**CHAPTER THIRTEEN**

**Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Requirements**

# Program Overview

The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program, like other graduate programs offered by the College of Nursing, is open to students seeking advanced education in nursing. The DNP program prepares nurses to be leaders in clinical practice and allows graduates to practice at the most advanced level of nursing. The DNP program provides students the opportunity to work in various health care settings under the guidance of experienced faculty mentors and community experts. An integral part of the program is the completion of the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Project, which provides students with the knowledge and skills to utilize research and leadership in practice and to participate in research relevant to their practice. DNP graduates are prepared to translate research and evidence into practice, lead interdisciplinary care teams, measure health-related outcomes, and improve the health of individual patients, groups, populations, and communities.

Prospective students who have earned the Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree select one of three areas of emphasis in the DNP Program: DNP Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP), DNP Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP), or DNP Advanced Population Health (APH). Along with completing required didactic coursework, students will complete a minimum of 1,000 practicum hours. Graduates of the FNP and PMHNP programs are eligible to complete a national certification examination leading to state licensure as Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners.

Prospective students who have earned the Master’s degree in Nursing complete an individualized program of study that includes a minimum of 32 credits and requires the completion of a minimum of 1,000 post-baccalaureate practicum hours.

1. **Admission Criteria**

# Post-Bachelor’s Doctor of Nursing Practice Program (includes all students applying to add a Nurse Practitioner specialty to their current nursing practice)

* A bachelor’s in nursing from an accredited program; program must be offered by an accredited institution.
* Professional practice goals that are congruent with program’s philosophy and focus.
* Score from the [GRE Analytical Writing Measure](http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/prepare/analytical_writing)  taken within the last five years.
* A minimum GPA of 3.0 or higher in both the bachelor’s and, if applicable, the master’s program.
* Completion of a general upper division or graduate level statistics course with a grade of 3.0 or higher.
* One year of full-time nursing practice.
* Current Washington State registered nurse (RN) licensure.

International students are eligible to apply only if they hold a current Washington State Registered Nurse (RN) licensure. International applicants must meet general Graduate School international applicant requirements. Please see <http://gradschool.wsu.edu/FutureStudents/index1.html>.

# Post-Master’s Doctor of Nursing Practice Program

* A bachelor’s degree in nursing or another field from an accredited program and a master’s degree in nursing from an accredited program; programs must be offered by an accredited institution.
* Professional practice goals that are congruent with program’s philosophy and focus.
* Score from the [GRE Analytical Writing Measure](http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/prepare/analytical_writing)  taken within the last five years.
* A minimum GPA of 3.0 or higher in both the bachelor’s and master’s program.
* Completion of a general upper division or graduate level statistics course with a grade of 3.0 or higher.
* One year of full-time nursing practice.
* Current Washington State registered nurse (RN) licensure.

International students are eligible to apply only if they hold a current Washington State Registered Nurse (RN) licensure. International applicants must meet general Graduate School international applicant requirements. Please see <http://gradschool.wsu.edu/FutureStudents/index1.html>.

# Additional Admission Criteria

As part of the admission process, applicants must submit a written goal statement, official transcripts from all previous college-level work, a current Curriculum Vitae or resume, an example of recently published or presented scholarly work, and three letters of reference from current or past supervisors, faculty members, or professional colleagues. Applicants will complete a pre-admission interview that may include responding to written interview questions or completion of a telephone interview.

Applicants are also are required to submit evidence of CPR certification, certain immunizations, and other health-related documents. All graduate students must purchase liability insurance through WSU annually. Students will receive information about these requirements from the College of Nursing Graduate Programs Office.

A clinical background check is also required upon admission. In addition, Washington State Law RCW 43.43 requires that a disclosure statement must be made by applicants to clinical/internship sites concerning certain civil adjudications, conviction records of crimes against persons, and disciplinary board final decisions. Background inquiries may be made to local, state, and/or federal law enforcement agencies. Individuals may not be eligible for licensure in the state of Washington if they have certain criminal convictions or other adjudications on their record. Further, because of requirements for clinical placements and internships, if individuals have certain criminal convictions or other adjudications on their record, they may not be able to complete a degree, regardless of whether they were admitted to the program.

1. **Obtaining a Master of Nursing (MN) Degree While Enrolled in the DNP**

Students may have the option to earn a Master of Nursing (MN) thesis or non-thesis degree while enrolled in the Doctor of Nursing Practice program. To do this, students must maintain their DNP student status while completing all requirements for this MN degree including the completion of a thesis or clinical project. To earn this degree, students must:

1. Work closely with an academic advisor to establish a program of study.
2. Review all requirements for the MN degree.
3. Select a chair and committee for the Master’s thesis or clinical project.
4. Be familiar with all Graduate School requirements regarding completion of the thesis or project.
5. Maintain status as a student in good standing, maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA in all graduate courses.
6. Complete and submit a Plan and Degree Level Change Form, available on the Graduate School website.
7. Complete the program of study for the master’s degree and submit it to the Graduate School.
8. **Maximum Time Limits for Completion of DNP**

Most students enrolled in the DNP degree program require 3-5 years for completion of their program. The maximum time allowed for completion of the DNP degree is ten years from the beginning date of the earliest course applied toward the degree. The Graduate School recognizes that part-time students may require a longer completion period. As appropriate, The College of Nursing may request an extension of this time limit as described in Chapter 6 (General Academic Requirements).

1. **Program of Study**

1. **University Requirements**

The student, with the assistance of his/her advisor, should develop a proposed program of study, and complete, sign and submit the ***DNP Program of Study*** form to the Director of the DNP program. It is the program director’s responsibility to assure that the program of study meets the minimum requirements of the respective program and Graduate School. The program director will sign and submit the ***DNP Program of Study*** form to the Dean of the Graduate School for approval to assure that it meets the minimum requirements of the Graduate School. The ***DNP Program of Study*** form should be submitted no later than the end of the 4th semester of the student’s program.

1. **Course Requirements**

**Program of Study for Post-Baccalaureate’s DNP with Nurse Practitioner (NP) Specialty Track**

**Minimum of 72 total hours of 500-level coursework and 1,000 practicum hours required**

* 39 hours minimum of 500-level NURS courses for core DNP program
* 9 hours minimum of 500-level NURS courses for the DNP Project (NURS 557, 558, 559)
* 24 hours minimum of 500-level NURS courses from one Post-Baccalaureate DNP Specialty Track
  + Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) Courses
  + Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) Courses
  + Advanced Population Health (APH) Courses
* Completion of a *minimum* of 1,000 post-baccalaureate practicum hours

**Program of Study for Post-Master’s DNP General Program**

**Minimum of 32 total hours of 500-level coursework and 1,000 practicum hours required**

* 23 hours minimum of 500-level NURS courses for core DNP program
* 9 hours minimum of 500-level NURS courses for the DNP Project (NURS 557, 558, 559)
* Completion of a *minimum* of 1,000 post-baccalaureate practicum hours

**Program of Study for Post-Master’s DNP Program with Nurse Practitioner (NP) Specialty Track**

**Minimum of 56 total hours of 500-level coursework and 1,000 practicum hours required**

* 23 hours minimum of 500-level NURS courses for core DNP program
* 9 hours minimum of 500-level NURS courses for the DNP Project
* 24 hours minimum of 500-level NURS courses from one Post-Baccalaureate DNP Specialty Track
  + Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) Courses
  + Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) Courses
  + Advanced Population Health (APH) courses
* Completion of a *minimum* of 1,000 post-baccalaureate practicum hours

1. **Practicum Experiences and Requirements**

Practicum experiences are hands-on, immersion experiences that allow DNP students to develop and demonstrate competence in the areas of clinical care and leadership, and practice inquiry. Practicum experiences allow students to apply and integrate theoretical content, research findings, and assessment and intervention strategies into practice. Students typically engage in seminars with other students and faculty as part of practicum experiences.

The purpose of DNP practicum courses is to provide opportunities for students to gain professional experience with the supervision of faculty and the guidance of a preceptor. In most courses, students are expected to be involved in applying practical skills and knowledge gained through coursework in a role or roles appropriate to the program of study to the setting, and to the DNP role.

Practicum experiences are negotiated and arranged by students with support from course faculty and a campus-based Clinical Coordinator. Faculty approval is required before the student can begin working in any practicum site. The College of Nursing Graduate Student Handbook includes details about Clinical Placement Requirements.

**Practicum Requirements for Post-Bachelor’s Studies:** Students must complete a *minimum* of 1,000 hours of practicum experience in their post-bachelor’s studies. Seminar hours are included as practicum hours.

**Practicum Requirements for Post-Master’s Studies:**  Students must complete the *number* of hours required to ensure that the total number of practicum hours they have completed following completion of the Bachelor’s degree is 1,000.

1. **Program Progression**
2. Students must receive a grade of “B” (3.0 on the 4.0 g*rading* scale) or higher to pass each DNP Project course (NURS 557, 558, and 559).
3. Students may repeat any DNP Project course (NURS 557, 558, 559) if they do not receive a passing grade. See the [WSU policy concerning Repeat Courses](http://www.registrar.wsu.edu/registrar/apps/acadregs.aspX).
4. Students may be required to complete additional practicum hours in any course with a practicum component, while enrolled in that course or in a subsequent semester, based on the recommendation of course or practicum faculty, the Graduate Curriculum and Progression Committee, and/or the Director of the Doctor of Nursing Practice Program.
5. Once students begin work on the DNP Project, they must remain continuously enrolled in a Project-related or other practicum course. This can be accomplished by enrolling and earning a passing grade in another DNP Project course or by enrolling in NURS 540 (FNP or PMHNP Program Internship – 1 credit) or NURS 595 (APH Program Internship – 1 credit) for a minimum of one credit (minimum 60 clinical/practicum hours) each semester.
6. Students who do not enroll continuously in clinical/practicum courses for any reason must request a Leave of Absence from the program according to the Graduate School’s Leave of Absence policy (see Chapter 5) and College of Nursing guidelines.
7. **DNP Project**

The DNP Project is an integrative experience that synthesizes practice inquiry, leadership, and inter-professional practice. The focus of the project will be the development of a translational research project that requires the appraisal and translation of evidence to practice. Students will investigate a research question related to an area of nursing practice, the health care delivery system, or a health care policy issue. The project may take a variety of forms, but each project must demonstrate the use of evidence to improve clinical outcomes or to resolve the gap between evidence and improvement of evidence in clinical practice and community policy.

1. **Project Requirements**

Project requirements include development and implementation of the DNP Project, analysis of findings/results, and dissemination of recommendations for best practice. The product produced by students in completing the DNP Project is a scholarly paper. An Executive Summary describing all aspects of the project will be presented to the student’s preceptor. Students will prepare a poster and a written report describing their DNP Project for presentation to a Faculty Advisory Committee which includes invited members of the College of Nursing Graduate Faculty. Students will be encouraged to disseminate findings of their research through presentation at a research conference and/or publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

1. **Required Courses**

The DNP Project is course-based and does not require the formation of a committee. The course faculty for the series of three DNP Project courses serves as the major advisor for development of the scholarly paper and presentation. A community-based leader who serves as a preceptor and mentor for the DNP student may participate in reviewing and evaluating all major assignments produced for the Project courses. The course sequence required to complete the project includes 3 courses:

* NURS 557 – Concepts of DNP Project, 3 credits
* NURS 558 – DNP Project I: Data Collection and Program Design, 3 credits
* NURS 559 – DNP Project II: Implementation, Evaluation and Dissemination, 3 credits

1. **Program Completion**
2. The ***DNP Program Completion Form*** is to be completed and signed by the DNP Program director whose signature verifies that the student has met all of the program requirements, including coursework and practicum hours, and is ready for final degree clearance at the Graduate School. The form should be submitted to the Graduate School immediately after final grades are submitted for NURS 559.
3. Students must complete an **Application for Graduate Degree** following the instructions found here: <http://gradschool.wsu.edu/CurrentStudents/index1.html> no later than the beginning of the semester in which the student enrolls in NURS 559. The graduation fee must be paid ***when*** submitting the Application for Degree online.