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Introduction: This document was developed to serve as a reference for faculty and doctoral students at the University of Connecticut (UConn), School of Nursing (SON). The document presents information for doctoral students enrolled in the DNP Program. We believe you will find the document helpful. Always seek clarification for any questions with your Major Advisor or Director of the DNP Program.

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## General Doctoral Advisement Procedures 2017

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### 1. General Advisement Procedures:

- a. Students are admitted based on the match between their clinical/research interests and that of the faculty. A Major Advisor (MA) is assigned by the DNP Admissions & Progressions Committee based on that match. Changes in MA can be made at the discretion of the student and/or MA but should be made with consideration to the reality that such changes may delay progression.
- b. School of Nursing policy states that e-mail communications between students and faculty should be **addressed within 2 business days** following receipt of message. This is to foster prompt communication between advisors and advisees.
- c. Additional School of Nursing policy states that faculty are expected to provide feedback on chapter/project drafts, IRB applications, etc. to students **within 2 weeks following receipt of submission**.
- d. **Major Advisors with 9-month appointments are expected to adhere to the above timelines during the summer months.** MAs should notify students of vacation plans and develop timelines for communication during the summer months.

### 2. The DNP Advisory Committee: Structure and Function

- a. An advisory committee will collectively mentor doctoral students throughout coursework, project development, implementation and manuscript preparation. The role of the committee is to guide development and critique

the students' work in progress. Committees generally consist of 3 members (1 Major Advisor and 2 Associate Advisors) configured by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> year of full-time study. Committee members are chosen by the student collaboratively with the MA. Configuration of the committee at this point in time in the student's progression in the program is consistent with the graduate school policies. Once the committee is in place it is advisable that the meet at least once each semester; more often as needed to provide guidance for the student. These meetings can be in person, on the web, synchronous or asynchronous; or by phone. How the committee meets is not as important as conducting *regular meetings*. Regular meetings of the student and committee can best help assure progression in the doctoral program. Two reviewers (readers) are added to the review of student works once the student is in the general exam and project implementation phase. Readers are selected collaboratively by the student and the MA, and then submitted to the DNP program director for approval. The committee needs to be assembled early in the student's progress and meet regularly to guide the student's works.

- b. A combination of UConn faculty and non-UConn faculty members may be assembled to form an advisory committee. While it is preferable for the Associate Advisors to hold a terminal degree, it is not required; however, the Associate Advisor who does NOT hold a terminal degree MUST be a recognized expert (e.g. has published or presented on the topic); further, the Associate Advisors do not necessarily have to be nurses. Of the three members of the advisory committee, the Major Advisor and at least 1 Associate Advisor MUST be members of the UConn faculty with a Graduate School appointment; only the MA needs to be from the School of Nursing. Roles for various committee members follow below. Associate Advisors from outside the University must be approved for Graduate faculty status. An up-to-date CV is submitted to the DNP program director and in-turn to the Graduate School for approval. Approval must be in place prior to submission of Program of Study, General Exam, and/or DNP Project.

### **3. Role of Major Advisor (MA)**

- a. The Admissions Committee of the respective doctoral program selects the MA for the student at the time of admission. This determination is made by matching the area of interest indicated on application materials with a faculty member who has expertise in that area. Once admitted, the student must schedule an advising appointment with the MA prior to registering for course work this meeting can be in person or with the use of technology, by Skype, phone or other software.
- b. Sometimes, a change in MA is necessary i.e. a student has a substantive change in direction for their interests. Changes in the MA require a "Change in Major Advisor Form" be completed and submitted to the DNP Program Director and then to the Associate Dean for Research and Scholarship.

- c. Students should meet with the MA at least twice yearly (usually at least once each semester, more as needed to best support student progression) to review the student's course of study.
- d. The MA should file Doctoral Advisement notes in the student record at least twice yearly.
- e. Each year in the spring, the MA works with the student to complete end-of-year outcomes report, which should be completed electronically and submitted to the Associate Dean for Research and Scholarship.
- f. It is recommended that once the student advisement committee is assembled that the committee meet at least once each semester and more often as needed to best assure the student's progression in the committee. Any member of the advisement committee can ask for a meeting however it is often the role of the student and/or the MA to finalize the schedule and make sure a room is available if the meeting is to be face-to-face.

#### **4. Role of Associate Advisors (AA)**

- a. AA's share the responsibility with the MA of assisting with the development of the student's plan of study and doctoral requirements.
  - b. The AA's usually have subject matter or methods expertise that brings a complementary perspective to that of the MA and should be selected on that basis.
  - c. The student selects associate AA's in collaboration with the MA and/or the Program Director.
  - d. As stated above, at least one AA must be from the UConn faculty.
  - e. For DNP students, the Clinical Preceptor **MUST** be an expert in the field with at least a graduate degree and therefore is strongly suggested as one Associate Advisor. (The degree does not need to be in nursing).
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## **DNP Student Curriculum and DNP Project**

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1. [Curriculum](#)
2. [Scholarly Portfolio](#) (DNP Program Completion Documents See Item 2 (below))
3. [General Exam](#). The General Exam should be taken either at the end of the semester in which the student takes NURS5869, or at the beginning of the semester in which the student takes NURS5879. See Item 3 below.
4. DNP Project
5. Timelines for DNP Students
6. [Resources](#)

1. **Curriculum:** See the appropriate DNP Plan of Study (FT or PT). Students should plan to follow either the full or part-time plan of study prescribed. (On rare occasions and in collaboration with the Graduate School and MA, students may be permitted to deviate from the prescribed plan of study). The program of study sequence for required courses is prescribed.
  
2. An official “Plan of Study” must be completed by the student and signed by the student’s three-person advisory committee prior to the completion of 12 credits (for all students part-time or full-time and at least the end of first year of full-time study). Submission at this point in time in the student’s progression in the program is consistent with the graduate school policies. The student is responsible for submitting the required number of signed copies to the Associate Dean for Research and Scholarship. The Plan of Study is then submitted to the Administrative Assistant supporting the doctoral programs.

## 2. Scholarly Portfolio

Students will develop a scholarly portfolio, which will include the following:

- at least one publishable manuscript, approved by the student’s Committee,
- a copy of a poster reflecting the student’s DNP Project,
- proof of at least one peer-reviewed poster/podium presentation submitted to a professional conference external to UConn
- a copy of a report to the practice agency on the student’s DNP Project, if appropriate.

The Scholarly Portfolio contents will be approved by the student’s advisory committee and contents maintained by the University.

3. **The General Exam:** The goal of the General Exam is to evaluate synthesis of core content as noted in the General Exam Criteria. (AACN DNP *Essentials* (2006)).
  - a. Topics for the General Exam will be student-specific and consistent with the student’s specialty area of practice. (I.e. Neonatal APRNs will select a topic under the broad umbrella of neonatology; pediatric APRNs will select a topic pertaining to pediatrics, nurse executives will select a topic pertinent to nursing leadership, etc.). The student will demonstrate mastery of the AACN DNP *Essentials* (2006) in their presentation by addressing the *Essentials* in the presentation.

- b. The General Exam will include a comprehensive PowerPoint presentation by each student per the most current version of the DNP General Exam criteria.
- c. The topic for the General Exam may *not* be the same as the specific topic of the DNP Project, but can be in a related topic. The rationale for this is that the student's terminal degree will be in *practice*, as opposed to a single topic under that umbrella. Additionally, the General Exam presentation criteria were developed from both the AACN DNP *Essentials* (2006) and the UConn School of Nursing terminal program objectives. The idea is that the presentation serves as a competency outcomes measure near program completion.
- d. The major advisor must approve the topic of the general exam, with input from the advisory committee. Evidence of topic approval via e-mail or other means should be placed in the students file and a copy kept by the MA.
- e. The student *independently* prepares the presentation.
- f. The General Exam is held prior to the implementation of the student's DNP Project.

#### 4. The DNP Project

**Overview:** As part of the development of the DNP student's portfolio, the DNP Project is required. The DNP Project is comprised of two major parts required for successful program completion. The first is the actual Project development/implementation/evaluation, which culminates in the production of 1 manuscript ready for submission to a professional journal. The second part of the DNP Project is a verbal/ poster presentation of the completed Project submitted to a professional association conference and to ATHENA, and a report to the practice agency, if deemed appropriate by the student's DNP Project Committee. Copies of the manuscript, poster, and report (if applicable) will be archived in the student's Scholarly Portfolio.

**Overall framework:** As described by American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN, 2006):

"Doctoral education, whether practice or research, is distinguished by the completion of a specific project that demonstrates synthesis of the student's work and lays the groundwork for future scholarship. For practice doctorates, requiring a dissertation or other original research is contrary to the intent of the DNP. The DNP primarily involves mastery of an advanced specialty within nursing practice. Therefore, other methods must be used to distinguish the achievement of that mastery. Unlike a dissertation, the work may take a number of forms."

Following the recommendation of AACN, DNP students will assemble a cumulative practice portfolio that includes the impact or outcomes due to practice changes, and documents the final practice synthesis and scholarship. Therefore, the student may select one of the following as their final Project format, among others:

1. A program development or evaluation
2. A quality improvement project

3. An evaluation of a new practice model
4. Translating evidence into practice
5. A health policy project
6. Development of an evidence based practice guideline
7. Testing or refining an existing evidence based practice guideline
8. Or, another project, approved by the DNP Project Team Chair

## **Description of DNP Project Manuscript and Dissemination of Findings**

Introduction and Review of the Literature: These are finalized, updated, and revised in the manuscript.

Report of Findings & Discussion include:

- Processes followed to implement project
- Discussion of findings and comparison to other scholarly work
- Evaluation of conceptual/theoretical framework
- Illustration of how evaluation will be used for program/protocol/other improvement
- Description of any reports to be produced disseminated
- Recommendations for follow-up

Dissemination of Findings

- One publication-ready manuscript approved by the student's DNP Committee
- 1 presentation accepted for a professional conference
- Participation at ATHENA
- Report to the practice site on the findings of the DNP Project
- Presentation to the faculty

**8. IRB Application Process: Please note: IRB applications should not be submitted until the Proposal has been fully approved by the 3 person committee, with the final input from the reviewers. Students may begin the application process while the reviewers have the proposal but cannot submit until all final changes of the review process are accepted.**

- a. It is the responsibility of the MA to oversee and approve student IRB applications prior to submission.
- b. The IRB application must be approved internally within the School of Nursing before submission to the IRB. Dr. Xiaomei Cong, the School's IRB representative (or her representative), provides the initial review and notifies the Major Advisor when the application is ready for internal approval. (This pre-review step saves time once the application is submitted to the IRB and ensures the quality of all IRB applications being issued from within the SON).

- c. There are 2 *different procedures* to be followed at this point, depending on whether the student will be submitting to the UConn IRB or to an external IRB.
- For students NOT applying to the UConn IRB, all IRB materials should first be approved by the MA and then sent as an e-mail attachment to Dr. Cong requesting her to review.
  - For students applying to the UConn IRB, the review by Dr. Cong should be accomplished through InfoEd as described in “f” below.
- d. All student IRB applications are submitted with the name of the MA as the PI, not the student. (UConn policy). For applications being submitted to non-UConn IRB’s, the MA must designate an affiliation with that organization through the CITI Program online and complete any additional modules specific to that institution. This must be done before the student submits the official IRB application.
- e. The MA must notify the UConn IRB office via e-mail to request that the student be added to their InfoEd Profile. This step must be completed before the student submits the IRB Application.
- f. Submission of IRB applications is done electronically through “INFOED”.  
\*Please note that IRB approval must be obtained prior to final Dissertation Proposal submission to the Graduate School, as indicated on the Graduate School form.
- g. IRB approval must also be secured from the clinical agency where the research will be conducted. The MA supervises this process as well. Most often, IRB approval should be secured first from the clinical agency, followed by the UConn IRB. The MA supervises the student’s interaction with the UConn IRB to facilitate this process.

## **Description of the Manuscript for publications reporting on the DNP Project**

### Introduction and Review of the Literature:

- Issue identified within the conceptual/theoretical framework with rationale for choosing a particular approach
- Clearly state Problem
- Identify Objectives
- Purpose statement
- Literature Review – The review of the literature should be representative, substantive, and reflect the current state of the science. Sources cited should reflect recent publications wherever possible although allowing for inclusion of recognized classic references.

Methodology – Describes the activities to be conducted to achieve the desired objectives may include:

- Congruent flow from problem (s) and objectives

- Clear description of and provide rationale for selected program activities
- Description of sequence of activities with proposed timeline
- Description of resources needed/available to complete the project (i.e. staff, equipment, supplies, funding)
- Description of target participants or setting as appropriate
- Description of how data will be gathered or how/which outcomes will be measured, including test instruments or questionnaires to be utilized
- Description of the process of data analysis
- Information on evaluation
  - Present a plan for formative evaluation and modifying methods over the course of the project
  - Present a plan for summative evaluation to include accomplishment of objectives
  - Clearly describe evaluation criteria and rationale for selection

## Timeline

Coursework related to the development of the DNP Project courses begins during semester 1 for all students. The DNP Project topic is identified, developed, implemented evaluated, and disseminated throughout the program and in conjunction with the DNP Residency/Seminar Courses. During this time, students will work closely with their MA's, preceptors, and other committee members toward the development of the manuscript. Please refer to "General Format for the DNP Project" document for further details.

At the **conclusion of each DNP Residency & Seminar course** the student will have:

1. DNP Residency & Seminar I, NURS5869:
  - ✎ Developed DNP Project Proposal
  - ✎ Completed General exam
  - ✎ Submit IRB application
2. DNP Residency & Seminar II, NURS5879:
  - ✎ Implementation of Project as articulated in the DNP Project Proposal
3. DNP Residency & Seminar III, NURS5889:
  - ✎ Completed implementation of the DNP Project as articulated in the Project Proposal

At the **conclusion of the final semester**, each student will have:

1. Completed Project Evaluation
2. Completed Project Dissemination



3. Completed Portfolio Components (DNP Committee-approved manuscript, Poster, & Report of findings to faculty & practice agency, if applicable)
4. Completed presentation at ATHENA
5. Complete presentation to faculty
6. Obtained signed “Final Examination Form” and returned to program coordinator and filed with the Graduate School.
7. Complete all clinical hours.

## **6. Resources**

[DNP Plan of Study- Full Time](#)

[DNP Plan of Study- Part Time](#)

[American Association of Colleges of Nursing \(AACN\)- DNP Essentials](#)

[Graduate School- Change in Plan of Study Form](#)

[Graduate School Plan of Study Form](#)

[Doctoral Proposal Review Cover Sheet](#)

[Dissertation Proposal and Instructions](#)

[Report on the Final Examination](#)