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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 DNP 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**

<b>Concept</b>	<b>DNP (Evaluation Principles)</b>	<b>PhD (Research Principles)</b>
<b>Nature of Knowledge</b>	Problem Solving, Translation	Discovery
<b>Nature of Results</b>	Appraisal, Application & Evaluation of Current Knowledge	New Knowledge
<b>Level of Control</b>	Moderate-Low, Variable	High, Precision
<b>Statistical Power</b>	Optional	Essential
<b>Standards</b>	Repeatability & Impact Accuracy, Utility, Feasibility, Worth	Validity Accuracy, Generalizability
<b>Questions</b>	Quality, Value, Significance	Association, Effects, Comparisons, Predictions
<b>Planning</b>	Evaluation: - 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: - Scientific Method - State Hypothesis - Collect Data - Analyze Data - Draw Conclusions - Disseminate to interested audience
<b>Description of Program</b>	Objectives: To prepare nurse leaders at the highest level of nursing practice to improve patient outcomes and translate research into practice Competencies: AACN <i>DNP 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)
<b>Students</b>	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.
<b>Program Evaluation</b>	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 2006, 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 documents as they move through their curriculum. The **DNP Essentials Mapping Activity (Appendix 1)** will be used to assist the student and faculties in ensuring that applicable *DNP Essentials* are met by the end of the DNP program. This form should be filled out throughout the DNP project process.

The DNP project itself provides an opportunity to operationalize skills 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. Upon completion of the DNP project, the DNP student will be asked to submit a completed copy of their **DNP Essentials Mapping Activity (Appendix 1)** and reflect upon how they met the DNP Essentials. Refer to the full description of these items in the document available at: <http://www.aacnnursing.org/Portals/42/Publications/DNPEssentials.pdf>

### A short summary of the *DNP Essentials* is listed here:

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

**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. Preparing to Succeed:

The DNP QI Project is a challenging process to complete. Being successful will require excellent time management and strong organizational skills.

### Checklist for Success:

1. Do you have a dedicated space to work?
2. Have you scheduled regular intervals of time for thinking, reading, and writing?
3. Have you prepared yourself and your family?
4. Did you review examples of other DNP projects?
5. Did you read the AACN *White Paper*, *DNP Essentials*, and *UCCS DNP Project Handbook*?
6. Do you have a way to back-up your documents? Such as Google Docs, Drop box, or other cloud account to store documents?
7. Are you using bibliographic software, such as EndNote?
8. Do you know about the library resources at UCCS, including the dedicated College librarian?
9. Do you have an idea for a DNP QI project? Are you brainstorming your ideas with faculty, your Content Expert, and stakeholders at your clinical site?

### Useful Links:

The following links may be helpful as you get yourself set up for success. Many of these resources can be accessed in the **DNP Resources site in Canvas**.

[American Association of Colleges of Nursing](#) – Resource for DNP white paper, DNP Essentials...

[Doctors of Nursing Practice](#) – Site that is dedicated to DNPs, has an annual conference and repository for DNP projects.

[UCCS Student Resources and Services](#) - Page with multiple links to all kinds of resources for students at UCCS.

[UCCS Graduate Student Resources](#) - Resources for UCCS Graduate Students.

[UCCS Campus Policies](#) - UCCS Policies for Faculty, Staff and Students.

[UCCS Excel Centers](#) - Help with writing, communication, and other fields.

[UCCS Bookstore](#) - Buy or rent your textbooks here.

[UCCS Course Information Center](#) - Semester schedules, final exam schedules, academic calendar and more.

[Office of Veteran and Military Student Affairs](#) - For questions about G.I. Bill and other military tuition benefits

[Student Academic Ethics Code](#) - Including student rights and responsibilities at UCCS.

[Kraemer Family Library](#) - Search for and access many library resources online.

[Office of Financial Aid, Student Employment, and Scholarships](#) - Learn more about financial resources to help pay for your degree.

[DNP Resources in Canvas](#) – An excellent resource for all UCCS DNP students

## VII. 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 DNP 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 (Appendix 2)** 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 (Appendix 3)**, 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 DNP Essentials (**DNP Essentials Mapping– Appendix 1**), 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.

## VIII. 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 at all 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. The DNP project institutional mentor should have a terminal degree in their discipline (i.e., academic or practice doctorate) and will be appointed to the UCCS Graduate School under a Special Appointment status. This committee member must have clinical expertise in the area chosen for the DNP project. **If the institutional mentor does not have an appointment to the UCCS Graduate School, then the student must...**
  - a. Complete the section on the **DNP Project Institutional Mentor Agreement Form (Appendix 4)** where appropriate and request a curricula vitae (CV) for the institutional mentor.
  - b. This form and CV must be sent to the Graduate Nursing Program Assistant (Diane Busch – [dbusch@uccs.edu](mailto:dbusch@uccs.edu)) and the DNP Coordinator. This is required in order to have the individual appointed by special appointment to the UCCS Graduate School.

## IX. 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 to the DNP Program Coordinator and DNP

Program Assistant along with a curricula vitae (CV) and the **DNP Project Institutional Mentor Agreement Form (Appendix 4)** for all DNP project institutional mentors.

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, DNP Project Log, 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.
6. Assist the DNP Coordinator in securing and providing documentation of the DNP student's progress.
7. Mentor new faculty who have not previously participated in DNP project evaluation.

### **DNP Project Institutional Mentor:**

1. Typically, this is an expert in the student's clinical setting who must obtain a UCCS Graduate School appointment.
2. Make a professional contribution of knowledge or skill to the DNP project and help to guide the DNP student.
3. Advise and critique drafts of the DNP Project Proposal and DNP Project Defense.
4. Provide feedback to the DNP student in a timely manner.
5. Communicate concerns or issues with the DNP student and their progress to the DNP project faculty.

## X. 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.

## XI. 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. This process should begin with the student completing the **DNP Essentials Mapping Activity (Appendix 1)**. This exercise will help illustrate the experience that the student has and where there are gaps. Once this has been completed the DNP project faculty, institutional mentor, student can determine what additional experiences will be beneficial in implementing, evaluating, and disseminating the DNP project, to meet the DNP Essentials.

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 DNP Essentials, not only the *Essential VIII Advanced Nursing Practice*." 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 DNP Essentials are being met. The graduate nursing faculty should assist the student in the process of mapping DNP project activities to the DNP Essentials. See the **DNP Essentials Mapping (Appendix 1)** to help facilitate this process.

**The AACN (2015) asserts that to achieve mastery of the *DNP 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 UCSS 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 DNP 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, and how the activity is related to the DNP Essentials. See the **FAQ on Medatrax (Appendix 5)**.

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](mailto: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.

## XII. 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, your peers, and your 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.**

## Some questions to ask while determining and designing your DNP Project...

1. Does my DNP project focus on individuals, communities, populations, systems, etc.?
2. What is the clinical problem and Aim Statement my project will address?
3. Is my project grounded in clinical practice and designed to solve practice problems or to directly inform my practice (*AACN Position Statement on the Practice Doctorate in Nursing*,



2004, p. 5)?

4. Is my clinical site interested in my idea for a DNP project and willing to write a letter of support?
5. How will my project demonstrate achievement of the competencies outlined in the AACN's *The Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice*?
6. Is there existing literature that provides evidence for my project or supports the need for my project?
7. Does my project improve practice or patient outcomes?
8. Is it feasible for me to complete my project in the designated time frame?

## DNP Project Proposal Process

1. To begin the process, the student should obtain the **DNP Project Checklist (Appendix 2)**, this provides step by step instructions for the entire DNP QI Project. Next review the **DNP Project Resource Module in Canvas**. Pay particular attention to the project forms and examples of past proposals and projects. The student will work with the Graduate nursing faculty to identify a DNP project institutional mentor.
2. When starting the DNP Project Proposal process, the student should think about clinical problems that they encounter in their clinical setting to help identify a clinical problem for their DNP project. During this process it is helpful for the student to talk with faculty, institutional mentors, and other stakeholders, as well as the hosting organization to ensure that everyone feels the identified clinical problem is important and worthy of a DNP project.
3. It is also important for the student to do a focused literature review to ensure that there is evidence to support the proposed program, QI intervention, or healthcare delivery intervention. **If the student cannot find evidence to support their proposed program, QI intervention or healthcare delivery intervention, they should consider a different clinical problem for their DNP project.**
4. The next step in the process is for the student to secure a **Letter of Cooperation with Outside Organization (Appendix 3)** between the student and the clinical site authority where the DNP project will be done.
5. The student will work with the graduate nursing faculty in NURS 8050 to clearly outline the DNP project. This will be accomplished by completing the **DNP Project Worksheet**. This is a helpful tool that will help define in detail the elements of the DNP project.
6. The DNP Student will work with graduate nursing faculty in NURS 8051 to assess the progress of the DNP Project Proposal. When the written Project Proposal is complete and the DNP project faculty feel that the student is ready to defend the DNP Project Proposal, the student will give the formal **presentation of the DNP Project Proposal on DNP Project Proposal Day**, to UCCS faculty, institutional mentors, and interested stakeholders.

During the process of developing the proposal, the student will learn about the QI process and receive feedback from graduate nursing faculty and institutional mentors. It is not uncommon for a student's project to evolve over time, as more is learned about the problem being examined.

## DNP Project Proposal Paper

One of the products of the DNP Project Proposal is a scholarly paper. The **DNP Project Paper Title Page (Appendix 6)** is an example of the title page for the DNP Project Proposal Paper. The document must be formatted according to the latest edition of the American Psychological Society (APA) Manual (7<sup>th</sup> edition). A listing of **Required Content for the DNP Project Proposal Paper (Appendix 7)** is also available to assist students with heading labels and the minimum required content. Please work closely with the DNP course faculty and the institutional mentor when writing this paper.

Three DNP project evaluators will be identified for each student **by Week 9 of the spring semester. The DNP project evaluators will consist of two faculty who teach the DNP project courses and a third interested nursing faculty.** The DNP project evaluators will review the DNP Project Proposal Paper and make recommendations to the student on how to improve the proposal and DNP project.

**A copy of the DNP Project Proposal Paper must be submitted to the DNP project evaluators and DNP project institutional mentor 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 should 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 to the DNP project evaluators and DNP project institutional mentor 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, three DNP project evaluators will determine if the student has met the requirements to pass the oral defense. **The same three DNP project evaluators that read the DNP Project Proposal Paper will also evaluate the DNP Project Proposal Presentation.**

The **DNP Project Proposal Defense Evaluation Rubric (Appendix 9)** will be used by the DNP project evaluators to determine if the student has met all of the requirements to successfully pass the DNP Project Proposal Defense. The following are possible outcomes: 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. Written feedback will be sent to the student in the form of **DNP Project Proposal Defense Evaluation Rubric (Appendix 9) no later than 3 business days after the proposal defense.**

**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.**

## **Final Steps Post DNP Project Proposal Defense**

After the student has completed the DNP Project Proposal Presentation, there are a few **Final Steps** required to finish the DNP Project Proposal and move on to the implementation and evaluation stage of the DNP project:

1. Make any changes to the Final DNP Project Proposal Paper as recommended by the DNP Project Team (pre-IRB submission).
2. Ensure that all DNP project related documents are sent to the DNP Coordinator, these documents include:
  - a. Final DNP Project Proposal Paper (Word or PDF)
  - b. Final DNP Project Proposal Presentation slides (6 slides per page) PDF
  - c. **DNP Project Proposal Defense Evaluation Rubric (Appendix 9)** with signatures from the student and members of the Graduate nursing faculty and Institutional mentor (Fillable PDF)
  - d. **Permission to Retain DNP Project Products (Appendix 12)**

## **XIII. 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.

## **XIV. 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 same DNP project evaluators that reviewed the student's DNP Project Proposal will also review all of the elements of the DNP Project Defense.**

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

## DNP Project Paper

One of the final products of the DNP project is a scholarly paper. The **DNP Project Paper Title Page (Appendix 6)** is an example of the title page for the DNP Project Paper. The document must be formatted according to the latest edition of the American Psychological Society (APA) Manual (7<sup>th</sup> edition). **The paper will be written using the Squire Guidelines (Appendix 10).** This should provide you with the needed headings and content that is required for the DNP Project Paper. Please work closely with the DNP course faculty and the institutional mentor when writing this paper. **A copy of the final DNP Project Paper must be submitted to the DNP project evaluators and DNP project institutional mentor 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 to the DNP project evaluators 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. **In the event that a student decides that they do not want to publish their manuscript, the rights to this manuscript will transfer to the graduate nursing faculty six months after a successful DNP Project Defense. This means that the graduate nursing faculty could publish the work as first author and the student would be recognized as the second author.**

## 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 should 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 same three DNP project evaluators will determine if the student has met the requirements to pass the oral defense.

The **DNP Project Defense Evaluation Rubric (Appendix 11)** will be used to determine if the student has met all of the requirements to successfully pass the DNP Project Defense. The following are possible outcomes: 1) Meets all DNP project requirements, 2) Meets requirements with minor revisions, or 3) Does NOT meet project requirements. The student must meet all the requirements of the **DNP Project Defense Evaluation Rubric (Appendix 11)** and completed a project reflective of a doctoral-level clinically focused project. Written feedback will be sent to the student in the form of **DNP Project Defense Evaluation Rubric (Appendix 11) no later than 3 business days after the DNP Project Defense Day.**

**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 as determined by the DNP project faculty with input from the DNP project institutional mentor
2. Review of the DNP Project Presentation
3. Review of the final DNP Project Paper and DNP Project Poster

## XV. 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 sent to the DNP Coordinator these documents include the following: (Fillable forms can be found in Canvas – DNP Resources)
  - DNP Project Paper (Word or PDF)
  - DNP Project Poster (PDF)
  - DNP Project Presentation Slides (6 slides per page) PDF
  - DNP Project Rubric (Appendix 11) with signatures from the student and DNP project evaluators (Fillable PDF)
  - DNP Essentials Mapping Activity (Appendix 1) Fillable PDF
  - Permission to Retain DNP Project Projects (Appendix 12)

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: DNP Essentials Mapping

Student:

Anticipated Date of Graduation:

Specialty:

Graduate nursing faculty:

<b>DNP Essential</b>	<b>Evidence/Assignment Indicating Essential is MET</b>	<b>Planned DNP Experience</b>
I. Scientific Underpinnings for Practice		
II. Organizational and Systems Leadership for Quality Improvement and Systems Thinking		
III. Clinical Scholarship and Analytical Methods for Evidence-Based Practice		
IV. Information Systems/Technology and Patient Care Technology for the Improvement and Transformation of Health Care		



V. Health Care Policy for Advocacy in Health Care		
VI. Interprofessional Collaboration for Improving Patient and Population Health Outcomes		
VII. Clinical Prevention and Population Health for Improving the Nation's Health		
VIII. Advanced Nursing Practice		

Additional Student Comments:

Student Signature:

Date:

Faculty Review:

Date:

## Appendix 2: DNP Project Checklist

- ❑ **Read and review the DNP Project Handbook, most everything you need to know about the DNP project is in the handbook.**
- ❑ Go to the DNP Project Resource page in Canvas and review. Pay particular attention to the **project forms and examples of past proposals and projects.**
- ❑ Think about what you would like to do for your DNP project. Talk with the DNP project course faculty, stakeholders at your clinical site, and think about who you might consider to be your institutional mentor for your DNP project.
- ❑ Identify the DNP project institutional mentor who will be on your DNP Project Team. Once they have agreed to work with you, fill out as much as you can of the **DNP Project Institutional Mentor Form (Appendix 4 - PDF)**, electronically sign the form, and send it to your DNP project institutional mentor for review and signature. Ask the DNP project institutional mentor to then send the form back to you along with their CV. Please then send the form to the DNP Coordinator, who is the final person to sign the form. Please send the CV and the DNP Project Institutional Mentor Form to Diane Busch, Graduate Nursing Administrator, to work to get the institutional mentor a special appointment to the UCCS Graduate School.
- ❑ Use the **DNP Mapping Activity (Appendix 1 - PDF)** in collaboration with your DNP project course faculty to explore the experience that the student currently has and where experience gaps lie. This tool can be then used to plan activities for the student that will be helpful in the DNP project process and to meet the DNP Essentials
- ❑ The first semester that you will be required to document 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 DNP experience hours. If you have questions related to Medatrax you can contact Denise Ostovich at [mostovic@uccs.edu](mailto:mostovic@uccs.edu) (719.255.4473).
- ❑ See the **FAQ on Medatrax (Appendix 5 - PDF)**. You will be logging DNP experience hours for the following DNP courses: NURS 7200, NURS 7030, NURS 8050 – NURS 8054 (DNP project related hours).
- ❑ Work with the DNP project course faculty and DNP project institutional mentor to help identify a clinical problem (phenomena of interest) that you would like to address and **create a concise clinical Aim Statement**. This Aim Statement is what your DNP project will be based on.
- ❑ Obtain a Letter of Cooperation from the Organization where you will be doing your DNP project. See the **Letter of Cooperation with Outside Organization (Appendix 3 - Word)** for a sample letter that can be used as a template. Once the letter is attained send a copy to the DNP project faculty.
- ❑ Work with your DNP project faculty and the DNP project institutional mentor, to complete the DNP Project Worksheet for your clinical change project. This is designed to serve as a guide for the DNP project.

- Work on your DNP Project Proposal with guidance from your DNP Project Team. **When the DNP project course faculty feel that the proposal is ready to defend, your paper and presentation slides will be shared with the DNP project evaluators, and DNP project institutional mentor for review. This must happen by Friday, Week 12 of the spring semester. You will then be placed on the schedule for the DNP Project Proposal Defense Day.**
- **The DNP Project Proposal Defense Day will be held via tele-conference on Friday, week 14 of the spring semester.** DNP project faculty, your DNP project institutional mentor, and interested students and stakeholders will be invited to attend via tele-conference.
- The DNP Project Proposal Defense consists of the following elements, the **DNP Project Proposal Paper**, and the **DNP Project Proposal Presentation**.
- The DNP project evaluators will complete the **DNP Project Proposal Defense Evaluation Rubric (Appendix 9)** and provide you with feedback on changes that you may need to make. Work with the DNP project evaluators to set dates to complete these changes to your DNP project. Once all revisions are made and approved by the DNP project evaluators and the DNP project institutional mentor, the form will be sent for signatures to the DNP project evaluators, the student, and DNP Coordinator. **You cannot move forward** until the recommended changes are made.
- **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.**
- The student is responsible to **ensure that the following documents are sent to the DNP Coordinator:** 1) DNP Project Proposal Paper, 2) DNP Project Proposal Presentation Slides (6 pages per page) and 3) DNP Project Proposal Defense Evaluation Rubric (with all the needed signatures).
- Upon successful defense of your proposal, you will work with the DNP course faculty on the UCCS IRB application. The UCCS IRB website is: <http://www.uccs.edu/~osp/>. You cannot submit the application to the IRB by yourself and must work closely with the DNP course faculty to complete the application.
- **You may not start on any elements of your DNP project until the IRB application has been approved.** If you are also working with an outside organization, you may need to get approval from that organization. Typically, it is best to obtain approval from the external organization, before applying to the UCCS IRB. Be sure to discuss this with your DNP course faculty.
- Once the UCCS IRB application has been approved, you may start to collect data, do interviews, and begin your intervention... as outlined in the IRB application and DNP Project Proposal. This must be followed exactly; any variances to the IRB protocol must be communicated with your DNP course faculty and the IRB.
- Work on your DNP project with guidance from your DNP Project Team. **When the DNP**

**course faculty feels that the DNP project is ready to defend, your paper, poster, and presentation slides will be sent to the DNP project evaluators and institutional mentor for review no later than Friday, week 11 of the spring semester. You will then be placed on the schedule for the DNP Project Defense Day.**

- ❑ **The DNP Project Defense Day will take place Friday, week 13 of the spring semester.** DNP project faculty, your DNP project institutional mentor, and interested students and stakeholders will be invited to attend via tele-conference.
- ❑ The DNP Project Defense consists of successful completion of the following elements: a) DNP Project Paper, b) DNP Project Poster and c) DNP Project Presentation.
- ❑ Refer to the **DNP Project Paper Title Page (Appendix 6)** for the specific requirements on the title page for the Final Paper. You will also want to use the **Squire Guidelines (Appendix 10)** to write the paper.
- ❑ Refer to the **DNP Project Poster** section on p. 21 in the DNP Project Handbook to ensure that you are including each element for the poster.
- ❑ The DNP project evaluators will complete the **DNP Project Defense Evaluation Rubric (Appendix 11)** and provide you with feedback on changes that you may need to make. Work with the DNP project evaluators to set dates to complete these changes to your DNP project. **All revisions must be completed by Friday, week 15 of the spring semester in order for the student to graduate that semester.** Once all revisions are made and approved by the DNP project evaluators and the DNP project institutional mentor, the form will be sent for signatures to the DNP project evaluators, the student, and DNP Coordinator.
- ❑ The student is responsible to ensure that the DNP Coordinator receives the following documents: 1) DNP Project Paper, 2) DNP Project Poster, 3) DNP Project Presentation Slides (6 slides per page), **DNP Project Defense Rubric (Appendix 11)** signed by DNP project evaluators and the student.
- ❑ Complete the **Permission to retain DNP Project Products (Appendix 12)** and send this form to the DNP Coordinator if you are willing to share your work. This form gives the College permission to use your project as an example for accreditation purposes and/or to use your project as an example for other students.
- ❑ **Only when you have completed all the requirements and turned in all of the documentation to the DNP Coordinator will you be considered a candidate for graduation.**

## Appendix 3: Letter of Cooperation with Outside Organization



Helen and Arthur E. Johnson  
Beth-El College of  
Nursing and Health Sciences  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO COLORADO SPRINGS

Date: [MM/DD/YYYY]

**Re: Letter of Cooperation between the Helen and Arthur E. Johnson Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs and [List of Site Name(s)]**

Dear [Name of DNP Student],

This letter confirms that that I, as an authorized representative of [Organization Name], allow the above named Doctor of Nursing Practice student access to conduct quality improvement (QI) related activities at the listed site(s), as discussed with the DNP student and briefly outlined below, and which may commence when the DNP student provides evidence of IRB approval from UCCS for the proposed project.

- **QI Site(s):** [List the specific site name(s) and address(es) for all sites which the organization is providing access for DNP student to conduct their QI Project.]
- **Project Purpose:** [Briefly summarize the project's purpose and expected outcome(s).]
- **Project Activities:** [Briefly detail project activities that will commence at the site, baseline data collection, educational interventions, PDSA cycles proposed...]
- **Describe Target Population:** [Identify the population that the QI project is focusing on.]
- **Site(s) Support:** [Detail what support the project site(s) agree to provide to further the project, such as provide space to conduct project activities, retrieval of data from the EMR, facilitate educational sessions for the target population...]
- **Data Management:** [Briefly detail the data management plan—what data will be collected, whether data will be identifiable or de-identified, and what protections will be in place to protect the data, e.g. password protected, encryption, etc.]
- **Other:** [Outline any other agreements you and the organization have made to further the QI project, if applicable.]
- **Anticipated End Date:** [State the anticipated date you will conclude the QI project at the site.]

We understand that this site's participation will only take place during the active IRB approval period. All DNP Project related activities must cease if IRB approval expires or is suspended. I understand that any activities involving Personal Private Information or Protected Health Information require compliance with HIPAA Laws and UCCS Policy.

Our organization agrees to the terms and conditions stated above. If we have any concerns related to this project, we will contact the DNP student and their DNP project course faculty. For concerns regarding IRB policy or human subject welfare, we may also contact the UCCS IRB (see <https://www.uccs.edu/osp/>).

Regards,

[Signature of QI Site Authorized Representative]

[Date Letter Signed]

[Job Title of Research Site Authorized Representative]

# Appendix 4: DNP Project Institutional Mentor Agreement Form

## DNP STUDENT INFORMATION

Student Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

## DNP Institutional Mentor Information\*

Requested Member:

Academic Credentials/Degrees:

Agency:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

\*If the DNP project institutional mentor is **NOT** a graduate faculty member at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs, then they will need to be approved for a special appointment to the graduate faculty. **Please send this completed form along with an up-to-date curriculum vita (CV) from the prospective institutional mentor to Diane Busch at [dbusch@uccs.edu](mailto:dbusch@uccs.edu) so that she can initiate the UCCS Graduate School appointment.** In the event that the prospective DNP project institutional mentor is a graduate faculty member at UCCS, then please fill out this form and send it to the faculty member to sign.

Special Appointment to the Graduate Faculty at UCCS:  YES  NO

Date of Appointment:

## DNP PROJECT INSTITUTIONAL MENTOR RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program **requires completion of a minimum of 11 credit hours** (495 DNP Experience hours spent directly working on the DNP Project) in NURS 8050 – NURS 8054. The culmination of this course is a completed DNP project, a scholarly paper, academic poster, and presentation. The identified DNP project institutional mentor serves as an advisor and supports the student as they work to complete the DNP project.

**The DNP Project institutional mentor:**

- Assists the DNP student in selecting realistic and specific goals that support the framework and objectives of the Johnson Beth-El College DNP program.
- Guides the DNP student in development and acquisition of key leadership skills required in the applicable DNP courses.
- In collaboration with the graduate nursing faculty, meets with the DNP student on a regular basis and provides feedback accordingly.
- Facilitates completion of the course requirements and communicates as needed with the DNP project course faculty.
- Provides Johnson Beth-El with a current curriculum-vitae (CV) and facilitates institutional processing of any required clinical contract or memorandum of understanding.
- Encouraged to attend via teleconference, the student DNP Project Proposal and DNP Project Defense.

**I agree to serve as a DNP project institutional mentor to the DNP student named in this agreement.**

Signature of institutional mentor:

Date:

Signature of DNP student:

Date:

DNP Program Coordinator Approval:     Yes     No

Comments:

Signature of DNP Program Coordinator:

Date:

## Appendix 5: Medatrax FAQs

1. **Who do I contact for Medatrax questions?** Denise Ostovich [mostovic@uccs.edu](mailto:mostovic@uccs.edu) 719-255-4473
2. **When do I use Medatrax?** To track all of your DNP Project Hours for NURS 8050 – NURS 8054, in NURS 7200 Organizational System Leadership, and NURS 7030 Advanced Health Care Policy, Ethics and the Law.
3. **What do I log in Medatrax?** All of your DNP Project Hours and DNP Experience hours, 45 hours for NURS 7200 and NURS 7030. You will want to include the date, amount of time in the activity, what the activity is, and the type of hours.
4. **How does the invite email from Medatrax work?** Medatrax will send an email with Medatrax in the subject line.
5. **Why do I need to log my hours in Medatrax for the DNP Program?** Each student and program are required to document hours spent working on the DNP Project to assure that you have met the minimum requirements as set by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing.
6. **What if I do not log hours in Medatrax?** You will not be able to graduate until all of your hours are logged and meet the minimum requirements for the DNP Program.
7. **What is the web address for Medatrax?** <https://np.medatrax.com/>
8. **Is there a fee associated with the use of Medatrax?** Yes, there is monthly fee of less than \$10, this is currently \$7.50.



## Appendix 6: DNP Project Paper Title Page

Students should refer to the most recent APA guidelines (7<sup>th</sup> ed.) for spacing, font, font size, margins, page numbers.... Be sure to review the *Author Responsibilities* section of the APA manual for more detail. See example below.

1

*Title of the Paper*

*Author (First name Middle initial. Last Name)*

Helen and Arthur E. Johnson Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences  
University of Colorado Colorado Springs

NURS 8054 DNP Project V

*Instructor Name*

*Assignment Due Date*

## **Appendix 7: Required Content for the DNP Project Proposal Paper**

The following elements and headings are required but additional items may be added if needed. Use the APA format for heading levels as appropriate.

1. Cover Page (See Appendix 6)
2. Abstract (250 words or less)
3. Introduction
4. Background and Significance of Problem
5. Aim Statement
6. Purpose of the Project
7. Clinical Site Needs Assessment
8. Review of Literature for Proposed Interventions
9. Theoretical Framework
10. Methodology
  - a. Setting / Organizational Structure
  - b. Project Population
  - c. Project Procedures
  - d. Project Interventions
  - e. Project Outcomes
    - Process Measures
    - Balancing Measures
    - Outcome Measures
  - f. Ethical Considerations (IRB)
  - g. Project Resources / Cost
  - h. Project Timeline
11. Data Collection Process
12. Evaluation Plan / Data Analysis
13. Clinical Insights
14. References
15. Appendices
  - a. Evidence Table
  - b. Documents (Used to implement the Project)

## Appendix 8: Table of Evidence Requirements

The following rubric is used during the DNP Project I (NURS 8050) to evaluate the Table of Evidence. It is adapted from Dang & Dearhot (2012), Appendix E, Appendix F, and Appendix G.

### Evidence Table for DNP Project

Article #	Author and date	Study Design	Sample Size	Level of Evidence	Study outcomes that help to answer the clinical problem?	Limitations	Implications for DNP Project?

## Appendix 9: DNP Project Proposal Defense Evaluation Rubric

The DNP Project Proposal must be reviewed and approved by the DNP project evaluators and DNP project institutional mentor before the student may proceed with the DNP project.

**DNP Project Title:**

**Student:**

	<b>Criteria Met/Unmet with Comments</b>
<p><b>DNP Project Cover Page / Abstract</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Meets Requirements (Appendix 6) DNP Project Handbook</li> <li>b. Abstract 250 words or less (Provides overview of project)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Background of the Problem</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Introduction provides justification for choosing topic</li> <li>b. Background and significance of problem described.</li> <li>c. Aim Statement clearly defined</li> <li>d. How the DNP Project will attempt to solve the Aim Statement is outlined</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Review &amp; Synthesis of Literature</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Description of literature search strategy and databases used.</li> <li>b. Thorough review and critical analysis of the literature related to the clinical problem.</li> <li>c. Synthesis of the evidence to support the clinical problem and project.</li> <li>d. Evidence Table included in Appendix</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Theoretical Framework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Description of model or framework used to guide the project</li> <li>b. Justification and relevance of the framework to the clinical problem explained</li> <li>c. Concept Map included in Appendix (if appropriate)</li> </ul>	

<p><b>Purpose of the Project</b></p> <p>a. Addresses the clinical problem</p> <p>b. Clearly described and supported by the evidence presented</p>	
<p><b>Design and Methodology</b></p> <p>a. Setting / Organizational Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readiness for change?</li> </ul> <p>b. Project Population</p> <p>c. Project Procedures</p> <p>d. Project Interventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thorough description of implementation process and proposed interventions</li> </ul> <p>e. Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcome process and balancing measures are clearly defined</li> </ul> <p>f. Ethical Considerations (IRB)</p> <p>g. Project Resources / Cost</p> <p>h. Timeline for project</p>	
<p><b>Evaluation Plan</b></p> <p>a. Measures to evaluate success of Project described</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcome measures</li> <li>• Process measures</li> <li>• Structure measures</li> <li>• Balancing measures</li> </ul> <p>b. Procedures for data collection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psychometric properties of any instruments used (reliability and validity)</li> <li>• Ensuring data security</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Summary / APA – References, Formatting, Appendices</b></p>	

## DNP PROJECT EVALUATORS

### Evaluation of DNP Project Proposal:

- Approved as Presented
- Approved with Recommendations
- Not Approved

### Comments:

**All proposed recommendations were met by the student and they have been approved to proceed with their DNP Project.**

DNP Project Evaluator Signature:

Date:

DNP Project Evaluator Signature:

Date:

DNP Project Evaluator Signature:

Date:

Student Signature:

Date:

DNP Program Coordinator:

Date:

## Appendix 10: SQUIRE Guidelines

Revised **Standards for Quality Improvement Reporting Excellence (SQUIRE 2.0)** publication guidelines

### Notes to authors:

- The SQUIRE guidelines provide a framework for reporting new knowledge about how to improve healthcare.
- The SQUIRE guidelines are intended for reports that describe system level work to improve the quality, safety, and value of healthcare, and used methods to establish that observed outcomes were due to the intervention(s).
- A range of approaches exists for improving healthcare. SQUIRE may be adapted for reporting any of these.
- Authors should consider every SQUIRE item, but it may be inappropriate or unnecessary to include every SQUIRE element in a particular manuscript.
- The SQUIRE glossary contains definitions of many of the key words in SQUIRE.
- The explanation and elaboration document provide specific examples of well-written SQUIRE items and an in-depth explanation of each item.
- Please cite SQUIRE when it is used to write a manuscript.

**Adapted from:** Orgrinc, G., Davies, L., Goodman, D., Batalden, P., Davidoff, F., & Stevens, D. (2016). SQUIRE 2.0 (Standards for Quality Improvement Reporting Excellence): revised publication guidelines for a detailed consensus process. *British Medical Journal Quality and Safety*, 25, 986-992.

Text section and item name	Page/line no(s).
	info is located
<b>Title and abstract</b>	
<b>1. Title</b>	
Indicate that the manuscript concerns an initiative to improve healthcare (broadly defined to include the quality, safety, effectiveness, patient-centeredness, timeliness, cost, efficiency, and equity of healthcare).	
<b>2. Abstract</b>	
a. Provide adequate information to aid in searching and indexing.	
b. Summarize all key information from various sections of the text using the abstract format of the intended publication or a structured summary such as: background, local problem, methods, interventions, results, conclusions.	
<b>Introduction: Why did you start?</b>	
<b>3. Problem description</b> - Nature and significance of the local problem.	
<b>4. Available knowledge</b> - Summary of what is currently known about the problem, including relevant previous studies.	
<b>5. Rationale</b> - Informal or formal frameworks, models, concepts and/or theories used to explain the problem, any reasons or assumptions that were used to develop the intervention(s) and reasons why the intervention(s) was expected to work	
<b>6. Specific aims</b> - Purpose of the project and of this report.	
<b>Methods: What did you do?</b>	
<b>7. Context</b> - Contextual elements considered important at the outset of introducing the intervention(s).	



<b>8. Intervention(s)</b>	
a. Description of the intervention(s) in sufficient detail that others could reproduce it.	
b. Specifics of the team involved in the work.	
<b>9. Study of the intervention(s)</b>	
a. Approach chosen for assessing the impact of the intervention(s).	
b. Approach used to establish whether the observed outcomes were due to the intervention(s).	
<b>10. Measures</b>	
a. Measures chosen for studying processes and outcomes of the intervention(s), including rationale for choosing them, their operational definitions and their validity and reliability.	
b. Description of the approach to the ongoing assessment of contextual elements that contributed to the success, failure, efficiency, and cost.	
c. Methods employed for assessing completeness and accuracy of data.	
<b>11. Analysis</b>	
a. Qualitative and quantitative methods used to understand the data.	
b. Methods for understanding variation within the data, including the effects of time as a variable.	
<b>12. Ethical considerations</b> - Ethical aspects of implementing the intervention(s) and how they were addressed, including, but not limited to, formal ethics review and potential conflict(s) of interest.	
<b>Results: What did you find?</b>	
<b>13. Results</b>	
a. Initial steps of the intervention(s) and their evolution over time (e.g., time-line diagram, flow chart or table), including modifications made to the intervention during the project.	
b. Details of the process measures and outcomes.	
c. Contextual elements that interacted with the intervention(s).	
d. Observed associations between outcomes, interventions, and relevant contextual elements.	

e. Unintended consequences such as unexpected benefits, problems, failures, or costs associated with the intervention(s).	
f. Details about missing data.	
<b>Discussion: What does it mean?</b>	
<b>14. Summary</b>	
a. Key findings, including relevance to the rationale and specific aims.	
b. Particular strengths of the project.	
<b>15. Interpretation</b>	
a. Nature of the association between the intervention(s) and the outcomes.	
b. Comparison of results with findings from other publications.	
c. Impact of the project on people and systems.	
d. Reasons for any differences between observed and anticipated outcomes, including the influence of context.	
e. Costs and strategic trade-offs, including opportunity costs.	
<b>16. Limitations</b>	
a. Limits to the project's findings.	
b. Factors that might have affected the project outcomes such as, imprecision in the design, methods, measurement, or analysis.	
c. Efforts made to minimize and adjust for limitations.	
<b>Conclusions</b>	
a. Usefulness of the work.	
b. Sustainability.	
c. Potential for spread to other contexts.	
d. Implications for practice and for further study in the field.	
e. Suggested next steps.	

<b>Other information</b>	
18. <b>Funding</b> - Sources of funding that supported this work. Role, if any, of the funding organization in the design, implementation, interpretation, and reporting	

Revised based on:

*Ogrinc G, et al. BMJ Qual Saf 2015;0:1–7. doi:10.1136/bmjqs-2015-004411*  
*Downloaded from <http://qualitysafety.bmj.com/> on January 2, 2017*

Source:

[https://www.elsevier.com/\\_data/promis\\_misc/04262\\_SQUIRE2.0\\_Checklist.docx](https://www.elsevier.com/_data/promis_misc/04262_SQUIRE2.0_Checklist.docx)  
*Downloaded on May 25, 2018*

## Appendix 11: DNP Project Defense Evaluation Rubric

DNP Project Title:

Student:

	Criteria Met/Unmet with Comments
<p><b>DNP Project Cover Page / Abstract:</b></p> <p><b>Title</b> - Meets Requirements (Appendix 10) DNP Project Handbook.</p> <p><b>Abstract</b> - 250 words or less (Provides overview of project).</p>	
<p><b>Introduction:</b></p> <p><b>Problem description</b> – significance of the problem.</p> <p><b>Available knowledge</b> – summary of what is currently known about the problem, include articles cited.</p> <p><b>Rationale</b> – frameworks, concepts and theories used to explain the problem; reasons or assumptions discussed.</p> <p><b>Specific aims</b> – Purpose of the project and paper. Aim Statement.</p>	
<p><b>Methods:</b></p> <p><b>Context</b> – Elements that are important to discuss before describing the interventions.</p> <p><b>Interventions</b> – Description of the intervention in detail / team involved in the work.</p> <p><b>Study of the intervention(s)</b> – Approach chosen to assess the impact of the intervention.</p> <p>Approach chosen to assess if the observed outcomes were due to the intervention.</p>	

**Methods continued:**

**Measures** – Chosen for evaluating the process and outcomes of the intervention(s).

- Description of the assessment of contextual elements that contributed to the success, failure, efficiency, cost, etc.
- Methods used to assure complete and accurate data.

**Analysis** – Qualitative and quantitative methods used to draw conclusions from the data.

- Methods used to understand variation within the data.

**Ethical Considerations** – Description of IRB process, ethical concerns related to the project discussed, potential conflicts addressed.

**Results:**

- Define the steps of the intervention and how this changed over time, include any modifications.
- Discuss the process measures and outcomes.
- Describe the contextual elements that interacted with the intervention(s).
- Associations made between outcomes, intervention(s), and contextual elements.
- Unintended consequences associated with the intervention.
- Discuss missing data (if applicable).

**Summary:**

- Key findings, relevance to the project and the specific aims.
- Strengths of the project.

<p><b>Interpretation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the association between intervention(s) and the outcomes?</li> <li>• How do the results compare with other findings in the literature?</li> <li>• What is the impact of the project on clients, the organization?</li> <li>• Reasons for differences between observed and anticipated outcomes?</li> <li>• Costs and trade-offs?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Limitations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limits of the project's recommendations.</li> <li>• Factors that may have affected the results of the project.</li> <li>• Efforts made to minimize identified limitations.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Conclusions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Usefulness of the results?</li> <li>• How sustainable is the project / intervention(s)?</li> <li>• Can others use the results?</li> <li>• Implications for clinical practice?</li> <li>• Implications for future programs/projects?</li> <li>• Next steps?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Program reflects and demonstrates the AACN Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulates specific essentials met by implementation and completion of the project</li> </ul>	

<b>Squire Guidelines / APA Format:</b>	
--	--

- Paper is set up to follow the Squire Guidelines
- Title Page
- In-text Citations
- References

***Rubric adapted from the Squire 2 Guidelines***

Orgrinc, G., Davies, L., Goodman, D., Batalden, P., Davidoff, F., & Stevens, D. (2016). SQUIRE 2.0 (Standards for Quality Improvement Reporting Excellence): revised publication guidelines for a detailed consensus process. *British Medical Journal Quality and Safety*, 25, 986-992.

## DNP PROJECT EVALUATORS

**PASSED**, unconditional      **Date:**

The DNP project meets or exceeds all the evaluation criteria for the defense.

Comments:

**PASSED**, provisional      **Date:**

The DNP project requires minor to moderate, non-trivial revision(s). The DNP project evaluators will be responsible for communicating to the student, in detail, the revisions necessary for completion of the DNP project and the deadline for the completion of the revisions. If, after that length of time, the DNP project has not been accepted, the candidate will be considered as having failed the DNP project.

Comments:

**FAILED**      **Date:**

The DNP project does not meet criteria for a successful defense and contains significant deficits.

Comments:



**Member of the DNP project evaluators who will certify completion of any revisions that need to be made to the DNP project to pass.**

DNP Project Evaluator Signature:

Revisions must be completed by:

Revisions received on:

DNP project PASSED on:

Comments:

DNP Project Evaluator Signature:

Date:

DNP Project Evaluator Signature:

Date:

DNP Project Evaluator Signature:

Date:

Student Signature:

Date:

DNP Program Coordinator:

Date:

## Appendix 12: Permission to Retain DNP Project Products

I grant the Helen and Arthur E. Johnson Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences at the University of Colorado Springs permission to retain and archive the following material(s) for the purpose(s) specified below:

- DNP Project Proposal Presentation*
- DNP Project Proposal Paper*
- DNP Project Paper*
- DNP Project Poster*
- DNP Project Defense Presentation*

**The allowed material(s) may be used (check all which apply):**

- As samples to be viewed by other students and/or faculty
- As exhibits for site visitors (Colorado Board of Nursing, CCHE, or CCNE surveyors)
- As other purpose (explain)

Permission granted / Student Signature:

Reviewed by DNP Coordinator: