Purdue University

School of Nursing

Doctor of Nursing Practice

Practice Inquiry Project Guidelines and Checklist
Approved August 17, 2016 by Graduate Faculty Committee

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

The Purpose of the Practice Inquiry Project in the Doctor of Nursing Practice Curriculum
The DNP graduate is expected to evaluate, implement and translate best research evidence into practice. As part of this process, DNP graduates are expected to disseminate and integrate new knowledge, participate as members of inter-professional research teams, and conduct evidence-based research projects that lead to improvement in direct and/or indirect practice.

As an advanced practice nurse with a DNP degree, you will be able to:
1. Evaluate systems responses to health and illness as a basis for the promotion, restoration and maintenance of health and functional abilities and the prevention of illness
2. Integrate advanced knowledge of nursing theories, related sciences and humanities, and methods of inquiry in the care diverse populations
3. Design quality, cost effective nursing interventions based on the knowledge of interrelationships among person, environment, health and nursing
4. Measure outcomes to evaluate nursing and health systems in diverse settings
5. Demonstrate role competence as a Doctor of Nursing Practice in providing care to individuals and families including rural and vulnerable populations
6. Translate research to support evidenced-based practice for diverse populations
7. Initiate changes in the healthcare system through the implementation and evaluation of health policies that strengthen the healthcare delivery system
8. Apply systems concepts to prevent and solve complex healthcare delivery problems

Students are expected to incorporate the AACN DNP Essentials as outlined in the following document: [http://www.aacn.nche.edu/publications/position/DNPEssentials.pdf](http://www.aacn.nche.edu/publications/position/DNPEssentials.pdf).

Each student will have a committee that guides his/her project. The committee will consist of a committee chairperson and two committee members. All members of the committee must have Graduate Appointment Status. One committee member may be external to the School of Nursing (SON), but must be an expert in an area of inquiry relevant to the project. Refer to the University graduate handbook, the SON graduate handbook, and the SON website for qualifications for committee membership. Due to the necessary synthesis that is required, a minimum of two semesters are required for completion of the Practice Inquiry Project. Many students find they need a third semester to complete the project.

DNP Practice Inquiry Project Topic Guidelines
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.

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 degree:

- 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

Think about your an area of interest and work with the DNP Program Director to identify a faculty chair for your committee early in your program. Your chair can assist you in directing your coursework activities and identifying the rest of your committee.

Students conducting projects in their own workplaces must meet the following criteria: (1) project topic must not fall within the job responsibilities of the student, (2) project scope must expand beyond the unit/department on which the student works (i.e., must have a systems focus), and (3) project work must be completed outside of working hours.

Remember that the timely completion of your project is YOUR responsibility. Stay in touch with your committee and be persistent in completing the project.
The 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 existing 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 level of publishable quality. Students are strongly encouraged to submit their manuscripts to peer-reviewed journals. It is not a requirement that the manuscript be accepted for publication. Manuscript submission occurs with help from the committee chair or members, who should be listed as co-authors. Prior to submission of 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 (beginning Spring 2017) approximately three to four weeks prior to the graduate school 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 results of the discussion.

Tips for Writing the Practice Inquiry Project

The following strategies can help you in writing the project:
- Writing should be succinct, direct, and free of jargon.
- Students are encouraged to utilize previous DNP course work to develop the DNP Inquiry Project.
- Always review what you have written, incorporating recommendations from your chair or committee.
- To prevent being overwhelmed by the writing process, it is recommended that you divide your written project into smaller parts and focus on only one part at a time. For example, describing the demographic characteristics of your sample and making a summary table is a task you could complete in a day.
- Some students find the discussion a challenging portion of the project. A strategy help in writing the discussion is to consider what you found, why it is important, what it means in terms of existing research, and what are the implications for clinical practice and other similar implementations. Finally, the limitations of your findings should be addressed. Consultation with your chair is especially helpful during this phase of the project. You may also wish to discuss this section with your peers.
- Your DNP Practice Inquiry Project must be of publishable quality. You are strongly encouraged to work with your chair to identify an appropriate journal early in the process and follow the journal’s author guidelines as you prepare your manuscript.

Campus Resources Relevant to DNP Practice Inquiry Projects

- Human Subjects: Purdue Human Research Protection Program (www.irb.purdue.edu)
- Writing: Purdue Online Writing Lab (owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/)
- Statistical Consulting: Purdue Statistical Consulting Service (www.stat.purdue.edu/scs)
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**

1. Identify DNP Committee Chair no later than the semester before NUR68000/68300 Cognate Residency I, and preferably before NUR62400 Evidence-based Practice.
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.
4. 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**

5. Design your project with the help of your DNP Committee Chair
6. Prepare appropriate documentation (e.g., written description, PowerPoint presentation) for the committee to review and disseminate it at least two weeks prior to the first committee meeting.
7. Hold your first committee meeting to discuss your project design. Remember to have member sign the Graduate Advisory Committee Report Form and turn the completed form into the Graduate Coordinator.
8. Submit IRB paperwork. Be sure a copy of your IRB approval is submitted to the Graduate Coordinator.
9. Collect the data after receiving IRB approval or notification that the project does not involve human subjects.
10. Complete preliminary analyses to determine if data collection is complete. Collect more data if necessary.

**PHASE II**

11. Identify appropriate journal(s) for DNP project manuscript submission and complete Authorship Guidelines form.
12. Develop an overview of the content included in the DNP project executive summary and archival journal article with target dates for completing first drafts.
13. Outline methods of DNP manuscript and write it after the outline is approved. Multiple revisions may be necessary.
14. Outline introduction of DNP manuscript and write it after the outline is approved. Multiple revisions may be necessary.
15. Outline literature review. Multiple revisions may be necessary.
16. After data collection is complete, conduct and finalize analyses.
17. After results finalized, hold second committee meeting to review results and brainstorm points for the discussion section. Remember to have member sign the Graduate Advisory Committee Report Form and turn the completed form into the Graduate Coordinator.

**PHASE III**

18. Outline results section of DNP manuscript and write it after the outline is approved. Multiple revisions may be necessary.
19. Outline discussion of DNP manuscript and write it after the outline is approved. Multiple revisions may be necessary.
20. Outline executive summary and write it after the outline is approved. Multiple revisions may be necessary.
21. Complete/finalize literature review. Multiple revisions may be necessary.
22. After data collection is complete, conduct and finalize analyses.
23. Complete executive summary and manuscript into DNP Practice Inquiry Project Report and submit it to DNP Committee Chair for review and iThenticate check.
24. Revise complete project report based on the feedback from DNP Committee Chair. Multiple revisions may be necessary.
25. Work with your DNP Committee Chair to determine when you are ready to officially declare candidacy for graduation. The Graduate Coordinator must be notified about your candidacy prior to the beginning of the semester in which you anticipate graduating.
26. Submit completed project report to DNP Committee Chair for review. Students are strongly encouraged to meet with committee members at least one-two weeks prior to the date your presentation is scheduled. This timing will give you an opportunity to make any changes necessary to your project report and prepare for your presentation.

**PHASE IV**

27. Submit completed executive summary to the School of Nursing Graduate Office for distribution to all graduate faculty.
28. Schedule your final project presentation time with School of Nursing Graduate Office (see School of Nursing website for presentation dates) and complete the DNP Final Proposal Presentation form.
29. Prepare your PowerPoint presentation slides for your 30 minute final presentation. Your DNP Committee Chair will work with you on the presentation.
30. Disseminate PowerPoint presentation to all committee members for their review at least two weeks prior to the presentation day.
31. Present your project. Be sure to bring the Signature Page for the Final Project and the GS Form 20.
32. Get Signature Page for the Final Project and GS Form 20 forms signed and turn them into the Graduate Coordinator.
33. Make any revisions requested by the committee. Hopefully by this point, they will be minimal.
34. Submit a final version of your project report to committee members and School of Nursing graduate office. They all need a copy for their files. An electronic copy is acceptable.
35. Submit your manuscript.
36. Graduate!