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Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)

DNP PROJECT HANDBOOK:

**REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION,
EVALUATION AND DISSEMINATION OF DNP PROJECTS**

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Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Project

All students in the Helen and Arthur E. Johnson Beth-El College of Nursing & Health Sciences (Johnson Beth-El), Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program must complete a DNP project before they graduate from the program. The DNP Quality Improvement (QI) project reflects the synthesis of knowledge, Reflective Practice, and skills developed during the DNP program, while demonstrating competency in the AACN *Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice*. The project is intended to make an impact, directly or indirectly, on patient and/or healthcare outcomes. The DNP student identifies a clinical problem, evaluates the context of the problem, conducts a thorough review of literature, and translates this evidence to formulate a potential solution or intervention. The intervention is then implemented and evaluated to determine what impact it had on the given clinical problem. The findings are then shared with faculty, stakeholders, other scholars, and the public.

The purpose of this document is to articulate the requirements for the development, evaluation, and dissemination of the DNP QI project.

Adherence to Curriculum Plan

Students are required to adhere to the curriculum plan for their declared option. **Students are not permitted to take DNP courses early, out of sequence or without meeting the pre- or co-requisites as noted in each course syllabus.** Academic advising is available to the student via the DNP Coordinator and the Graduate Program Assistant.

Special thanks to Tracy R. Vitale, DNP, RNC-OB, C-EFM, NE-BC at Rutgers University for sharing and permitting use and incorporation of information from their DNP Project Requirements document.

I. American Association of Colleges of Nursing Recommendations:

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

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

II. Purpose of the DNP QI Project in the DNP curriculum

The primary purpose of the DNP QI project is to focus the student on practice change, in particular, QI in the clinical setting. A goal of the project is to provide the student with beginning expertise in implementing and evaluating practice change in a clinical setting, with a unique population. Students are supported by the Graduate nursing faculty and an institutional mentor, in the setting that the student will be doing their project. These individuals will assist the student to translate research/theory into evidence-based practice change.

The DNP QI project seeks to demonstrate the student's understanding of Essentials/knowledge and the ability to lead and practice at the highest level of professional, clinical practice. This project offers the student an opportunity to demonstrate skills as an innovative leader and self-determining practitioner at a doctoral practice level.

The student is required to integrate the following:

1. Expertise in practice in a specialty area related to the student's interest.
2. Independent practice inquiry (using reflective practice) to identify existing problems/needs in nursing practice and health care systems.
3. The ability to critically evaluate, translate and implement evidence, knowledge, and research to improve quality of care and health outcomes.
4. Organizational and systems leadership skills using reflective practice/informatics/ entrepreneurship to develop, implement and evaluate interventions to improve clinical care and health care outcomes for diverse populations/communities.
5. Using reflective practice within diverse, rural, underserved and/or vulnerable populations to improve quality of care and to affect systems of care.
6. Knowledge of advanced health care policy, ethics, and law to inform human rights, program ethics, risk/benefit, and cost assessment guidelines, and develop a population-based program

based on best available and current evidence.

7. Knowledge of healthcare economics and organizational systems, how healthcare systems are funded, providers secure payment and patients engage in the healthcare system to create new, cost effective models of healthcare.

III. UCCS DNP Program Outcomes

The following are Program Outcomes that all students should be working to achieve in the program...

1. Use translation science, theoretical frameworks, and scientific methods to describe, develop, implement, and evaluate health care practice to create new models of care to improve health care outcomes.
2. Provide leadership to strategically transform the healthcare system; creating ethical, cost-effective, safe, culturally competent, evidence based, patient-centered care.
3. Participate as a practice scholar to analyze, create, implement, and evaluate how adjustments to healthcare systems can foster safe, effective, efficient, equitable, patient-centered outcomes.
4. Demonstrate independent reflective practice skills in complex evidence-based settings using systems thinking and clinical reasoning to provide care to individuals, families, communities, and populations.
5. Collaborate on inter-professional teams to create safe, effective, health care systems that promote health and improve population outcomes.
6. Participate in the critical analysis and translation of knowledge into the practice setting and the construction of policies that decrease health disparities, increase access to care, honor cultural differences, and promote social justice and equality for all people.
7. Critically analyze data, technology, and information systems to determine how best to incorporate this knowledge to improve patient outcomes, healthcare programming and healthcare systems.

IV. DNP v. PhD Scholarship

There are basically two types of doctoral nursing scholarship. Nurses may choose a terminal degree in nursing via a DNP route or a PhD route. DNP scholars focus on practice change (QI), the synthesis, translation, implementation, and evaluation of evidence to solve clinical problems and improve patient outcomes. PhD scholars create new knowledge through rigorous research and statistical methodologies that may be broadly applicable or generalizable.

“The distinction between research-focused and practice-focus scholarship can be clarified to state: ...Research-focused graduates are prepared to generate knowledge through rigorous research and statistical methodologies that may be broadly applicable or generalizable; Practice- focused graduates are prepared to demonstrate innovation 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 or health outcomes (AACN, 2015, p.2).”

Table 1.0: Clarification of DNP versus PhD Scholarship

Concept	DNP (Evaluation Principles)	PhD (Research Principles)
Nature of Knowledge	Problem Solving, Translation	Discovery
Nature of Results	Appraisal, Application & Evaluation of Current Knowledge	New Knowledge
Level of Control	Moderate-Low, Variable	High, Precision
Statistical Power	Optional	Essential
Standards	Repeatability & Impact Accuracy, Utility, Feasibility, Worth	Validity Accuracy, Generalizability
Questions	Quality, Value, Significance	Association, Effects, Comparisons, Predictions
Planning	Evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify a Problem - Engage Stakeholders - Needs Assessment - Appraise evidence for translation - Implement & Evaluate a solution - Justify Conclusions - Disseminate to interested audience and to stakeholders 	Research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scientific Method - State Hypothesis - Collect Data - Analyze Data - Draw Conclusions - Disseminate to interested audience
Description of Program	Objectives: To prepare nurse leaders at the highest level of nursing practice to improve patient outcomes and translate research into practice Competencies: AACN <i>Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advancing Nursing Practice</i> (2006)	Objectives: To prepare nurses at the highest level of nursing science with an ability to conduct research to advance nursing science Competencies: AACN <i>The Research-Focused Doctoral Program in Nursing: Pathways to Excellence</i> (2010)
Students	Commitment to a practice-oriented career Strong interest in improving outcomes of patient care and population health.	Commitment to a research-oriented career. Strong interest in developing new nursing knowledge and formal scientific inquiry.
Program Evaluation	Outcome: Healthcare improvements and contributions via practice, policy change, and practice scholarship Receives accreditation by nursing accreditor. UCCS is accredited by CCNE.	Outcome: Contributes to healthcare improvements via formal science. Receives oversight by advisors and other accreditors.

Table 1.0. Adapted from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2011), *Introduction to Program Evaluation for Public Health Programs*; White, et al., (2016), *Translation of Evidence into Nursing and Healthcare*; and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (2014), *Key Differences Between DNP and PhD/DNS Programs*.

V. Developing Essential DNP Skills

Published in 2021, the AACN *Essentials*, "...provides a framework for preparing individuals as members of the discipline of nursing." (p. 1). Students should read this document in full upon admission to the program and refer to the documents as they move through their curriculum.

The DNP project itself provides an opportunity to operationalize skills and demonstrate *Essential* competencies. However, not all projects will align with all *Essentials*. Therefore, student learning is supplemented by activities in the core DNP courses to ensure requirements are met. In the final DNP project course, the DNP student will be asked to reflect upon how they met the Essentials. Refer to the full description of these items in the document available at: <https://www.aacnursing.org/Portals/42/AcademicNursing/pdf/Essentials-2021.pdf>

The Essentials domains are listed here:

1. Knowledge for Nursing Practice
2. Person-Centered Care
3. Population Health
4. Scholarship for the Nursing Discipline
5. Quality and Safety
6. Interprofessional Partnerships
7. Systems-Based Practice
8. Informatics and Healthcare Technologies
9. Professionalism
10. Personal, Professional, and Leadership Development

Prior to enrolling in project planning courses, the DNP student must have an ability to formulate an answerable clinical question, complete literature reviews, critically appraise evidence/clinical practice guidelines, and articulate models for translation of evidence into the clinical setting. Students must understand the QI process, be capable of interacting with technology and data, and describe driving forces in global, national, and local healthcare settings. **The student is charged with identifying an Aim Statement, or a gap in the practice setting, that can be impacted by the DNP project.** Ultimately, the DNP Student will **develop** a feasible, evidence-based solution, **implement** the solution, **evaluate** the process and outcomes, and **disseminate** the findings.

VI. DNP QI Project Background:

During the DNP Program, the core courses will help inform the student about the role of the DNP. These courses include but are not limited to topics related to leadership, ethics, healthcare systems, the law, policy, population-based care, critical appraisal of the literature, evidence-based practice, and business and finance. The core course work will help provide the foundation upon which the DNP student will build their DNP project, meet the Essentials, and better understand the role of the DNP in our healthcare system.

This section will provide a broad overview of the DNP QI Project. A DNP QI Project Checklist (found in the DNP Resources class in Canvas) has been created to help keep you on track and provide you with a document that outlines the DNP QI Project from the start to finish. Please be sure to refer to it often to help guide you regarding the next steps in the process.

The first part of the process is reading this DNP Project Handbook from start to finish and reviewing the DNP Project Resource Page in Canvas. During the DNP project courses (NURS 8050 – NURS 8054) you will learn about the QI process, define a clinical problem that you want to work on in your clinical setting, and ensure that your idea is something that the clinical site is willing and wants to do. You will be asked to secure a written Letter of Cooperation with the Outside Organization, develop an Aim Statement, and begin your literature review. During the DNP courses you will create a plan for your project, begin to formulate how your DNP project and related experiences will meet the Essentials, and start working on your DNP project proposal under the supervision of the graduate nursing faculty and your project institutional mentor. You will be working with the graduate nursing faculty and your institutional mentor to refine the following sections of your DNP Project Proposal Paper:

a) Purpose of the Project, b) the Design and Methods section, and c) the Evaluation Plan and Data Analysis. You will continue to add articles to your Evidence Table, learn more about the QI process, finish CITI training (if it has not already been done), and develop your leadership voice.

Once you have successfully defended your DNP Project Proposal and had your project reviewed by UCCS IRB and the facility IRB (if needed), you will then move on to the implementation phase of the project. This is where you will be implementing the interventions that you proposed in your DNP Project Proposal and determining if they have made a difference in the problem that you want to solve. Typically, most students will use Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycles during their project and will be using the Squire Guidelines to write up their findings. The student is required to complete a write up of their findings, a Paper, a Poster, and a Power Point presentation to successfully defend their DNP QI Project.

VII. DNP Project Team

The DNP Project Team must be established in NURS 8050

The role of the DNP Project Team (DNP project course faculty and your institutional mentor) is to advise the student in the development, implementation, and dissemination of the DNP project. This is accomplished by progressing through the DNP project courses (NURS 8050 – NURS 8054) and meetings with your institutional mentor and the DNP project course faculty. The DNP Project Team is expected to guide, critique, and help to focus the student throughout the DNP project process. DNP Project Team members are expected to communicate with each other and attend the DNP Project Proposal Defense and DNP Project Defense if possible.

DNP Project Course Faculty and the DNP Project Institutional Mentor:

1. **DNP Project Course Faculty** - During each DNP project course the faculty will be working with each DNP student on their project. The faculty will provide feedback, evaluate and guide each individual student project.
2. **DNP Project Institutional mentor** – Advises the student and is required to be working in the site where the DNP QI Project is being implemented. The institutional mentor should be intimately familiar with the DNP project, the student, and the clinical site. This team member must have clinical expertise in the area chosen for the DNP project, thorough understanding of the quality improvement process, or grasps the nuances of the workings and politics of the facility.

VIII. Responsibilities of DNP Project Team Members:

DNP Student:

1. Work with the Johnson Beth-El Nursing Faculty member teaching the DNP project courses, to identify an appropriate problem and DNP QI Project topic in their particular clinical setting.
2. Initiate contact with a DNP project institutional mentor in their clinical setting who would be willing to mentor them through the DNP project.
3. Read and comply with all relevant policies and procedures as set forth by the College and the UCCS Graduate School, for the DNP program and the DNP project.
4. Complete and submit all required forms in the 8050-54 classes.
5. Maintain consistent and effective communication with their DNP project faculty and their chosen DNP project institutional mentor.
6. Collaborate with their DNP project faculty to schedule meetings for advisement on the DNP project, IRB applications, and other related project activities.
7. Invite the DNP project institutional mentor to the DNP Proposal Defense and Project Defense on the scheduled dates.
8. Coordinate communication between UCCS, the hosting organization and DNP project faculty when appropriate.
9. Complete all required documentation of DNP project hours in Medatrax.

10. Report problems that delay progress in completing the DNP Project Proposal, DNP project, IRB variances, and/or scholarly manuscript to the DNP project faculty.
11. If publishing, discuss authorship with your DNP project faculty.

DNP Project Course Faculty:

1. Mentor the student throughout the DNP project from initial idea to final DNP Project Defense.
2. Collaborate with the student to schedule meetings, when appropriate.
3. Evaluate the student's progress during the DNP QI project, review and approve the DNP Project Proposal, and DNP Project Defense and all the associated deliverables.
4. Communicate effectively with the DNP student and DNP project institutional mentor.
5. Provide timely feedback to the DNP student on all DNP project associated assignments and questions.

DNP Project Institutional Mentor:

1. Typically, this is an expert in the student's clinical setting.
2. Make a professional contribution of knowledge or skill to the DNP project and help to guide the DNP student.
3. Provide feedback to the DNP student in a timely manner.
4. Communicate concerns or issues with the DNP student and their progress to the DNP project faculty.

IX. Types of DNP Projects:

All DNP projects at UCCS must meet the minimum expectations as outlined by AACN (2015), DNP projects should focus on: 1) change that impacts outcomes; 2) systems; 3) demonstrate implementation; 4) a plan for sustainability; 5) evaluation of processes; 6) clinical utility or importance; 7) a foundation for future scholarship.

The following are examples of types of DNP Projects from Moran, et al. (2016).

1. **Quality Improvement Projects:** efforts to improve healthcare delivery services that impact health outcomes. According to the IOM, this means improving safety, effectiveness, and delivery of care that is patient-centered, timely, efficient, and equitable.
2. **Program Development and Evaluation:** planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs that improve health and impact health outcomes.
3. **Healthcare Delivery Innovation:** examining, developing, implementing, and evaluating, new methods of healthcare delivery. May include screening, referral, or disease management.
4. **Healthcare Policy Analysis:** evaluation of policies from a historical context to ensure that they are congruent with the current healthcare needs. May also include the examination of the adherence to policies.

Projects may also have a strong technology, information-technology, or education component. When a clinical problem has been identified, the student should collaborate with the graduate nursing faculty and other stakeholders to determine what is the best approach to address the clinical problem. Students are encouraged to review previous DNP projects, consider current evidence, and collaborate with others to promote scholarship and ultimately a better DNP project.

X. DNP Experience Hours

During the DNP project, students, faculty, and the DNP project institutional mentor will collaborate to develop the DNP project plan. **As activities are planned and implemented, the student can document them as DNP Experience hours, as long as they directly relate to the DNP project.** Time spent on the DNP project is documented in Medatrax, the online tracking tool.

Questions are often raised about the type of experience required. Review this quote from AACN (2015, p.7), "...experience hours should prepare the student to meet the outcomes of all Essentials." The American Association of Colleges of Nursing further states, "Faculty are responsible for assessing the student's learning needs and designing experiences that allow the student to attain, demonstrate, and integrate the Essentials into practice." Students can be placed in non-traditional settings to promote skill development, interprofessional collaboration, and improved understanding of the healthcare system. **There are two DNP courses where you will be required to spend time in healthcare settings learning about leadership (NURS 7200) and healthcare policy, ethics, and the law**

(NURS 7030). These are DNP Experience hours and should be counted toward the total number of hours that are required in the program.

The hours are also counted when the student is working on the DNP project, creating, implementing, evaluating, and disseminating their findings. Students, faculty, and the DNP project institutional mentor should collaborate to develop a plan to meet not only the objectives for the DNP project, but also ensure that the Essentials are being met.

The AACN (2015) asserts that to achieve mastery of the *Essentials*, a nurse must complete a minimum of 1,000 hours (including a mix of clinical and DNP Experience hours) beyond the BSN or baccalaureate degree. These hours must be part of an academic program. Work experience is not accepted as a substitute. **The UCCS DNP Program requires 540 DNP Experience Hours to meet this requirement.** To clarify the meaning of this recommendation, examine the following:

Post MSN Students:

Post MSN students are required to complete a **minimum of 540 DNP experience hours during the DNP program.** This includes 45 hours each in the following two courses: NURS 7200 and NURS 7030 and 450 hours in the DNP project courses (NURS 8050, NURS 8051, NURS 8052, NURS 8053 and NURS 8054).

BSN to DNP Students:

BSN to DNP students are required to complete a **minimum of 1170 total hours (630 clinical hours and 540 DNP experience hours) during the BSN-DNP Program.** This includes a total of 630 clinical practice hours as a NP student and **540 DNP experience hours during the DNP program.** This includes 45 hours each in the following two courses: NURS 7200 and NURS 7030 and 450 hours in the DNP project courses (NURS 8050, NURS 8051, NURS 8052, NURS 8053 and NURS 8054).

DNP Experience hours differ from Clinical practice hours...

1. **DNP Experience hours** typically do not involve direct patient care. These hours may involve time spent with policy experts, healthcare leaders, practice inquiry, literature reviews, DNP project research, data collection, development, implementation, and dissemination.
2. **Clinical Practice hours** are typically completed in an outpatient office setting, with a clinical expert guiding the student and involve direct patient care (Part of NP program).

Every DNP project is unique, and the DNP student's experience will vary. According to the AACN (2015), DNP Experiences are designed to provide:

1. Systematic opportunities for feedback and reflection
2. In-depth work/mentorship with experts (nursing and other professions)
3. Opportunities for engagement in the practice environment (not just inpatient care)
4. Opportunities to build and assemble knowledge/expertise at a high level

5. Opportunities for further application, synthesis, and expansion of learning
6. Experience the context of advanced practice within which the DNP project occurs
7. Opportunities for integration and synthesis of all Essentials

Tracking DNP Experience Hours

Students are required to use Medatrax for documenting DNP Experience hours in the following DNP courses: NURS 7200 – Organizational Systems Leadership, NURS 7030 – Advanced Health Care Policy, Ethics and Law, and NURS 8050 – NURS 8054 - DNP project courses. **Medatrax must be used to track all DNP Experience hours this also includes all hours devoted to the DNP project.**

Medatrax entries for DNP Experience hours should include the following: date of activity, activity description, hours spent on activity, the **DNP project** category should be selected.

The first semester that you will be required to document hours for your clinical hours or DNP experience hours, you will receive an e-mail directly from Medatrax, with information on how to log in. Once you log in you will find tutorials and other resources to help you learn how to document your hours. If you have questions related to Medatrax you can contact Denise Ostovich at mostovic@uccs.edu (719.255.4473).

For those students who are in the BSN-DNP program, you will be using Medatrax for all of your Clinical Practice hours and for all of your DNP Experience hours. This provides one clinical tracking tool that is used to document all of your required hours for the program.

Once all required hours are entered into Medatrax, and before graduation, an audit will be performed to ensure that both the DNP Experience hours and/or Clinical Practice hours are met.

XI. The DNP Project Proposal:

The primary purpose of the DNP project courses (NURS 8050 – NURS 8054) is for the faculty to work directly with the DNP student and support them to meet all of the requirements of the DNP QI project. With assistance from the DNP project course faculty the student will be trained in the process of developing a written DNP Project Proposal (this will take place during NURS 8050 DNP Project I – NURS 8051 DNP Project II). The written proposal will be graded, and the student will present their DNP Project Proposal to the graduate nursing faculty, peers, and DNP project institutional mentor at the DNP Project Proposal Defense. Once the DNP Project Proposal is approved, the student will use parts of the proposal to complete the Institutional Review Board (IRB) application.

The DNP Project Proposal Defense Day will take place on Friday during week 14 of the spring semester.

DNP Project Proposal Paper

One of the products of the DNP Project Proposal is a scholarly paper. The document must be formatted according to the latest edition of the American Psychological Society (APA) Manual (7th edition). The DNP Project Proposal Paper will follow the SQUIRE guidelines up to the Results section.

A copy of the DNP Project Proposal Paper must be submitted in the NURS 8051 Canvas course by Friday, week 12 of the spring semester, two weeks before the DNP Project Proposal Defense Day.

DNP Project Proposal Presentation:

The DNP Project Proposal Presentation is a formal presentation of the DNP Project Proposal. **The DNP Project Proposal Defense Day will take place on Friday during week 14 of the spring semester.**

Students may use the UCCS School of Nursing Power Point Template (**available in Canvas in the DNP Resources**) for formatting the DNP Project Proposal Defense presentation slides. **The presentation should be approximately 30-45 minutes and should summarize the project.**

A copy of the DNP Project Proposal Presentation slide deck must be submitted into the NURS 8051 Canvas course by Friday, week 12 of the spring semester, two weeks before the DNP Project Proposal Defense Day.

Graduate nursing faculty, institutional mentors and interested stakeholders will be invited to attend the student's defense via video teleconference. After the student has completed their presentation, there will be a time for anyone in attendance to ask questions about the student's project. Once all questions have been answered, the DNP project evaluators will determine if the student has met the requirements to pass the oral defense.

The following are possible outcomes of the DNP project proposal defense: 1) the project is approved as written; 2) the project is approved with minor revisions; or 3) the project is rejected. If the project is not approved, the DNP project evaluators must give written feedback on areas of deficiency.

The DNP Project Proposal must be approved by the DNP project faculty, DNP project institutional mentor, and receive a PASS from the three DNP project evaluators before the student is eligible to continue work on their DNP project.

Grading the DNP Project Courses

1. In the event that the student does not make satisfactory progress while taking a DNP project course (NURS 8050 – NURS 8054), the student may earn a failing grade. If a failing grade is earned by the student, then the student must register for the course the next year and cannot progress in the program until they have completed the DNP project course with a passing grade.
2. The student must earn a grade of “B” or better in each DNP project course (NURS 8050 – NURS 8054) in order to successfully complete the DNP program. Likewise, the student must successfully receive a PASS for the DNP Project Proposal Defense and the DNP Project Defense.
3. **At any time during the DNP program, if the student earns two failing grades they will be dismissed from the program.**

Students are expected to speak with their DNP project course faculty regarding extenuating circumstances (i.e., illness, family emergency, etc.) that affect the progression of the DNP Project Proposal and/or DNP project. Each situation will be evaluated on a case by case basis with individual plans of action being developed.

Institutional Review Board - Ethical and Privacy Concerns:

1. Students **must successfully defend their DNP Project Proposal before** beginning an IRB application. The DNP Project Team must approve the DNP Project Proposal before the IRB application can be submitted. **All IRB applications must be submitted by the DNP project faculty who will work with the student through the IRB process.**
2. **The DNP student must discuss the required process of application submission to the UCCS Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB) with their DNP project faculty.** View the UCCS IRB website at: <http://www.uccs.edu/~osp/>. Be sure to also look at the following page on Research Involving Human Subjects, <https://www.uccs.edu/osp/research-compliance/research-involving-human-subject-irb> there are many useful resources for CITI training, FAQs, and other forms. If there are specific questions related to your project that arise, please discuss them with your DNP project faculty.
3. DNP students **must complete CITI training through UCCS** before applying to the UCCS IRB. A Link to this training can be found on the UCCS Office of Sponsored Programs website: <https://www.uccs.edu/osp/research-compliance/research-involving-human-subject-irb>
4. **It is incumbent on the student to notify their clinical site of their project, so the institution can ascertain whether institutional IRB (approval from the clinical site where the DNP project is taking place) approval is necessary. The student will notify their DNP project faculty of the institutional response.** In some cases, the student may need IRB approval from the institution (clinical site) and UCCS. DNP project faculty will help the student determine which IRB application to do first.
5. **Students CANNOT apply to the IRB. All IRB applications must be reviewed and submitted by the DNP project faculty.**

6. The student must **not** begin work on implementing their DNP project (including project components unrelated to human subjects) **until all appropriate IRB approvals have been obtained and the Graduate nursing faculty gives permission to begin.**

XII. Implementation and Evaluation of the DNP Project

In the next phase of the process, the student engages in the implementation and evaluation of their DNP project. Upon IRB approval, and with the permission of the DNP project faculty, the student begins to execute the project implementation and evaluation. This will vary from student to student, but the DNP Project Proposal provides a description and road map of what you plan to do, how you will evaluate your project, the specific practice change activities you will measure, and how you will report what you have learned.

It is imperative that you collaborate with the DNP project faculty and the DNP project institutional mentor to create a reasonable timeline to implement, evaluate, and report what you have learned in a timely fashion. It is a rare project that goes as planned, so plan for some cushion in your due dates and timeline.

XIII. DNP Project Defense

The DNP project courses (NURS 8052 – NURS 8054) provide the student the opportunity to implement, evaluate and disseminate the findings of their proposed DNP project. DNP Project Defense consists of successful completion of the following: a) NURS 8054 DNP Project V, b) the DNP Project Paper, c) the DNP Project Poster, and d) the DNP Project Presentation (the 3 P's).

The DNP Project Defense Day will take place on Friday during week 13 of the spring semester.

DNP Project Paper

One of the products of the DNP Project Proposal is a scholarly paper. The document must be formatted according to the latest edition of the American Psychological Society (APA) Manual (7th edition). The DNP Project Proposal Paper will follow the SQUIRE guidelines up to the Results section.

A copy of the final DNP Project Paper must be submitted to the NURS 8054 course in Canvas by Friday, week 11 of the spring semester, two weeks before the DNP Project Defense Day.

Any revisions to the DNP Project Paper that are proposed after the DNP Project Defense Day, are due no later than Friday of week 15. The DNP Project Paper revisions must be successfully completed prior to graduation.

Students are encouraged to submit their DNP Project Paper for publication. Authorship discussions with your graduate nursing faculty and DNP project institutional mentor should occur early on in the DNP project process.

DNP Project Poster

The DNP student will present a Final DNP Project Poster. The purpose of this activity is to demonstrate the ability to design, develop, and present a scholarly poster. Examples of scholarly posters can be found in Canvas, in the DNP Resource section. The student will ensure the poster meets the following minimum requirements:

- Full Title of Project with the student as first author followed by DNP project faculty and institutional mentor
- Abstract (250 words or less)
- Background
- Methods
- Results
- Discussion
- Short reference list in APA format
- Student contact information

Students are encouraged to submit their poster to an appropriate conference to present and disseminate their findings. **A copy of the poster in PDF format must be included with the final DNP Project Paper and submitted to the DNP faculty evaluators and DNP project institutional mentor by Friday, week 11 of the spring semester, two weeks before the DNP Project Defense Day.**

DNP Project Defense Presentation

The DNP Project Defense is a formal presentation of the DNP project. **The DNP Project Defense Day will take place on Friday during week 13 of the spring semester.** The main objective of this presentation is to discuss the findings and implications of the DNP project.

Students may use the UCCS School of Nursing Power Point Template (**available in Canvas in the DNP Resources**) for formatting the DNP Project Defense presentation slides. **The length of the presentation should be approximately 30-45 minutes.**

Graduate nursing faculty, institutional mentors and interested stakeholders will be invited to attend the student's defense via video teleconference. After the student has completed their presentation, there will be a time for anyone in attendance to ask questions about the student's project. Once all questions have been answered, the DNP project evaluators will determine if the student has met the requirements to pass the oral defense.

The following are possible outcomes of the DNP project proposal defense: 1) the project is approved as written; 2) the project is approved with minor revisions; or 3) the project is rejected. If the project is not approved, the DNP project evaluators must give written feedback on areas of deficiency.

The final defense of the DNP project must be approved by the DNP project evaluators, DNP project faculty, the DNP project institutional mentor, and all required revisions submitted to the DNP project evaluators by end of week 15, before the student is eligible for graduation.

Dissemination (3 P's)

The DNP project findings should be disseminated. This process takes place in the academic setting and beyond. To meet the UCCS DNP project requirements, **all DNP projects** should be disseminated using the 3P's of Dissemination: 1) DNP Project **P**aper; 2) Project **P**oster; and 3) Project **P**resentation (Moran, et al., 2016). The student will work closely with their DNP project faculty and DNP project institutional mentor to determine when they are ready to defend their DNP project. The DNP student may also want to work with the DNP project faculty to arrange the DNP Project Paper into a manuscript that is suitable for publication, after the DNP Project Defense.

Final Grading

Students receive a grade for NURS 8054 at the completion of the DNP Project Defense. The final DNP project grade is determined by:

1. The quality of the work for the DNP project
2. Review of the DNP Project Presentation
3. Review of the final DNP Project Paper and DNP Project Poster

XIV. Final Steps in the DNP Project

1. Make any changes to the DNP Project Paper as recommended by the DNP project faculty. **These must be completed by Friday of week 15.**
2. Ensure that all DNP project related documents are submitted.