

University of Arizona

College of Nursing

DNP Project Tool Kit

For Students Starting DNP Projects in Spring 2025

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Overview

The purpose of this document is to define the requirements for the development, implementation, evaluation, and dissemination of the University of Arizona College of Nursing Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Project. All students seeking a DNP degree must successfully develop, implement, and defend a DNP Project, including all project requirements, prior to graduation. In addition to this document, **students should also review and utilize the materials on the [College of Nursing’s DNP Project Resources](#) webpage.**

The DNP Project is typically completed in three or four semesters, according to the student’s specialty [Plan of Study](#). A minimum of 6 total credits of NURS922 courses must earn a passing grade of Satisfactory or higher.

Phases and Typical Timeline

Phase 1: Prior to NURS922 courses		Exploring interests and relevant literature, consulting with faculty advisors, and networking with stakeholders at potential implementation sites
Phase 2: NURS922 Section 201 course, Spring	2 Units	Development of project proposal
Phase 3: NURS922 as an Independent Study, Summer	2 Units	Project proposal defense, IRB review, and implementation
Phase 4: NURS922 as an Independent Study, Fall	2 Units	Data analysis, final project paper write-up and defense, plan for dissemination

Process for Development

The UA CON faculty developed these requirements in alignment with the American Association of Colleges of Nursing *DNP Essentials* (2006), White Paper, *Doctor of Nursing Practice: Current Issues and Clarifying Recommendations* (2015), standards from professional organizations, such as the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF), and current evidence-based practice.

All students are required to complete a DNP project along with all courses listed in the DNP Program of Study for their specialty. The DNP project is an academic project (AACN, 2015). The DNP project and the DNP coursework contribute to the completion of the AACN DNP Essentials (AACN, 2015).

The DNP project is an opportunity to apply skills obtained in the theoretical coursework. The project should make an impact, directly or indirectly, on patient and/or healthcare outcomes (AACN, 2015).

The DNP student works with the implementation site stakeholders and the DNP Project Committee Chair to identify a clinical problem, evaluate the context of the problem, conduct a thorough review of literature, and synthesize evidence to formulate a potential solution or intervention. The intervention is then implemented and evaluated. The project should be sustainable, with the findings disseminated to stakeholders and ideally distributed to other scholars and the public.

According to the AACN (August 2015) [White Paper, Current Issues and Clarification Recommendations](#), at a minimum, all DNP projects should:

- Focus on a change that impacts a healthcare outcome(s) either through direct or indirect care.
- Have a system (micro, meso-, or macro level) or population/aggregate focus.
- Demonstrate implementation in the appropriate arena or area of practice.
- Include a plan for sustainability (e.g. financial, systems or political realities, not only theoretical abstraction).
- Include an evaluation of processes and/or outcomes (formative or summative).
- Be designed so that processes and/or outcomes will be evaluated to guide practice and policy. Clinical significance is as important to guiding practice as statistical significance is to evaluating research.
- Provide a foundation for future practice.

The AACN (2015) determined the project be identified as a **DNP Project** not a capstone project.

DNP Project vs. PhD Dissertation Research

There are essentially two types of doctoral scholarship that nurses may choose as terminal degrees in nursing: a PhD route or a DNP route. Though both types of scholarship may generate new information, DNP scholars do not test hypotheses or theoretical models or generate information that is considered generalizable (AACN, 2015, p. 2).

DNP scholars focus on synthesis, translation, implementation, and evaluation of evidence to solve clinical problems.

Research-focused (PhD) graduates are prepared to generate knowledge through rigorous research and statistical methodologies that may be generalizable.

Practice-focused (DNP) graduates are prepared to demonstrate innovations of practice change, translation of evidence, and the implementation of quality improvement processes in specific practice settings, systems, or with specific populations to improve health outcomes (AACN, 2015, p.2).

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A DNP Project IS :	A DNP Project IS NOT :
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required of all DNP students • An academic project based on a practice issue • Based on theory and literature • Developed to make an impact, directly or indirectly, on patient and/or healthcare outcomes • Limited to a time and/or place • Developed with rigorous methodology • Developed to include a plan for sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generalizable • A randomized control trial • Testing of a hypothesis • Testing of a theoretical model

AACN DNP Essentials

The AACN [*DNP Essentials*](#) “outline the curricular elements and competencies that are required for schools conferring the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree” (p. 8). Students should read this document in full upon admission to the program and refer to the document as they move through the curriculum. The DNP Project itself provides an opportunity to operationalize skill and demonstrate *DNP Essential* competencies; however, not all projects will align with all [*DNP Essentials*](#). Therefore, student learning is supplemented by activities in the core DNP courses to ensure requirements are met.

The [*DNP Essentials*](#) used by the current DNP program curriculum and project are:

1. Scientific Underpinnings
2. Organizational and Systems Leadership for Quality Improvement
3. Clinical Scholarship and Analytical Methods for Evidence-Based Practice
4. Information Systems & Patient Care Technology
5. Health Care Policy for Advocacy in Health Care
6. Interprofessional Collaboration for Improving Patient and Population Health
7. Clinical Prevention and Population Health for Improving the Nation’s Health
8. Advanced Nursing Practice

In addition to the [*DNP Essentials*](#), prior to enrolling in NURS 922, the DNP student must:

- Have the ability to formulate answerable clinical questions
- Complete literature reviews and literature syntheses
- Critically appraise evidence and clinical practice guidelines
- Articulate models for translation of evidence into the clinical setting
- Understand the quality improvement and program evaluation processes
- Be capable of interacting with technology and data
- Describe driving forces in global, national, and local healthcare settings

The student must identify a clinical problem or practice gap that can be addressed as part of their DNP Project. Ultimately, the DNP Student will **develop** a feasible, evidence-based intervention during NURS 922-201, Spring. The DNP Student will **implement** the intervention, **evaluate** the process, and plan for **sustainability** and **dissemination** of findings during NURS 922 Summer and NURS 922 Fall.

The **primary, required steps of the DNP Project** process are to:

1. Identify an appropriate topic, project question, objectives, and general methods for the project in consultation with the implementation site stakeholders and DNP Project Committee Chair.
2. Write the DNP Project proposal paper.
3. Pass the DNP Project proposal defense.
4. Obtain IRB review and approval.
5. Implement and evaluate the DNP project.
6. Write the DNP Project final paper.
7. Pass the DNP Project final defense.

Adherence to Curriculum Plan

Students are required to adhere to the DNP Program of Study (POS) for their specialty. Students are not permitted to take DNP courses early, out of sequence, or without meeting the pre- or co-requisites described in the syllabus of each course. Any concerns with the Program of Study should be addressed with the faculty advisor.

Plan for Success

The DNP Project process is challenging but rewarding. Being successful requires excellent time management and strong organizational skills. Recommended strategies to promote success include:

- Having a dedicated space to work that promotes focus and productivity.
- Scheduling time each week for thinking, reading, and writing.
- Checking in with their DNP Project Committee Chair regularly (at least every three or four weeks) via email and/or meetings.
- Using social support to promote balance between academic and other life obligations.
- Reading examples of other DNP projects from peers, their DNP Project Committee Chair, and/or the [University of Arizona Campus Repository](#).
- Reading the [AACN White Paper](#), [DNP Essentials](#), and *UA CON DNP Tool Kit*.
- Utilizing the current APA publication manual and online resources such as the [Purdue Owl APA Formatting and Style Guide](#).
- Effectively utilizing bibliographic software, such as EndNote (licensed by the University of Arizona and free to enrolled students).
- Meeting with the CON Librarian, [Mary Slebodnik](#).
- Meeting with the with the CON Writing Coach, [Leslie Dupont](#).
- Implementing the [College of Nursing Academic Success Strategies](#).
- Utilizing other [University](#) student resources.

Even prior to starting the NURS 922 courses, students could begin brainstorming regarding the DNP Project. During the core courses in the DNP program, faculty will guide students to develop the foundational skills necessary to develop the sections of the DNP project. Foundational skills include the ability to apply a theoretical framework within the context of the DNP Project, find and synthesize appropriate evidence, use a project model to guide the methodology of the DNP Project, and analyze the data collected to disseminate to the setting.

During this phase, the DNP student will meet their faculty advisor and/or DNP Project Committee Chair once assigned to evaluate identified needs and develop the project topic. Once a potential implementation site has been identified and approved by the DNP Project Committee Chair, site stakeholders should be consulted about the potential project.

The DNP project must be in a setting and/or related to a topic that is within the area of the student's specialty and future professional role after graduating from the DNP program.

DNP students are encouraged to think creatively and to explore topics of interest; however, the DNP student must also secure a site in which to implement their DNP Project. The student is required to secure a written **Site Authorization Letter** (see Appendix A for a template) before defending their DNP project proposal. Students should work with their implementation site/organization to identify a project topic and methodology that both meets the requirements of the DNP project and the needs of the site/organization. The implementation site may be a clinical site where a student is completing a clinical rotation, but it could also be a student's employment site or other local practice or community site where an appropriate project could be completed for the student's specialty and future professional role.

By exploring trends in national healthcare, students may anticipate some organizational needs. For example, if the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is penalizing an organization for patient readmissions, the organization may be interested in a DNP Project to improve this healthcare outcome. Students are encouraged to examine issues related to nursing and/or their future professional role. For example, if a DNP student is training to become a nurse practitioner, they might consider issues related to their specialty population or subpopulation (e.g., family practice, pediatrics, psychiatric mental health, etc.).

In Phase 1 of the DNP Project process, the student should start **networking**. Recommended strategies include talking with faculty mentors and their DNP Committee Chair; engaging in the community and in professional organizations; and talking to colleagues, employers, and local community organizations. In addition, it can be beneficial to discuss with clinical preceptors the challenges they see in their clinical settings. Networking will increase the possibility of developing a project that is rewarding and useful.

The DNP Project Committee

The DNP student must assemble a DNP Project Committee according to the University of Arizona Graduate College and College of Nursing requirements. The DNP Project Chair will be assigned by the Specialty Coordinator or DNP Program Director.

The DNP Committee Chair must be a University of Arizona College of Nursing faculty member with a doctoral degree (e.g., DNP, PhD, EdD, DNS). The DNP Chair may offer the student advice and assistance on selecting other committee members. **Every project is required to have a**

Chair and two additional Committee Members. The second Committee Member is also required to have a terminal degree and must be a University of Arizona College of Nursing faculty member.

The third Member is selected by the DNP student and the DNP Committee Chair. This member may be a University of Arizona College of Nursing faculty member or a member of the healthcare community with expertise in the project focus area and who holds a doctoral degree. If the member is not part of the College of Nursing graduate faculty, the student is required to submit a [“DNP Project Special Member Request”](#) for approval. The request must include this potential Committee Member’s CV and current email address. Students often select physicians, APRNs, known content experts, or other stakeholders at their project sites.

DNP Project Committee Members must agree to be engaged in the process. This includes advising the student, reviewing the project proposal and final paper, providing support to the student during implementation, and attending the student’s proposal and final defenses. All committee members must be present and vote at the DNP Project Proposal defense and DNP Project Final defense.

Responsibilities of the Student as Project Lead:

1. Enroll in NURS 922 courses each semester DNP project work occurs.
2. Maintain IRB Compliance requirements, including CITI training.
3. Update GradPath with DNP Project Committee members for approval through the CON and Graduate College.
4. Upon receiving authorization by the Committee Chair, collaborate with Committee Chair to schedule the DNP Project Defense, IRB submission, and DNP Project Final Defense.
5. Submit work that demonstrates a high level of engagement and scholarship to the NURS 922 D2L course and DNP Project Committee.
6. Coordinate and maintain communication and activity between the UA CON and the implementation site.
7. Ensure compliance to all DNP Project requirements.
8. Maintain an updated DNP Portfolio.
9. Provide appropriate time allocation for the review and scheduling of activities.

Responsibilities of DNP Project Committee Chair:

1. Be a current University of Arizona College of Nursing faculty member with a terminal degree (e.g., DNP, PhD, EdD).
2. Maintain IRB Compliance requirements, including CITI training and an updated CV.
3. Mentor student throughout preparation of the DNP Project proposal, project development, IRB process, implementation, evaluation process, final written DNP Project Paper, and project dissemination.
4. Lead committee review and approval of the DNP Project Proposal and Final Project Defense including paper, poster, and publications.
5. Communicate effectively with the student and committee members.
6. Provide feedback to student on written drafts in a timely manner.
7. Document student progress toward completing steps in the DNP Project Tool Kit and

refer student to other resources as needed.

8. Mentor new faculty who have not participated on a DNP project committee, with a focus on fellow committee members.

Responsibilities of DNP Project Committee Member 2:

1. Be a current University of Arizona College of Nursing faculty member with a terminal degree (e.g., DNP, PhD, EdD).
2. Provide feedback on the DNP Project proposal and DNP Project final paper.
3. Participate in the Committee discussion and attend the project proposal and final project defenses as a voting member.
4. Provide feedback to the student in a timely manner.

Responsibilities of DNP Project Committee Member 3:

1. Hold a terminal degree (e.g., DNP, PhD, EdD MD) in a relevant professional area, with expertise in the DNP Project implementation site and/or topic.
2. Provide feedback on the DNP Project proposal and final paper.
3. Participate in Committee discussions and attend the project proposal and final project defenses as a voting member.
4. Provide feedback to the student in a timely manner.

How to Select DNP Project Committee Members:

A faculty advisor is assigned to each student prior to the first semester of the program by the Specialty Coordinator. This person may or may not be assigned as the DNP Project Committee Chair but can provide general mentorship and guidance related to the project prior to the NURS 922 courses. Students will work with their DNP Project Committee Chair and Specialty Coordinator to determine the second and third members of their committees.

Students are responsible for updating committee members in GradPath by submitting the Doctoral DNP Project Committee Appointment (NURSDNP) form in GradPath by the spring semester of year two (concurrent with the first clinical management course).

If a student would like a Special Member on the committee, they must first get approval from the DNP Project Committee Chair, then submit the "[DNP Project Committee Special Member Request](#)" form; the student must also include that potential Special Member's CV and current email address.

How to Change a DNP Project Committee Member or Chair:

When the student has confirmed the DNP committee members, these members will generally not be changed throughout the DNP Project development. However, occasionally a student may feel that a member needs to be changed, and they should follow the process listed below:

1. Maintain a respectful and professional demeanor.
2. Discuss with the DNP Committee Chair.
3. Identify a willing faculty member to replace the member being removed.
4. Inform the committee of the change.

5. Edit and resubmit the “Doctoral DNP Project Committee Appointment” form in GradPath.

No changes to the project topic or implementation site may be made without the DNP Project Committee Chair’s approval. **Changing the DNP project topic, implementation site, and/or DNP project committee members will likely extend the project completion and graduation dates.**

Individual versus Group Projects

While it is more common for the DNP student to complete an individual project, a group project is an option with early and collaborative planning.

The AACN (2015) *White Paper* states that “group projects are acceptable if they are consistent with the aims of the project” (p. 4). It further states that each student must be evaluated individually on all elements of project development, implementation, evaluation, and dissemination. Each student must have a clear leadership role on at least one set of aims/objectives. There must also be a record of each student’s contribution to the project (AACN, 2015). The University of Arizona College of Nursing endorses these recommendations.

The faculty at the University of Arizona College of Nursing set the following requirements for group projects:

- The maximum allowance per DNP Project is 3 students per group.
- The students and DNP Project Committee Chair must agree to comply with the AACN (2015) recommendations for group work.
- Each student in the group needs to participate in the proposal development, project implementation, and evaluation and analysis of the results.
- For each section of the proposal and final paper, each student needs to participate in finding relevant evidence, drafting some of the content, providing feedback on what the others have drafted, and making necessary edits. The group can implement the same project either at two different sites or together at the same site, but each student needs to lead specific portions of the project.
- All students in the group will present together at the proposal and final defenses, including a description of who was responsible for which parts of the project and paper.
- Each student will submit a copy of the final paper as required to the Graduate College to fulfill degree requirements.
- If at any point any of the students in the group has concerns about the equity of the work being done, the students and project committee chair will schedule a meeting to discuss and address it as promptly as possible.

Approved Types of DNP Projects

At the University of Arizona College of Nursing, all DNP Projects must meet the following minimum expectations, as outlined by the AACN (2015):

1. Change that impacts outcomes
2. System focus
3. Demonstration of implementation
4. Plan for sustainability

5. Evaluation of process
6. Clinical utility or importance
7. A foundation for future scholarship

These requirements are obtainable in several ways. The CON has approved the following types of DNP Projects:

Quality Improvement Projects: Efforts to improve services to impact a health outcome.

According to the IOM, this means of improving safety, effectiveness, and delivering care that is patient-centered, timely, efficient, and equitable.

Program Evaluation: Planning, implementing, and evaluating programs that improve health and impact health outcomes.

Depending on the skillsets of the DNP student, a project may also have strong technology, information-technology, leadership, policy, or education components. When a clinical problem is identified, the student should collaborate with the DNP Chair and stakeholders within the site to determine the best approach. Students are encouraged to review previous DNP Projects, consider current evidence, and collaborate to promote the best methodology for the project.

Almost all DNP Projects involve some element or degree of education; however, DNP Projects are not intended to develop DNP students in the role of nurse educators unless they are already trained and working in that capacity (AACN, 2015). For example, if a post-Master's DNP student is employed by a school of nursing and wants to develop a project on debriefing practices, then that is appropriate. In contrast, for a BSN to DNP student, in training to become a nurse practitioner, it would be inappropriate for them to develop a nursing simulation program for FNs because they do not have the training or expertise to do the project. Students who aspire to be nurse educators will need and should seek additional preparation and training in that role (AACN, 2015).

The student will conduct a needs assessment to prepare for the methodology of the project. The needs assessment does not constitute "data collection" and is therefore appropriate to do before receiving IRB approval. This needs assessment may be in the form of conducted focus groups and/or asking open-ended questions to stakeholders. This data will not be formally coded via qualitative data analysis, but it may be evaluated for commonalities among the information. This is a common way of obtaining information about clinical practice prior to planning and implementing a change. Due to the nature of the analysis, this type of needs assessment is not considered qualitative research.

Theoretical Framework refers to a theory that guides the selection, implementation, and/or evaluation of an intervention or program. The theory is not about the health problem, but rather is identified from existing theories about changing behavior or educating adults or changing attitudes.

The Theoretical Framework helps guide and inform the project. For example, a student using Erickson's *Modeling/Role-Modeling Theory*, which focuses on developing an understanding of the patient's personal barriers to following healthcare orders and where the patient's personal drive comes from and then taking this information and role-modeling a personalized plan for treatment that will address the patient where they are. The DNP student is creating a project,

which aims to increase adherence to medication in patients with hypertension, for example. Using this theory, the student will address the patient’s personal barriers (or a more generalized barrier list from the literature) and develop the DNP Project based on these factors. The theoretical framework should help inform the evaluation; for example, the project question and survey items could align with concepts from the theoretical framework guiding the project.

Examples of Commonly Applicable Theories

Health promotion model (Pender)
Chronic care model (Wagner)
Theory of planned behavior (Ajzen)
Health belief model (US Public Health Service)
Lewin’s change theory
Transtheoretical model (Prochaska & DiClemente)
Social cognitive theory (Bandura)
Diffusion of innovations (Rogers)
Internal Family Systems
Bowen Family Systems Theory
Adult learning theory
Modeling/Role-Modeling (Erikson)

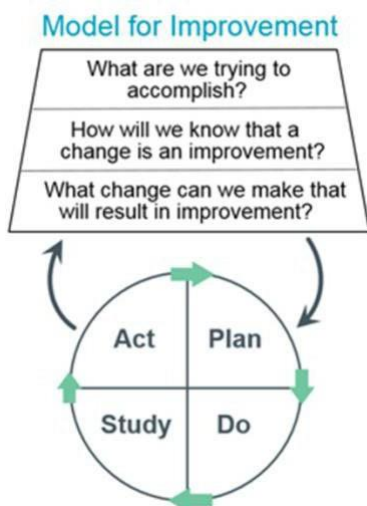
Recommended Models for Methodology Section of DNP Projects

For a quality improvement project, the student will use a model for implementation within the methodology section of the DNP Project Proposal. This model will guide the development of the methodology, or “Do” part, of the DNP Project. There are many models available. The following models are recommended:

Quality Improvement Projects

Quality improvement (QI) is the most common type of project for DNP students. Refer to content from NURS 752 Evaluation Methodologies for Safety and Quality Improvement, which utilizes the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) Model for Improvement (2019).

The Model for Improvement (MFI) has two parts, part one contains three guiding questions:



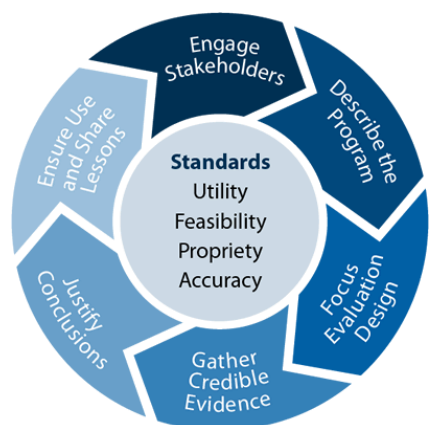
What are we trying to accomplish; What change can we make that will result in improvement; and, How will we know that a change is an improvement?

This is expanded into six steps: Step 1 Introduction, Step 2 Forming the Team, Step 3 Setting Aims, Step 4 Establishing Measures, Step 5 Selecting Changes, Step 6 Testing Changes. Step 1 is an overview rather than an action. Steps 2 and 3 contribute to answering the first question. Steps 3 and 4 are linked to the second question. Step 5 is question 3. Step 6 is synonymous with the second half of the model, Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA).

References:
 Institute for Healthcare Improvement. (2019). Retrieved from: <http://www.ihl.org/resources/Pages/HowtoImprove/default.aspx>
 Langley, G. L., Moen, R., Nolan, K. M., Nolan, T. W., Norman, C. L., & Provost, L. P. (2009). *The Improvement Guide: A Practical Approach to Enhancing Organizational Performance* (2nd edition). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Program Evaluation Projects

Effective program evaluation is a systematic way to improve and account for public health actions by involving procedures that are useful, feasible, ethical, and accurate. The Framework for Evaluation in Public Health guides public health professionals in their use of program evaluation. It is a practical, nonprescriptive tool, designed to summarize and organize essential elements of program evaluation ([CDC, 2019](#)). A DNP student that is developing a Program Evaluation Project can utilize the [CDC Framework for program evaluation in public health](#), which includes the Logic Model and has six steps:



- 1) Engage Stakeholders
- 2) Describe the Program
- 3) Focus Evaluation Design
- 4) Gather Credible Evidence
- 5) Justify Conclusions
- 6) Ensure Use and Share Lessons

The purposes of the [CDC Framework for program evaluation in public health](#) are to:

- summarize the essential elements of program evaluation,
 - provide a framework for conducting effective program evaluations,
 - clarify steps in program evaluation,
 - review standards for effective program evaluation, and
 - address misconceptions regarding the purposes and methods of program evaluation.
- ([CDC, 2019](#))

Developing the DNP Project Proposal

NURS 922 is designed to guide the DNP student in developing the necessary skill set to write a scholarly DNP Project Proposal, prepare an IRB application, collect and analyze data, and present findings through the DNP Project Final paper and Defense, poster, and possibly publications.

To begin this process, the student networks and consults with faculty and stakeholders to ensure the implementation site will approve the project and that the project aligns with that site or organization's values. As the work of proposal writing unfolds, a **Site Confirmation Letter** (Appendix A) is secured and the DNP Committee Members have been updated in GradPath.

The DNP Project Proposal must be formatted according to the DNP project template and current edition of APA style. The Methods section of the Proposal should be written in future tense (as it describes a proposed project that has not been done yet). The student will change future tense to past tense in the final paper (to describe the completed project).

Table of Evidence (Literature Grid) and Literature Synthesis

As a part of the DNP Project Proposal, the student will include a table of evidence that answers the proposed clinical question of the project. This literature grid will focus on the project topic and will not include the literature required for the theoretical framework or implementation models, these will be compiled within the respective proposal sections.

Then, students should create a literature synthesis from the table of evidence. A literature synthesis is not simply listing studies and the findings, which is a literature review. The student will be required to critically review the literature and prepare to synthesize it. The student should organize the literature around the variables, concepts, and factors from different studies to be compiled and be presented in the context of the project.

DNP Project Proposal Appendices

The appendices of the DNP Project proposal will include all required documents from the proposal including site approval letter, project consent or disclosure statements, recruitment materials, evaluation instruments, chart audit forms, project budget, project timeline, table of evidence, and any other items used in the project.

Formal Presentation of the DNP Project Proposal

The DNP Student and DNP Committee Chair will work together to assess the progress of the DNP Project planning. When the written Project Proposal is complete and approved by the DNP Project Committee Chair, the student will do a **formal DNP Project Proposal Defense** with the DNP Project Committee. The presentation should be approximately 20-30 minutes and should summarize the project (addressing each of the main sections of the proposal paper). Students should use the University of Arizona College of Nursing Power Point Template for formatting the presentation slides.

The project proposal must be submitted to the DNP Committee **at least 2 weeks (10 business days) prior to the defense**, unless prior arrangements are made with all committee member's approval, to allow time for the DNP Committee to review and compile their feedback. The proposal should be emailed to committee members with a doodle poll to schedule the defense. The defense can be in person in the CON or via Zoom online meetings. The defense time must be agreed upon by all committee members. When the student has a date that all three members confirm, the student will email the DNP Committee Chair and OSAA. The Chair or OSAA will create the Zoom meeting (online) or room reservation (in-person) and send to all parties.

During the Proposal Defense, the DNP Committee will vote to determine the student's project:

- 1) is approved as written;
- 2) is approved with minor revisions; or
- 3) requires major revisions.

The process for the DNP Proposal Defense is as follows:

- 1) The student gives their presentation.
- 2) The committee asks questions of the student related to the project (e.g., rationale for methodology chosen, more specifics of the relevant literature, thoughts about possible changes to the project components, etc.).
- 3) If the defense is in the CON, ask the student to leave the room for the voting to occur.

If the defense is via Zoom meeting online, the DNP Committee Chair will place the student in the “waiting room.” The discussion and voting may then take place. The committee members can choose to see a revised proposal before formally voting to pass the proposal defense, or to have the DNP project committee chair oversee and approve any requested revisions.

- 4) The student will be informed about the decision made by the committee and required next steps.
- 5) The DNP Committee must also give permission for the student to submit the project to the IRB. (See IRB steps on the next page). This may be done with project approval. If revisions are necessary, IRB application permission will be placed on hold until changes have been approved.
- 6) The Committee Chair will fill out and submit the “[DNP Project Proposal Defense](#)” form with the results of the proposal defense, then email it to the student; the student will then save the form in their DNP Portfolio. A copy will also be emailed to con-osaa@arizona.edu.
- 7) Once OSAA receives the “DNP Project Proposal Defense” form, the Doctoral Advisor will save it in the student’s OSAA file and approve the GradPath “Prospectus/Proposal Confirmation” form in GradPath.

All students **must** submit their DNP Project paper to Melinda Burns at gmfletch@arizona.edu for formatting. When this is returned in the proper formatting, do not change the format and only use this file for further writing and submissions.

Institutional Review Board(s) Requirements

All DNP Projects at the University of Arizona College of Nursing must be submitted to the University of Arizona Institutional Review Board (IRB). All students must obtain IRB approval prior to any project recruitment or implementation activities. See the [College of Nursing’s IRB Process site](#) for up-to-date forms and information direct any questions to Dr. Alice Pasvogel (apasv@arizona.edu). Some implementation sites require additional reviews & approvals and/or IRB determination at their site instead of the University of Arizona. Students should clarify the required process at their site as soon as possible in the DNP project planning process and update their DNP Project Committee Chair and Dr. Pasvogel.

After passing the proposal defense, students will prepare the Determination of Human Subjects form and required attachments and submit to their DNP Project Committee Chair. Once it is reviewed and approved, the student sends the form and required attachments to Dr. Alice Pasvogel for her review and feedback. Once any required revisions or additions are made, Dr. Pasvogel will provide instructions for students to seek University IRB review in the eIRB system. Projects taking place on Tribal land and/or with Indigenous populations may require an additional form.

The student may track the status of the project. The student must remain alert to electronic notifications from the IRB, [Dr. Alice Pasvogel](#), and the DNP committee chair and make modifications as requested. When all modifications are made, the student will be notified that the project is approved. The student will receive this approval via email.

Students may not change any elements of the project after they have received IRB approval. If a change must be made, IRB approval for the change must be obtained. This can be a time-consuming process, so it is highly recommended to make sure students are prepared to implement as written prior to applying for IRB approval.

Remaining NURS 922 Courses

After the first semester of NURS922, students will submit the “Independent Study Course Request” form (provided by OSAA and/or on the CON website) to be enrolled in the independent study version of NUR 922 DNP Project Development with the Chair of their committee until all DNP project activities are completed (including the final defense and paper submission).

Final DNP Project Paper and Presentation

The DNP student will compose the Final DNP Project Paper according to the DNP Project template instructions located in NUR922 D2L course and [CON website](#).

The student will revise the Proposal Paper and change Methods and any other relevant sections to past tense (e.g., Proposal: “I will do...” vs. Final Paper: “I did...and these are the results”). Then the student will present the results, discussion, and implications for clinical practice, healthcare policy, education, and quality. The student will describe plans for sustainability and dissemination beyond the implementation site and academic setting and present plans for future scholarship.

The student must submit a copy of the Final DNP Project Paper to the DNP Project Committee at least **ten (10) business days prior to the DNP project final defense**, unless prior arrangements are made with all committee member’s approval, for review.

The DNP student is required to give a formal presentation of the final DNP Project and its findings/implications prior to graduation. The final date to defend the project and graduate in in any given semester is shared in the “Final Defense Guide” provided to students from OSAA every semester.

The final defense process is very similar to the DNP proposal defense and follows the same structure. The presentation should address all of the main components of the project and final paper, with an emphasis on the results and discussion. For the DNP Project final defense, the presentation is open to the public (with attendance of peers and social support networks encouraged!) and then the committee and student will move into the ‘closed session’ for the remainder of the defense.

Students may present a poster instead of or in addition to a PowerPoint presentation using the University of Arizona College of Nursing Poster Presentation Template with the following content:

- Full Title of Project with student as first author and committee members as co-authors
- Abstract
- Purpose
- Background/Significance
- Methods

- Results
- Discussion/Conclusions
- Utilize a QR scanner with references listed in APA format

It is also important to disseminate the project's findings at the implementation site, ideally through a presentation and/or executive summary. Students are instructed in activities such as preparing a manuscript submission, constructing professional poster presentations, and abstract preparation for professional conferences.

The DNP Project Committee will vote to determine if the student's project is approved as written, approved with minor revisions, or if the project does not pass the final defense (requires major revisions and/or does not meet all DNP project requirements). If the defense is held in person, the student will leave the room for the voting to occur. If the defense is via Zoom meeting online, the DNP Committee Chair will place the student in the "waiting room." The discussion and voting may then take place. The student will then be informed when a decision has been made and next required steps.

The University of Arizona College of Nursing endorses the recommendation of the AACN to establish an electronic repository of DNP Projects. Therefore, students and faculty should be aware that the Final DNP Project Paper will be posted at the University of Arizona Repository and [ProQuest](#).

After the final project defense, students must incorporate any and all requested revisions from the DNP Project committee in the final version of the paper, which has already been formatted by Melinda Burns. Students **must** submit this formatted, final version of the DNP project to the [UofA Graduate College/ ProQuest](#) by the deadline. The date is listed at [UofA Graduate College](#) website. Even if students complete the final defense, they must also submit the final project to the Graduate College/ProQuest by the posted deadline, or the degree will not be conferred.

Appendix A: Site Authorization Letter Template

XYZ CLINIC
3333 Main Street
Anytown, USA 00000

Date

University of Arizona Institutional Review Board
c/o Office of Human Subjects
1618 E Helen St
Tucson, AZ 85721

Please note that Ms. Jane Martin, UA Doctor of Nursing Practice student, has permission of the XYZ Clinic to conduct a quality improvement project at our facility for her project, "Project Title."

Ms. Martin will conduct a survey of health care providers at XYZ Clinic. She will recruit providers through email. The email will provide a description of the project, what they will be asked to do, the time involved, and a link to the online survey. Ms. Martin's activities will be completed by *(date)*.

Ms. Martin has agreed to provide to my office a copy of the University of Arizona Determination before she recruits participants. She will also present aggregate results to the providers at their monthly staff meeting.

If there are any questions, please contact my office.

Signed,

XYZ Clinic President