



**DEPARTMENT OF NURSING**  
**STUDENT HANDBOOK**  
**POST MASTER'S**  
**DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE**

**2023-2024**

Updated August 2023



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# WELCOME

## Greetings Students!

We are delighted to welcome you to the Post-Master's Doctor of Nursing Practice (PMDNP) program at the University of North Dakota. The College of Nursing & Professional Disciplines (CNPD) has a rich history and solid reputation for preparing future clinicians and leaders to advance human well-being and improve quality of life for diverse populations. Our mission and commitment to excellence in teaching, research and community service stems from our high-quality faculty who regard nursing with stringent ideals. The PMDNP program, curriculum and teaching-learning practices reflect the best evidence-based educational and professional standards.

Faculty, staff and administrators are highly committed to your success. During your studies at the CNPD, you will engage with challenging courses, exceptional faculty, and wonderful learning experiences. You will also make lifelong friendships. Our faculty and staff are here to support your program of study and will assist you with all the phases of your academic journey.

We have prepared this ***Post-Master's Doctor of Nursing Practice Student Handbook*** as a complement to the *Department of Nursing Student Handbook (2023-2024)* and the Graduate Programs in Nursing Student Handbook (2023-2024) to provide you with a comprehensive overview of information about academic and general student matters that can facilitate your learning experiences and interactions at the College and at UND. Upon review of the handbooks applicable to your program, you will complete the electronic DocuSign form acknowledging you have reviewed and understand the information presented. The Office of Student services will send the electronic document acknowledging handbooks via email, along with the following items:

- Consent to Release Information/Release from Liability
- Photograph/Video Record Image Release
- Student Conduct Release Form
- Student Document Consent Form

Other resources that will help you are [University of North Dakota Undergraduate and Graduate Academic Catalog](#) and the [UND Code of Student Life](#). These publications are available online.

Although the nursing program requires your serious attention to study, we are confident you will find your efforts very meaningful and contributory to your educational pursuits. As a graduate of the PMDNP program, you will make a significant contribution to your own future and that of the clients and families you serve here in North Dakota, rural communities and beyond. Our goal is to assist you with the transition to the DNP-prepared nurse and to become a member of a community of clinical scholars. We extend our very best wishes for a rewarding doctoral education.

**Mary Jane Rivard, DNP, RN-BC**  
**Post Master's DNP Program Director**  
**Clinical Assistant Professor**  
**College of Nursing and Professional Disciplines**

## **OVERVIEW**

### **COLLEGE OF NURSING AND PROFESSIONAL DISCIPLINES MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the College of Nursing and Professional Disciplines (CNPD) is to prepare future leaders, to advance human well-being and improve quality of life for diverse populations, with an emphasis on rural communities in North Dakota, the region and beyond, through the provision of high-quality innovative interprofessional education, research and service.

### **DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE PROGRAM**

The CNPD Post-Master's Doctor of Nursing Practice (PMDNP) program admitted its first class in August 2013. This Post-Master's DNP program prepares certified nurse practitioners, certified clinical nurse specialists, certified nurse-midwives, certified nurse anesthetists, and advanced nursing practice specialists for the highest level of nursing practice. DNP prepared nurses hold expertise in quality improvement and systems leadership and influence health policy and health care outcomes for individuals, families and underserved or vulnerable populations.

### **OUTCOMES OF DNP GRADUATES**

Based on the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) *Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice (2006)*, DNP graduates will demonstrate the ability to:

#### **DNP Essential I: Scientific Underpinnings for Practice**

**UND DNP Program Outcome #1:** Integrate nursing science with knowledge of ethics, biophysical, psychosocial, analytical and organizational sciences as a basis of practice and inquiry.

#### **DNP Essential II: Organizational and Systems Leadership for Quality Improvement and Systems Thinking**

**UND DNP Program Outcome #2:** Lead systems level quality improvement and safety initiatives to enhance patient outcomes.

#### **DNP Essential III: Clinical Scholarship and Analytical Methods for Evidence-Based Practice**

**UND DNP Program Outcome #3:** Evaluate evidence-based processes that address practice patterns and healthcare organizations in order to promote safe, equitable and patient-centered care.

**UND DNP Program Outcome #4:** Apply relevant evidence-based findings to develop practice guidelines that improve population health, the practice environment and promote safe, equitable and patient-centered care.

#### **DNP Essential IV: Information Systems/Technology and Patient Care Technology for the Improvement and Transformation of Health Care**

**UND DNP Program Outcome #5:** Integrate technology and information systems with advanced nursing practice to improve patient care and outcomes.

#### **DNP Essential V: Health Care Policy for Advocacy in Health Care**

**UND DNP Program Outcome #6:** Demonstrate expertise in the analysis, formulation and implementation process of healthcare policy.

#### **DNP Essential VI: Interprofessional Collaboration for Improving Patient and Population Health Outcomes**

**UND DNP Program Outcome #7:** Collaborate effectively as a member and leader of inter-professional teams.

## **DNP Essential VII: Clinical Prevention and Population Health for Improving the Nation's Health**

**UND DNP Program Outcome #8:** Employ clinical prevention and health promotion strategies to improve population health with an emphasis on rural, diverse and vulnerable populations.

## **DNP Essential VIII: Advanced Nursing Practice**

**UND DNP Program Outcome #9:** Demonstrate advanced levels of nursing practice, clinical judgment and accountability to deliver optimal patient care with an emphasis on rural communities.

Please see the [\*AACN Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice\*](#)

## **POST-MASTER'S DNP ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

### **(POLICY 619)**

Completion of a master's degree or higher from an accredited program of nursing.

Current U.S. licensure unencumbered and in good standing as a Registered Nurse (upload Nursys verification report in application).

A minimum Grade Point Average of 3.0 from a previous graduate program (official transcripts must be submitted).

Three letters of recommendation.

Current resume or curriculum vitae.

Active national certification in an advance practice registered nurse (APRN) specialty for the APRN track. APRN certification is not required for Leadership track

Satisfy the School of Graduate Studies' English Language Proficiency requirements as published in the graduate catalog.

A two-page American Psychological Association (APA) formatted professional statement which addresses your professional goals and how the DNP degree will contribute to the achievement of these goals.

Interview may be required (via web, phone or in person).

Successful passage of a criminal background check will be required upon offer of admission.

Successful passage of drug screen and satisfaction of current health and immunization policy of the Department of Nursing will be required the semester prior to data collection in a clinical setting.

Approved by Nursing Faculty 10/24/14  
Approved by Graduate Council R 12/14/18; R 05/10/19; 09/09/2022; **R 04/14/2023**

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## **DEGREE REQUIREMENT OVERVIEW**

Students admitted to the PMDNP program are required to complete a minimum of 36 credits. Graduate credits earned at other institutions may be offered in partial fulfillment of the University of North Dakota's required credits for conferment of a doctoral degree from this institution.

Students seeking the Doctor of Nursing Practice Degree at the University of North Dakota must satisfy all general requirements set forth by the School of Graduate Studies as well as requirements set forth by the Nursing Department. The PMDNP nursing courses are offered online.

Completion of all course work with GPA of at least 3.0

- Completion of a minimum of eighty semester hours beyond the bachelor's degree.
- Satisfactory completion of all designated practice experience hours.
- Satisfactory completion of the DNP project.
- Satisfactory completion of the DNP project paper.
- Satisfactory completion of a campus oral presentation of the DNP project.
- Compose a scholarly product (i.e., abstract/manuscript/poster) for presentation and publication.

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## POST MASTER'S DNP CURRICULUM

### Post master's DNP- Leadership Track Course Progression

520 Practice Experience Hours (PE) Required  
65 Practice Experience hours = 1 academic credit hour

#### YEAR ONE

SEMESTER 1 (Credits 9)		
PSYC 541	Advanced Univariate Statistics	3 credits
NURS 612	Integrated Leadership DNP Core Concepts	3 credits
NURS 602	Evidence Base Research I	3 credits
SEMESTER 2 (8 Credits)		
NURS 603	Evidence Based Research II	3 credits
NURS 605	Health Policy	2 credits
NURS 613	Organizational System Focused Practice	3 credits
SEMESTER 3 (7 Credits)		
NURS 509	Foundations for Nurse Education	3 credits
NURS 604	Health Informatics	3 credits
NURS 609	DNP Project Teams (65 PE)	1 credit
YEAR TWO		
SEMESTER 4 (8 Credits)		
NURS 608	Health Economics, Finance and Leadership	3 credits
NURS 609	DNP Project Teams (130 PE)	2 credits
NURS 614	Culture of Safety and Ethics	3 credits
SEMESTER 5 (5 Credits)		
NURS 609	DNP Project Teams (195 PE)	3 credits
NURS 610	DNP Capstone (130 PE)	2 credits
TOTAL CREDITS 37		

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## **Post Master's DNP- Advanced Practice Nursing Track Course Progression**

*(Not accepting applications for this track currently)*

520 Practice Experience Hours (PE) Required

### **YEAR ONE**

<b>SEMESTER 1 (Credits 9)</b>		
PSYC 541	Advanced Univariate Statistics	3 credits
NURS 612	Integrated DNP Core Concepts	3 credits
NURS 602	Evidence Base Research	3 credits
<b>SEMESTER 2 (6 Credits)</b>		
NURS 613	Integrated DNP Core Concepts II	3 credits
NURS 603	Evidence Based Research II	3 credits
<b>SEMSTER 3 (9 Credits)</b>		
NURS 604	Health Informatics	3 credits
NURS 605	Health Policy	2 credits
NURS 606	DNP Systems Focused Practice I	2 credits
NURS 609	DNP Project Teams	1 credit
<b>YEAR TWO</b>		
<b>SEMSTER 4 (7 Credits)</b>		
NURS 607	DNP Systems Focused Practice II	3 credits
NURS 608	Healthcare Economics, Finance and Leadership	2 credits
NURS 609	DNP Project Teams	2 credits
NURS 610	DNP Capstone	2 credits
NURS 609	DNP Project Teams	3 credits
<b>TOTAL CREDITS 36</b>		



## **ACADEMIC POLICIES**

### **ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT**

Students are appointed an advisor by the Chair of the Graduate Nursing program when admitted to the program. The academic advisor is typically the DNP Program Director. DNP students will also be assigned a DNP Project advisor to assist with defining the DNP Project topic, navigating IRB approval, submitting the Program of Study and Topic Proposal, completing the final DNP Project and paper, and assisting with initial presentation and publication preparation.

*\*See [Department of Nursing, Graduate Programs in Nursing Student Handbook 2023-2024](#)*

Doctoral forms for the Program of Study and Topic Proposal can be accessed at [Forms for Graduate Students](#).

Questions regarding the Institutional Review Board (IRB), human participants in research and IRB forms may be downloaded from the [Institutional Review Board](#) web page.

All research which involves the use of humans as subjects, or which use human material, must be reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to the initiation of any research using human participants including recruitment and screening activities. Independent Study and DNP Projects may require IRB approval. The length of time necessary to approve IRB applications can be affected by the quality of the application, current volume of applications submitted and under review, and type of review.

### **GRIEVANCE/APPEALS PROCESS**

*\*See [Department of Nursing, Graduate Programs in Nursing Student Handbook 2023-2024](#)*

## **TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS**

You must verify your computer equipment meets the minimum technical requirements needed for your courses.

Although specific technical requirements may vary by course or program, make sure your computer meets the [general technical requirements](#) and that your web browser is configured correctly.

For more specific information about technical requirements, refer to your course syllabus or contact your instructor.

### **OFFICE 365 EMAIL AND APPS**

UND students, faculty and staff use [Microsoft Office 365](#) email system provided by the North Dakota University System.

## **REQUIRED DNP COMPREHENSIVE EXPERIENCES**

### **DNP PROJECT REQUIREMENTS**

The DNP Project is the final scholarly project completed by the DNP student. It demonstrates a high-level mastery of advanced nursing practice and focuses on translating evidence and research into practice. According to [The Doctor of Nursing Practice: Current issues and clarifying recommendations](#) published by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing in 2015, the DNP Project demonstrates a measurable improvement or impact on healthcare care delivery and/or patient outcomes (p2). It has the potential to advance nursing practice at local, state, and national levels by addressing key issues and barriers

surrounding healthcare and promoting inter-professional collaboration. The DNP Project must be completed and disseminated through an oral presentation before the student graduates from the program. The DNP student will also complete a DNP Project paper per the following guidelines and be expected to disseminate their work through future journal submission and/or future presentations at state and national levels.

## **DNP PROJECT PAPER OVERVIEW**

The paper should be formatted using the guidelines from the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (revised 7<sup>th</sup> ed.) (2020)* and be no more than 30 pages in length, exclusive of tables, and references. Recommended sections for the DNP project paper are listed below. These may change based on the project, in concert with your DNP project faculty advisor.

### **Title Page**

#### **Abstract** (½ page)

An abstract of your project should include a very brief description of the problem, the project purpose or research question and a BRIEF description of the project design, setting, subjects and instruments used to measure your outcomes. You should briefly add information to the abstract about your results and conclusions.

#### **Background and Significance**

This section should include a description of the problem, the incidence or frequency of occurrence, and the significance to nursing. It should also discuss the specific aim/purpose of your project, explaining what your project will do to address the problem. You should include definitions of key terms /variables—as you defined them for your project. These definitions might differ from the standard definitions of terms, populations, or scenarios—and that is okay. You want to be sure that your reader interprets them the same way that you used them.

- Statement of the problem or needs assessment
- Clinical question
- Definition of terminology
- Significance of the project for nursing and health care

#### **Literature Review**

This section should start with a sentence identifying the search engines/databases used for your literature review. You should organize previous research in a manner that best supports your project's purpose. You should critique the strengths and weaknesses of the body of knowledge related to your project as a whole, identify gaps in the literature, and concisely state how your project will address these gaps. Avoid merely summarizing study after study; however, you can summarize a few (fewer than five) noteworthy studies in more detail.

- Provide an overview of theoretical, methodological research in the literature pertinent to your project and include results related to your project or population
- Include local and/or national data if pertinent
- Identify gaps or limitations in the literature

## **Conceptual Framework**

Describe your chosen conceptual/theoretical framework and include a brief description as to why you chose this framework (the applicability to your identified project or the problem at hand). You should state your research problem. Discuss the key concepts related to the chosen framework. Explain the reason the framework was selected.

## **Project Purpose**

Specifically state the purpose of the project and list the project goals and objectives. Include the significance of the project for nursing and health care. The project goals should be SMART goals: specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time specific. They should form the basis for the evaluation.

## **Design and Methods**

The purpose of this section is to describe what you are going to do in detail. Describe step-by-step what happened in the project, starting from obtaining IRB approval to analyzing data. How did you identify eligible subjects? How did you collect the data, safeguard the data and store the data? Which statistical tests did you use? Describe your sample and include the number of subjects and length of time it took to collect data. Include gender, education, race/ethnicity, and age if relevant. In other words, provide a brief overview of any important demographics for your project.

- Description of your population (who your subjects are), sampling (convenience? inclusion, exclusion criteria), and recruitment (how did you obtain your subjects?)
- Study design: describe the type of design; number of groups or participants; type of testing or survey (pre- and post-testing) (chart review)
- Setting for your project including a BRIEF organizational analysis
- Description of intervention
- Procedure for implementation
- Describe your survey or tool, including the demographic data collected
- Protection of human subjects and confidentiality of data collected: describe how you maintained anonymity
- Outcomes (describe your measures and, if appropriate, their reliability and validity or sensitivity /specificity profile)
- Plans for data analysis and evaluation

## **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

Start by re-stating (in one paragraph) the overall purpose/aim of your project. Then discuss your results. Discuss any problems you encountered that may have influenced or biased your results. Present your results using a statistical model and description (for example, Specific measures: standard deviation, frequency, t-test, correlations, p-value, etc.)

- Specific results
- Validity of your results (problems you may have encountered implementing your project that might have influenced your results)
- Interpret your results

## **Practice Implications and Future Directions**

- Summarize and explain your result findings
- Discuss the impact of your results on practice

- Explain how your results either support or differ from previous research findings,
- Speculate on reasons that your findings agree or disagree (perhaps sample, size, or variation, environment, timing of the project).
- Were there any unexpected findings? Speculate why these may have occurred.
- Evaluate your conceptual/ theoretical model- how do the results support or not support the model selected for the project
- Discuss the strengths and limitations of the project- support from the organization, sample size adequacy, findings generalizability, biases, sample diversity.
- Discuss the significance of your project findings. What are suggestions for changing nursing practice? For interprofessional practice? Do you have suggestions for advanced practice? For nursing education? For health policy?
- What are the implications for future projects: what are the next steps in implementing the results or changing practice as a result of your project?

### **Conclusions**

Make the last paragraph a conclusion that summarizes your overall project aim, project findings, and contribution to nursing knowledge, practice, or theory.

- Summary of results
- Clinical implications of results/impact on practice
- Sustainability of the intervention
- Limitations and suggestions for improvement
- Suggestions for future clinical projects or research

### **References**

### **Appendices**

- Theoretical models (schematics)
- Project timeline graphic
- Summary matrix of individual data review tables (a table of data analysis)
- Copy of data collection survey
- Copy of consent forms
- IRB approval letter

## **GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

### **DNP Students are required to:**

- Complete all coursework with a GPA of at least 3.0.
- Completion of a minimum of eighty semester hours beyond the bachelor's degree.
- Satisfactorily complete all designated practice experience hours.
- Satisfactorily complete the DNP Project paper under the guidance of their faculty advisor and DNP Project advisor.

- Satisfactorily complete and submit the DNP Project paper according to the overview listed above.
  - Note: Students will build the paper throughout the curriculum.
  - An expert in the student's DNP Project topic may be requested by the faculty or student to review the content.
  - The student will be responsible for facilitating contact with the chosen expert.
- Satisfactorily complete an oral presentation to the UND community prior to graduation. This presentation features a Power Point presentation outlining the DNP Project.
  - The oral presentation represents the compilation of the DNP student's work. The presentation will be attended by members of the DNP Project Team and content experts if applicable.
  - The DNP Project advisor and any faculty advisors on the PMDNP student's project team will grade the presentation according to the ***Criteria for Grading DNP Project Presentation and Defense*** [\\*SEE APPENDIX A](#). The DNP student will meet with the DNP Project Team immediately following the presentation. The DNP Project Team must agree that the presentation was satisfactory and recommend the student for graduation.
  - In the event that the student does not meet the standards for a satisfactory presentation, the DNP faculty will work with the student to develop a remediation process. The student will then be required to complete paper revisions and/or repeat the oral presentation.
  - The presentation is open to the student's community partner and the public.
- Compose a scholarly product (i.e., abstract/manuscript/poster) for presentation and/or publication
- A DNP Student Checklist is available in [APPENDIX B](#).

## **DNP PRACTICE EXPERIENCE HOURS LOG**

**University of North Dakota  
College of Nursing and Health Professions  
Doctor of Nursing (DNP)  
Practice Experience Log**

DNP students are required to maintain a log of their clinical hours accumulated throughout their program of study as indicated in the selected courses. A minimum of 520 total hours are to be completed by the end of the DNP program. An excel spreadsheet will be provided to the student and used to keep track of the practice experience hours. The log will include:

- Course Number
- Program Outcome to which the activity applies
- Activity Details
- Date activity was completed
- Completed hours

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# APPENDICES

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## APPENDIX A: CRITERIA FOR GRADING DNP PROJECT PRESENTATION

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA  
 COLLEGE OF NURSING AND PROFESSIONAL DISCIPLINES  
 Criteria for Grading DNP Project Presentation and Defense

STUDENT \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

DNP PROJECT ADVISOR: \_\_\_\_\_

DNP PROJECT TEAM MEMBER \_\_\_\_\_

DNP PROJECT PAPER APPROVED                      YES      NO

Instructions: Each DNP Project Team member will use a separate grading sheet. The criteria below are applicable to the evaluation of the DNP Project Presentation and Defense. The examination grade of Pass or Fail is determined by tallying the satisfactory and unsatisfactory ratings for each DNP Project Team member. For the presentation to be accepted as Satisfactory, all members must indicate that the student has received satisfactory marks in ten out of ten criteria.

CRITERIA	SATISFACTORY	UNSATISFACTORY
Demonstrated depth of knowledge.		
Demonstrated breadth of knowledge.		
Based Capstone on pertinent clinical knowledge and applicability to practice.		
Synthesized relevant knowledge to support the topic.		
Demonstrated critical thinking in development of project design.		
Demonstrated critical appraisal of project results.		
Derived meaningful, defensible conclusions, including strengths, limitations of project.		
Summarized implications, future directions and sustainability of project.		
Presentation followed required guidelines		
Overall presentation was thoughtful, professional and organized.		
<b>Totals</b>		

**Comments:**

In addition to your general comments, you are required to provide the reasons for unsatisfactory marks and identify the student’s missed opportunity to successfully demonstrate the criteria.

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## **APPENDIX B: DNP STUDENT CHECKLIST**

### **UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA CNPD DNP Student Checklist**

Upon admission to the DNP program, completing the following tasks is required for all doctoral students during tenure with the CNPD. The checklist provides a general sequence of events. Students will work with their advisors to complete the list.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Advisor assigned on admission by the Graduate Department Chair.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Submit and complete all required CNPD verifications and requirements. Note: some verifications and requirements are yearly, and others are a one-time requirement.
- \_\_\_\_\_ File Program of Study (POS) with the CNPD. This will be forwarded to the UND School of Graduate Studies. The POS should be completed during the first semester of coursework.
- \_\_\_\_\_ DNP Project Advisor assigned at the beginning of DNP Project Teams.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Submit IRB forms for DNP Project.
- \_\_\_\_\_ File Topic Proposal for the DNP Project with the CNPD, once IRB approval is received, which will be forwarded to the UND School of Graduate Studies – must be filed at least one semester prior to when you wish to graduate.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Advance to Candidacy – this will occur once your POS and Topic Proposal have been accepted by the UND School of Graduate Studies.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Apply for Graduation – Upon Advancing to Candidacy, the UND Graduate School will send you an application to apply for graduation. This needs to be completed and approved by your advisor and filed with the CNPD and the UND School of Graduate Studies.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Present DNP Project to the UND campus and interested community during last semester in the DNP program.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Submit an electronic copy of your DNP Project Paper to your DNP Advisor and DNP Project Advisor and the CNPD's Office of Student Services.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Advisor completes and submits "Final Report on Candidate" to the CNPD and the UND School of Graduate Studies.

\*\* For a complete list of date and deadlines each semester, go to the UND Graduate School's Website at: [Term Deadlines](#)

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