PURDUE UNIVERSITY | School of Nursing

DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE

PRACTICE INQUIRY PROJECT

HANDBOOK

July 24, 2024

Empowering you to pursue bold ideas and influence health care delivery in Indiana and around the world.

THAT'S MY

GIANT LEAP

Introduction

This handbook has been developed to serve as a roadmap to the processes, procedures, and requirements of the DNP Practice Inquiry Project. The DNP Practice Inquiry Project is developed, implemented, and **throughout the program**, supported by content delivered across several courses.

Overview of DNP Practice Inquiry

The DNP program culminates in the completion of a scholarly Practice Inquiry Project over a minimum of three semesters. This project is a comprehensive, integrative practice experience that reflects the synthesis of program course work and mastery of expert practice knowledge in translating current research to improve nursing practice or healthcare outcomes for patients, families, populations, or systems.

DNP Practice Inquiry Projects should (a) focus on a clinically significant practice issue from a system or population perspective and (b) be data-driven. Specific topics may center on quality improvement, practice innovation, implementation of evidence, transfer of processes across entities, etc. Topics should be selected in conjunction with the DNP Chair.

Each student collaborates with an agency to address a real-world clinical problem or health issue. The project allows the student to demonstrate clinical expertise and competencies in organizational leadership, system analysis, program assessment, evaluation, and practice change. The student must formally present the project to complete the requirements for the DNP degree. The project's final product is an executive summary, formal PowerPoint presentation, and manuscript prepared for publication in a targeted peer-reviewed journal.

DNP projects can take the form of a/an:

- Evidence-based intervention or change initiative
- Program development and/or evaluation related to clinical practice
- Quality improvement initiatives
- Implementation and evaluation of evidence-based practice guidelines
- Design and evaluation of new models of care
- Policy implementation, analysis, revision

Consistent with the AACN DNP Implementation Task Force recommendations documented in the August 2015 white paper, the following topics/approaches do not meet the requirements for a clinical doctorate:

- Integrative and systematic reviews alone (project implementation and valuation is needed)
- Portfolios
- Projects focused on the educational process, the academic curriculum, or educating nursing students

A shared feature of these examples is research evidence and systems leadership to improve healthcare outcomes, whether at the practice, patient, or health system level.

Typical Development and Progression of the DNP Practice Inquiry Project

	Years 1 and 2 DNP Chats Project Seminars	NUR 680	NUR 687	NUR 689
Identify interest area	X			
DNP Project committee formation: DNP Project Chair Faculty Member/Expert Member Organizational/Agency Member	X	X		
Needs assessment identifies the challenges/problems leading to the proposed project.	X	X		
Identify Culminating project: describe the project and how the project intervention addresses at least one challenge/problem that influences healthcare for a significant number of persons		X		
Review of the literature		X		
Proposal development		X		
CITI Training OR complete in Nursing Research Course (Must be within 3 years)		X		
IRB preparation		X		
IRB submission		X	X	
Project implementation			X	
Data/outcome analysis			X	
Project evaluation (facilitators and barriers)			X	
Dissemination of findings: • Executive Summary • Project Presentation • Manuscript • Power Point Presentation			X	X

DNP Project Committee

Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Degree Plans of Study must include a Practice Inquiry Project that provides evidence that the student can expertly appraise evidence relevant to practice. The Practice Inquiry Project is a faculty-guided scholarly experience that provides evidence of critical thinking and the ability to apply evidence-based principles through problem identification, proposal development, implementation, and evaluation of a clinical problem.

Role of the DNP Committee Chair

The purpose of the Committee Chair is to guide the student through decisions to efficiently and effectively build the foundational work, preparation, and processes that culminate with the required Practice Inquiry Project.

The Committee Chair ideally should have expertise in the topic of the student's DNP Practice Inquiry Project but is not necessary, as there may be another member of the committee who has expertise in the topic area. As the expert in the process, the Committee Chair will be able to efficiently guide the student through each phase of the project, including determining the type of project, the scope of the project, and the committee members whose areas of expertise will complement the project.

Faculty who are assuming the role of Committee Chair must have graduate school regular faculty certification and have served as a committee member on at least one graduate committee in which the project is completed. Faculty should be aware of the rules from the Office of the Vice Provost for Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Scholars that govern professional doctorates.

Specific roles and responsibilities of the faculty member who takes this role with new DNP students include:

Socialization into the doctoral role

- Provide support and encouragement to the individual students as he/she progresses to completion of the DNP
- Encourage and facilitate the process of student communication with committee members
- Mentor new committee members into the role of committee chair
- Reinforce student's responsibilities as adult learners

Advising of the courses and cognate residencies

- Understand the student's competencies as they relate to coursework and project topic and scope
- Help students determine requisite knowledge in the processes of the required courses and cognates and residencies needed for their DNP project.
- Help the student determine appropriate Practice Inquiry Projects for their portfolio (topic, scope, location, using existing data)
- Assist the student in finding committee members who can make a valuable and unique contribution to the project
- Help students identify small grants, fellowships, attendance, and presentations to conferences, and seminars relevant to their educational and career goals

- Assist the student with making connections with professionals and opportunities relevant to their DNP project

Project Processes/Construction

- Assist the student in the importance of understanding and meeting the established timelines (as identified by the Checklist, grad documents)
- Participate with the student in meetings with the committee members, and assist the student in prioritizing the expectations discussed during those meetings
- Assist the student in acquiring IRB approval for their DNP project
- Be available to meet regularly (e.g., monthly/weekly) with the student during the writing phase of the project
- Maintain an easily accessed record of communications with the student that describes feedback provided to students and expectations for addressing the feedback. (These records give evidence for authorship and, if needed, student appeals)
- Ensure the student understands the value of the process of multiple revisions to each component of their project
- Ensure that the written project and final oral presentation are satisfactorily completed prior to asking committee members to sign the form GR-20, provided by the Graduate Program Administration Specialist

Project Submission/Post Graduation

- Facilitate student publications from the DNP project
- Facilitate presentations from the project at regional or national conferences
- Assist the student in making professional connections that will serve their continued professional growth after graduation
- Maintain communication and facilitate the transition from graduate to alumni of the program: using these opportunities to both encourage connectivity to the school while supporting graduates in developing their new professional roles

Role of the DNP Committee Co-Chair

The purpose of the Committee Co-Chair is to act in tandem with the Committee Chair to guide the student through a Practice Inquiry Project.

The Committee Co-Chair will coordinate with the Committee Chair to discuss the student's progress and mutually agree to mentor the student through the project. The Co-Chair will take an active role in providing support to the student as a content expert and/or project mentor. In the absence of the Committee Chair, the Co-Chair will act as primary and provide updates to actions taken to the Committee Chair.

Faculty members assuming the role of Committee Co-Chair must have regular graduate school faculty certification and have served as a committee member on a least one graduate committee in which the project is completed. The role of the Co-Chair intends to prepare the faculty member acting as Co-Chair to gain the experience necessary to become the Committee Chair for future students. Faculty should be aware of the rules from the Office of the Vice Provost for Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Scholars that govern professional doctorates.

Specific roles and responsibilities of the faculty member who takes this role with new DNP students include:

Socialization into the doctoral role

- Provide support and mentorship to the student
- Provide support to the Committee Chair in assisting the student through the DNP process
- Reinforce student's responsibilities as adult learners

Advising of the course and cognate residencies
- Reinforces the recommendations by the Committee Chair to the student to ensure completion of course competencies, help the student develop a Practice Inquiry Project, be an active committee member, and aid in encouraging the student to network with professionals and opportunities. Relevant to their DNP project

Project Process/Construction
- Reinforce with the student the importance of understanding and meeting agreed-upon timelines as discussed with Committee Chair
- Participate with the student in meetings with the committee members, and reinforce the student in prioritizing expectations discussed
- Support the student and Committee Chair through the IRP approval for the project
- Be available to meet on an agreed-upon time with the student and Committee Chair

Project Submission/Post Graduation
- Support student publications and presentations of the student's DNP project

Role of the DNP Committee Member

The purpose of the Committee Member is to help the Committee Chair guide the student through decisions to efficiently and effectively build the foundational work, preparation, and processes that culminate with the required practice inquiry project.

The Committee Member will have expertise relevant to the methods or content area of the student's DNP project. The Committee Member will enhance the efficiency of the project process by guiding students in the conceptualization, design, methods, and synthesis of project information.

Specific roles and responsibilities of the faculty member who take this role with new DNP students include:

Advising

- Provide support and encouragement to the individual student as he/she progresses to the completion of the DNP degree.
- Alert the chair and students of any opportunities (e.g., conference or other) relevant to the student's work.

Project Processes/Construction

- Contribute content expertise to the project
- Collaborate with the student and committee chair in every phase of the Practice Inquiry Project, from developing the concept, methods, analysis, and synthesis of project information
    - Be available to meet regularly (e.g., quarterly) with the student during the writing phase of the project
    - Provide timely feedback to the committee chair and student
    - Maintain an easily accessed record of communications with the student that describes feedback provided to students and expectations for addressing the feedback. (These records give evidence for authorship and, if needed, student appeals)

Project Submission/Post Graduation

- Facilitate student publications from the DNP project
- Facilitate presentations from the project at regional or national conferences
- Assist the student in making professional connections that will serve their continued professional growth after graduation

IRB Approval

All projects require approval by the Institutional Review Board through Purdue University and/or the organization the project is being conducted. Even if human subjects are not involved (ex., data mining, etc.), IRB approval is necessary since the student is expected to present findings. The student is responsible for securing IRB approval with their committee.

DNP Practice Inquiry Project Report Format

The DNP Practice Inquiry Project Report must be (a) of publishable quality as determined by the DNP Committee, (b) well-grounded in the existence of evidence base, and (c) include the following two distinct elements:

I. Executive Summary (approximately six-eight pages total)
   a. Problem Statement and Significance
   b. Methodology
   c. Results
   d. Discussion
   e. Implications (approximately four pages total (i.e., one page per implication)
      i. Systems
      ii. Policy
      iii. Economics
      iv. Practice

II. DNP Manuscript – content and length will vary depending upon journal requirements

The DNP manuscript describes a data-based scholarly project involving the analysis of new or existing data that must be written at the publishable quality level. Students are strongly encouraged to submit their manuscripts to peer-reviewed journals, it is not a requirement that the manuscript is accepted for publication. Manuscript submission occurs with help from the committee chair or member(s), who should be listed as co-authors. Before submitting a manuscript, the student must receive written approval from the chair of the committee, using the *DNP Manuscript Submission form* and the *DNP Authorship Guidelines form*. **MANUSCRIPTS SUBMITTED WITHOUT CHAIR APPROVAL WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED PART OF THE DNP PRACTICE INQUIRY PROJECT**

DNP Practice Inquiry Project Presentation Day

- A presentation day will be scheduled every semester approximately three to four weeks prior to the Office of the Vice Provost for Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Scholars deadlines for completing all requirements for graduation. Dates will be published well in advance to assist with scheduling
- All prospective DNP graduates are required to participate in the presentation day
- All current DNP students are strongly encouraged to attend the presentation day
- All graduate faculty are encouraged to attend the presentations
- Presenting students should be professionally dressed and prepared (no slide or note card reading)
- Each student will be scheduled for a 60-minute time slot. During this time, they will provide a 30-minute presentation of their project and answer questions from their (a) committee, (b) other faculty observers, and (c) other audience members (in this order) for 15 minutes. In the remaining 15 minutes, the committee will meet to discuss the student's performance and inform the student of the discussion results.

Guidelines for authorship

As a matter of professional integrity, scholars list each major contributor to work as a coauthor. Contributions by authors may include the conception of the work, writing, data analysis, and revision of the work. Students developing a paper or other work for external review should confer with their project advisor before the work begins. Student groups working on a paper or other project for external review should confer about authorship before beginning the work. These guidelines apply to ideas and papers submitted as part of coursework and are considered potentially publishable.

- Authorship may be a complex issue depending on whether the work was the idea of one person or multiple people and the type of contributions of each person.
- For student work developed with the support of a faculty member, the student will be the first author, and the faculty will be listed as the second author.
- School of Nursing guidelines for authorship form must be signed by student
    - If the manuscript is not submitted to the first journal within three months of graduation or the student declines to resubmit due to a rejection or revision within three months, the rights to publish the manuscript will be transferred to the committee chair, who will then become the first author. The student will become the second author and, in this capacity, will be notified whenever the manuscript is submitted to a new journal

- Coauthors' names are important and vary depending on the journal and field of study. In nursing, the author's order typically signifies each author's contributions, and the order of authors should be agreed upon before the publication is developed
- Some journals require authors to formally list each author's role in the publication and provide guidelines about who should be included as an author based on their role in the publication
- Most publications require authors to sign certain assurances about the originality and contributions of authors to work presented, and certain laws protecting intellectual property apply

Guidelines for acknowledgment

Authors publicly thank those people and organizations that supported the work submitted for public presentation.

- Before acknowledging an organization or person, confer in advance with the person or organization whose name you intend to recognize publicly.
- Some organizations that provide grant funding will require acknowledgment and may have a preferred statement about how they wish to be acknowledged.
- Students publishing or presenting their capstone work as sole authors typically.

DNP Practice Inquiry Project Checklist
The following items are tasks that must be achieved. The DNP student must work with their Committee Chair to identify all work required to progress from one phase to the next.

Preliminary Work: DNP Project Idea Development
1. Identify DNP Committee Chair no later than the semester before NUR 68000 Cognate Residency I, preferably before NUR 62400 Evidence-based Practice.
   a. Use Chair/Committee member Form in NUR 51700, Doctor of Nursing Project Seminar, Doctor of Nursing Practice , to send to prospective faculty chairs and members of the committee and submit to the Graduate Program Administration Specialist.
2. Attend the DNP Practice Inquiry Project Presentation Day (see School of Nursing website for presentation dates)
3. Identify two DNP Committee Members with the help of your DNP Committee Chair. Send the Acknowledgement of Committee Membership Form to the Graduate Program Administration Specialist
4. Participate in NUR 51700 Doctor of Nursing Project Seminar, Doctor of Nursing Practice (2x per semester)
5. Review Purdue Human Subjects website and complete Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) training (www.citiprogram.org). Work with your DNP Chair to determine appropriate CITI training for your project

PHASE I: Planning
1. Design your project with the help of your DNP Committee Chair and NUR 68000, Cognate Residency I Faculty
    a. Complete literature review
    b. Develop methods for the project
    c. Develop or utilize tools for evaluation of project outcomes
    d. Develop timeline for completion of project
2. Prepare appropriate documentation (e.g., written description, PowerPoint presentation) for the committee to review and disseminate at least two weeks prior to the first committee meeting
3. Hold your first committee meeting to discuss your project design. Remember to have members sign the Graduate Advisory Committee Report Form and turn the completed form in to the Graduate Program Administration Specialist
4. Submit IRB through Cayuse
5. Provide IRB approval to the Graduate Program Administration Specialist

PHASE II: Project Implementation/Data Collection and Analysis
1. Implement project per IRB protocol
2. Collect the data after receiving IRB approval
3. After data collection is complete, conduct and finalize analyses
4. After results are finalized, hold a second committee meeting to review results and brainstorm points for the discussion section.
    a. Have committee members sign the Graduate Advisory Committee Report Form. Once completed, submit the form to the Graduate Program Administration Specialist.

PHASE III:
1. Complete executive summary and submit to DNP Committee Chair for review
2. Complete journal manuscript and submit to DNP Committee Chair for review
3. Revise executive summary and journal manuscript on the feedback from DNP Committee Chair
    a. Multiple revisions may be necessary
4. Work with your DNP Committee Chair to determine when you are ready to declare candidacy for graduation
5. The Graduate Program Administration Specialist must be notified about your candidacy prior to the beginning of the semester in which you anticipate graduating
6. Meet with DNP committee one-two weeks prior to the date the presentation is scheduled

PHASE IV: Dissemination
1. Submit completed and approved executive summary and journal manuscript to the Graduate Program Administration Specialist
2. Create a PowerPoint presentation for a final 30-minute presentation under the guidance of your DNP Committee Chair
3. Disseminate PowerPoint presentation to all committee members for their review at least two weeks prior to the presentation day
4. Present your project on your scheduled date. The Graduate Program Administration Specialist will schedule presentations
5. School of Nursing Guidelines for Authorship Form must be signed by the student and submitted prior to the presentation
6. Make any revisions requested by the committee on the executive summary and/or journal manuscript
7. Submit a final version of your project report to your committee members and the School of Nursing graduate office.
8. Submit your manuscript along with the Manuscript Release Form.
9. Graduate!

Useful Resources

- [DNP Residency Log template](#)
- [Health Policy, Cognate/Independent Residency, and DNP Contract with guidelines](#)
- [Independent Study Contract](#) (If students need elective credits and independent study can be used)
- [Purdue Branded PowerPoint Templates: Black background or Gold Background](#)
- [Office of the Vice Provost for Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Scholars](#)
- [Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Professional Development](#)
- [Office of the Vice Provost for Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Scholars: Student Services](#)
- [Purdue Online Resource Fair](#)
- [Purdue Event Calendar](#)
- [Purdue Writing Lab](#)
- [Statistical Consulting Service](#)
- [Advanced Methods at Purdue](#)