcome(s)   0   1   2   3

5. Impact on Practice/Future Directions
a) Conclusions are supported by results   0   1   2   3
b) Sustainability and Future implications are discussed   0   1   2   3
c) Limitations and Strengths are discussed   0   1   2   3

6. Presentation - Overall
a) Flow of information is logical and facilitates understanding   0   1   2   3

Total _____ / 42

Score Key: **Circle ONE:**
0 = No Attempt
1 = Developing   **PASS – 36 points and above**
2 = Competent
3 = Exemplary   **FAIL – 35 points and below**

Appendix C

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Poster Evaluation Rubric

DNP Faculty Mentor's Name: _____

Presenter's Name: _____

Please rate the poster/presenter from 0 to 3 on each of the following (circle one):

1. Overview to Practice Problem
a) Well-explained rationale for the DNP project	0	1	2	3
b) Project objectives are clearly defined	0	1	2	3

2. Literature Review
a) Relevant literature thoroughly reviewed	0	1	2	3
b) Succinct	0	1	2	3
c) References are appropriately cited	0	1	2	3

3. Methods (Explanation/Appropriateness)
a) Clear description of intervention	0	1	2	3
b) Methods are appropriate to address outcomes	0	1	2	3

4. Analysis/Results
a) Figures/tables clearly to present the data	0	1	2	3
b) Findings are presented clearly and accurately	0	1	2	3
c) Analysis is well explained & appropriate to project outcome(s)	0	1	2	3

5. Impact on Practice/Future Directions
a) Conclusions are supported by results	0	1	2	3
b) Sustainability and Future implications are discussed	0	1	2	3

6. Presentation - Overall
a) Effective overall aesthetic/organization of poster	0	1	2	3
b) Flow of information is logical and facilitates understanding	0	1	2	3

Total _____ / 42

Score Key:
0 = No Attempt
1 = Developing
2 = Competent
3 = Exemplary

Circle ONE:

PASS – 36 points and above

FAIL – 35 points and below

Appendix D

Helpful Resources List

1. G-Power Tool Download: http://www.gpower.hhu.de/
2. SPSS Download (Graduate Student Version): https://store.thinkedu.com/spss-c71.aspx .
3. Laerd Statistics: https://statistics.laerd.com/
   a. A how-to guide in choosing and running statistical analysis.
   b. A how-to guide in writing statistical results (APA style).
4. PBA IRB Website (Forms): https://pba.instructure.com/courses/12711
5. Statistics Assistance: https://www.dissertationdone.com/

Appendix E

DNP Project Hours Guidance

The following are examples of ways to earn DNP project hours. Students are not limited to this list of activities. Students are encouraged to discuss additional opportunities with their respective DNP Faculty Mentor to determine if the activity may count toward DNP project hours. No more than 25% of DNP project hours may be completed through indirect supervision.   Indirect supervision consists of meetings with DNP faculty mentor (related to the DNP project and/or attainment of DNP Essentials) and other learning opportunities, such as conferences, online learning experiences (i.e. CEUs, trainings, etc). At least 75% of DNP project hours must be completed through direct supervision with student's DNP Community Mentor (preceptor). All activities must be linked to one or more of the DNP essentials. This should be clearly described in the Medatrax timelog.

DNP Essential I: Scientific Underpinnings for Practice
- Meet with nursing resource librarian to learn how to perform database search
- Meet with nursing resource librarian to learn how to navigate library resources
- Meet with subject matter expert on project topic

DNP Essential II: Organizational and System Leadership for Quality Improvement and Systems Thinking
- Build support for your project or project concepts
- Design programs (including the development of curriculum) on health topics
- Identify strategies for determining budget priorities for an organization
- Secure grant funding
- Develop a business plan
- Attend leadership development conference

DNP Essential III: Clinical Scholarship and Analytical Methods for Evidence-Based Practice
- Analyze, interpret and evaluate de-identified project related data
- Prepare de-identified data for professional presentation
- Access, download and process public data sets

DNP Essential IV: Information Systems/Technology and Patient Care Technology for the Improvement and Transformation of Health Care
- Learn to use Microsoft Excel
- Learn to use Microsoft PowerPoint
- Learn to use SPSS
- Develop web-based data gathering tools

DNP Essential V: Health Care Policy for Advocacy in Health Care
- Design programs (including the development of curriculum) on health topics
- Attend public policy forum or workshop
- Shadow a healthcare lobbyist or legislator
- Develop and implement a new organizational policy or practice
- Develop recommendations for legislators or organizations
- Participate in a nursing organization
- Participate in a local government committee

- Participate in state level policy committee

DNP Essential VI: Interprofessional Collaboration for Improving Patient and Population Health Outcomes

- Consult with faculty mentor or community mentor
- Consult with subject matter expert(s) or Interprofessional teams
- Attend community organization or not-for-profit organization meeting(s)
- Participate in round-table conversations related to topics related to DNP project
- Facilitate an Interprofessional group or journal club related DNP project to mentor junior students

DNP Essential VII: Clinical Prevention and Population Health for Improving the Nation's Health

- Access and process clinical data to identify areas of need
- Assess clinical performance on quality measures
- Implement quality improvement projects for health promotion and disease prevention
- Collect and analyze epidemiologic data
- Engage in the process of measuring and reporting of organizational performance
- Implement evidence-based practice (including the development of tools and algorithms) in the practice setting

DNP Essential VIII: Advanced Nursing Practice

- Utilize health systems data to identify quality gaps and implement solutions to bridge identified gaps
- Facilitate health system planning
- Lead a community needs assessment
- Implement evidence based practice solutions to needs identified in the clinical setting

Reference: Indiana State University (2020). Doctor of nursing practice clinical guidelines.