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INTRODUCTION

This student handbook is designed for graduate students enrolled in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Consortium Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Program. The DNP program provides masters prepared nurses with opportunities for practice-based doctoral education. The DNP Program is taught by the graduate nursing faculty and advanced practice nurses and leaders from the associated clinical facilities of:

- Metropolitan State University
- Minnesota State University, Mankato
- Minnesota State University Moorhead
- Winona State University

The development of the DNP Program was motivated by the increased complexity of today’s health care environment and the national call for improved preparation of nurse leaders in advanced nursing practice.

The DNP Program features a plan of study that:

- builds upon the previous masters education of nurses currently practicing in a variety of advanced roles (e.g., nurse administrator, nurse educator, clinical nurse specialist, nurse anesthetist, nurse practitioner, nurse midwife).

- emphasizes leadership in advanced practice, preparation for research utilization/translation of research to practice, and doctoral level clinical experiences in evidence-based practice, quality improvement, and organization/systems thinking.

- is structured around the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice, and focuses upon the development of skills and knowledge needed for increasingly complex roles in practice, teaching, and leadership.

- provides five semesters of doctoral level didactic and clinical coursework utilizing a variety of approaches, including distance learning technologies, that facilitate access for students in remote areas while providing opportunities for discussions and clinical experiences with advanced nursing leaders and experts throughout Minnesota and the nation.

Doctoral Education in Nursing (Research or Practice Focus)

The DNP is an alternative for doctoral education that is new to Minnesota and many parts of the United States. Traditionally, doctoral level education in nursing has been specific to the more research and theory based Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and Doctor of Nursing Science (DNS, DSN, or DNSc) programs. AACN (2006) provides the following description of the differences between the practice based DNP and the traditional research focused Ph.D., DNS, or DNSc:
“Research- and practice-focused doctoral programs in nursing share rigorous and demanding expectations, a scholarly approach to the discipline, and a commitment to advancement of the profession. Both are terminal degrees in the discipline, one in practice and one in research. However, there are distinct differences between the two degree programs. For example, practice-focused programs understandably place greater emphasis on practice, and less emphasis on theory, meta-theory and research methodology and statistics than is apparent in research-focused programs.”

“Practice-focused doctoral programs are designed to prepare experts in specialized advanced nursing practice. They focus heavily on practice that is innovative and evidence-based, reflecting the application of credible research findings. The two types of doctoral programs differ in their goals and the competencies of their graduates.”


DNP Student Learning Outcomes

Based on the AACN Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice (2006), five student learning outcomes are expected for the DNP program. These are the ability to:

1. evaluate scientific underpinnings that contribute to translation of nursing research to improve practice.

2. evaluate nursing actions that influence health care outcomes for individuals, families, and populations.

3. use knowledge gained through evaluation of nursing actions that influence health outcomes to improve care delivery, patient outcomes, and systems management.

4. evaluate evidence pertaining to direct care of patients and management of care for individuals, families, systems, and populations.

5. translate evidence gained through evaluation of direct care of patients and management of care for individuals, families, systems, and populations to improve practice and implement health policy.
DNP Student Handbook

DNP Consortium Overview

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities DNP Consortium structure is unique in the country. Figure I depicts the management structure of the DNP Consortium. The governance and activities of the DNP Consortium are conducted through two councils. The Program Management Council (PMC) is comprised of four graduate nursing faculty members (one from each of the parent institutions) and four graduate nursing program leaders (one from each of the four parent institutions). Each parent institutions has one alternate PMC member. The PMC is responsible for:

1. monitoring the day-to-day activities of the DNP program,
2. advocating for student support and student services
3. advertising and promoting student recruitment for the DNP program,
4. coordinating the DNP program immersion at the beginning of each academic year,
5. recommending students for admission to the DNP program,
6. listening to DNP student grievances and appeals,
7. advising DNP students and evaluating DNP student progress,
8. developing, delivering, and evaluating the DNP program curriculum,
9. taking action on recommendations from the CC regarding committees/work groups/task forces,
10. providing direction to project committees/work groups/task forces recommended by the CC,
11. evaluating student outcomes and providing recommendations to the CC,
12. investigating and/or providing written reports to the CC on issues or problems related to the operation of the DNP program,
13. evaluating the program and providing reports to the CC,
14. organizing and calling the meetings of the DNP community Advisory Board, and
15. developing, evaluating, and revising the By-Laws of the DNP Consortium.

The Consortium Council (CC) is comprised of two academic administration representatives from the parent institutions. The Chairperson of the PMC and a representative from the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Office of the Chancellor are Ex Officio members of this committee. The CC is responsible for:

1. approving policies and procedures for the DNP Consortium,
2. making financial decisions regarding the DNP program,
3. approving of the membership of the PMC and revoking membership on the PMC,
4. facilitating DNP program access to student services (e.g., computing services, library services, financial aid, graduate college admissions, registration, distance learning technology),
5. approving the By-Laws of the DNP Consortium,
6. assuring that the terms of the DNP Consortium are adhered to by the members, and
7. interfacing with the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Office of the Chancellor.
DNP Consortium Management Structure

University Presidents
(4 Universities)
- Metropolitan State University
- Minnesota State University, Mankato
- Minnesota State University Moorhead
- Winona State University

Consortium Council (CC)
(8 Members, 2 Ex Officio Members)
- Each institution’s Dean of School or College
- Each institution’s Dean of Graduate Studies
- Representative from the Chancellor’s office, Ex Officio
- Chair, PMC Ex Officio

Program Management Council (PMC)
(8 Members)
- One faculty member from each institution
- One Chair or Director of Graduate Programs from each institution
- One Faculty Alternate from each institution

Student Services Administration
(4 Institutions)
- Registration
- Libraries
- IT
- Admissions

DNP Students
(7 admitted annually at each institution)
DNP Program Contact Persons

The Chairperson of the PMC for the 2007 – 2008 academic year is Sue Ellen Bell PhD, APRN, BC. A graduate faculty member at Minnesota State University, Mankato, she can be contacted directly at sue.bell@mnsu.edu or 507.389.6814. Tim Gaspar RN, PhD, is the Chairperson of the CC for the 2007 – 2008 academic year. He can be contacted at tgaspar@winona.edu or 507-457-5122.

The following persons are the contact persons at the DNP Consortium institutions:

Metropolitan State University; Contact Person – Marilyn Loen (marilyn.loen@metrostate.edu), Phone 651.793.1376

Minnesota State University, Mankato; Contact Person – Sue Ellen Bell (sue.bell@mnsu.edu), Phone 507.389.1317

Minnesota State University Moorhead; Contact Person - Jane Giedt (giedt@mnstate.edu), Phone 218.477.4699

Winona State University; Contact Person - William McBreen (wmcbreen@winona.edu, Phone 507.285.7489

Additional information and updates about the DNP Consortium and the DNP program can be found in the following locations:

1) the Graduate Nursing Program Brochures for each of the DNP Consortium institutions,
2) the Graduate Student Catalog/Bulletin for each of the DNP Consortium institutions,
3) the Graduate Colleges of each of the DNP Consortium institutions, and
4) the School of Nursing website for each of the DNP Consortium institutions.
Academic Requirements

Academic Advising

Each student in the DNP program will be assigned an academic advisor after admission into the program. It is the student’s responsibility to contact the academic advisor early in the first semester of coursework. The academic advisor is a member of the DNP faculty.

DNP Program Requirements

Applicants to the DNP program are required to possess a masters degree in nursing from a nationally accredited masters in nursing program.

The number of credits required for graduation from the DNP program includes:

1. 36 credits of doctoral course work completed as an admitted student in the DNP program.

2. a minimum of 36 credits of nursing-focus or role-specific course work transferred from the student’s masters in nursing program.

A minimum total of 72 credits is required for graduation.

DNP Plan of Study

The following is the sequence of coursework for the DNP program. Students are admitted with a cohort of students that progresses through the DNP program as outlined. If a student has to stop out of the DNP program for academic, personal, or professional reasons, the student must submit a written request to join another cohort. The written request must be submitted to the DNP Program Management Council Chairperson. Students who do not enroll in courses for more than one year must reapply to the program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NURS 700:</strong> Theoretical Foundations for Nursing Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NURS 701:</strong> Applied Biostatistics</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NURS 704:</strong> Clinical Prevention and Population Health</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NURS 750:</strong> Clinical Scholarship II*</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NURS 702:</strong> Clinical Scholarship and Analytical Methods for Advanced Nursing Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NURS 740:</strong> Clinical Scholarship II*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>NURS 706: Organizational and Systems Leadership</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Credits Transferred in from Masters</td>
<td>36</td>
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*Includes 2 credits (100 hours) clinical and 1 credit seminar (25 hours)

**Can be taken any semester

**DNP Course Descriptions**

**NURS 700, Theoretical Foundations for Nursing Practice**

Credits: 4 semester credits
Prerequisite: Admission to the DNP program
Course Description:

This course focuses on theoretical perspectives and foundations for inquiry in the discipline. The structure of nursing knowledge (phenomena, concepts, and theories) will be evaluated for its relationship to practice. The interrelationship of theory, research, and practice will be analyzed.

**NURS 701, Applied Biostatistics**

Credits: 4 semester credits
Prerequisites: Admission to the DNP program; Graduate Level Statistics Course
Course Description:

The goals of this course are to develop statistical skills necessary to evaluate critically biomedical research using advanced quantitative methods, to identify appropriate techniques for interpretation of results of independent research, and for presentation of results to improve clinical practice.

**NURS 702, Clinical Scholarship and Analytical Methods for Advanced Nursing Practice**

Credits: 4 semester credits
Prerequisites: Nurs 700 & Nurs 701
Corequisite: Nurs 740
Course Description:

This course focuses on the conduct of clinical scholarship. Content includes transformational research approaches and evidence-based practice processes, including epidemiological methods. Evaluation methods of clinical practice change outcomes on individuals, groups, populations, and systems are addressed.
**NURS 704, Clinical Prevention and Population Health**
Credits: 4 semester credits  
Prerequisite: Nurs 700, Nurs 702, & Nurs 704  
Corequisite: Nurs 750  
Course Description:  
The conceptual foundations of culturally sensitive clinical prevention and population health in advanced nursing practice will be evaluated. A global perspective to clinical prevention and population health that bridges illness and preventive care models will be investigated and designed.

**NURS 706, Organizational and Systems Leadership**
Credits: 4 semester credits  
Prerequisite: Nurs 700, Nurs 702, Nurs 704, Nurs 740, & Nurs 750  
Corequisite: Nurs 760  
Course Description:  
Organizational and systems leadership skills critical for culturally sensitive nursing practice to improve healthcare and outcomes are enhanced. Focus is on transformational leadership, measurement of outcomes, data driven decision-making, and the business realities of leading within healthcare.

**NURS 740, Clinical Scholarship I**
Credits: 3 semester credits (1 credit seminar, 25 hrs; 2 credits clinical, 100 hrs.)  
Prerequisite: Nurs 700, Nurs 701  
Corequisite: Nurs 702  
Course Description:  
This clinical seminar focuses on collaboration of interprofessional teams and the roles of advanced practice nurses within this collaboration. Development of a framework for identifying, implementing, and evaluating a collaborative effort is emphasized.

**NURS 750, Clinical Scholarship II**
Credits: 3 semester credits (1 credit seminar, 25 hrs; 2 credits clinical 100 hrs.)  
Prerequisite: Nurs 700, Nurs 702, & Nurs 740  
Corequisite: Nurs 704  
Course Description:  
Develop, implement, and evaluate culturally-sensitive approaches to improve health status/access patterns and/or address gaps in care of populations within a community of focus whether locally, nationally, or globally.

**NURS 760, Clinical Scholarship III**
Credits: 3 semester credits (1 credit seminar, 25 hrs; 2 credits clinical, 100 hrs.)  
Prerequisites: Nurs 700, Nurs 702, Nurs 704, Nurs 740, & Nurs 750  
Corequisite: Nurs 706
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Course Description:

This course focuses on development of consultative and leadership strategies for use in implementing a clinical practice approach to a clinical nursing practice problem. The inter-professional context along with various information technologies and information systems will be considered.

**NURS 770, Clinical Scholarship IV: Capstone**

Credits: 3 semester credits (1 credit seminar, 25 hrs; 2 credits clinical, 100 hrs.)

Prerequisites: Nurs 700, Nurs 702, Nurs 704, Nurs 740, Nurs 750 & Nurs 760

Corequisite: None

Course Description:

This seminar and practicum focuses on accountability for advancing the nursing profession and contributing to the developing body of nursing practice knowledge. Addresses advocacy at all levels of policy implementation. Culminates in a successful oral defense of the capstone project.

**Grades**

A grade of “B” is the minimum passing grade for each course. If a student does not receive a minimum grade of a “B” in any DNP course, the student will not be allowed to progress to the next courses in the plan of study until the course is repeated and completed with a minimum grade of “B”. Only one course can be repeated, and students are allowed to repeat a course only once during the academic program. If a student is required to repeat a course for academic reasons, a formal request to repeat the course and to continue the program with a new cohort of students must be submitted to the PMC. The PMC will admit students to a subsequent cohort on a “space available” basis.

Grade of Incomplete or In Progress: A grade of incomplete (IC) or in progress (IP) may be granted at the discretion of the lead instructor for the course and consistent with the institutional grade policy. Students must submit a request for a grade of incomplete prior to the end of the respective course. The uncompleted coursework must be completed and a grade of “B” or better assigned by the instructor prior to the end of the following semester. Any coursework that remains uncompleted by the end of the following semester will turn to an “F” grade. The student may not progress into subsequent courses until a satisfactory grade is submitted by the lead instructor.

Dropping Courses and Withdrawal: Dropping courses in the DNP program is not encouraged since the student will need to wait until the following year to complete the dropped course and continue the program. If a student must drop a course, it is important that the student officially drops the course. Otherwise, the course will appear on the student transcript. Any course not officially dropped will be subject to institutional scholastic standards, and the student may receive an "F" for the course. Each class dropped after the fifth class day will result in a grade of withdrawal or "W," which will
appear on the student transcript. To drop all courses, which is considered an official withdrawal from the program, students must contact the graduate college at the parent institution for more information.

Grade/Policy Appeal

Students have the right to appeal academic decisions. For general appeals, students should follow the academic appeals process outlined in the graduate catalog of the student’s home institution. For appeals of grades received in specific courses, DNP students should follow the grade appeal process for the university offering the respective course.

Transfer Credits

Transfer of doctoral level courses into the student’s program of study can include coursework that substitutes for required courses or meets the requirements of elective coursework. Consistent with institutional and system policy, all coursework to be considered for transfer into the DNP program must be at the doctoral level from nationally accredited academic institutions and must be completed after the student is enrolled in the DNP program.

Students must submit a formal request for transfer of credits to the PMC after approval from student’s academic advisor. The request must be submitted prior to enrollment in the course and must include a course description and syllabus. Final approval of a course to be transferred into the student’s plan of study will be made by the PMC. A maximum of 4 credits can be transferred into the student’s plan of study. Appeals may be directed toward the Chairperson of the PMC and will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

DNP Degree Completion Timeline

All degree requirements including DNP program credits, transfer credits, and all other program requirements must be completed within five years of the start of DNP coursework. Under exceptional extenuating circumstances, a student may submit a petition through their advisor and to the Program Management Council requesting an extension of the time limitation.

DNP Qualifying Examination/DNP Capstone Project Proposal Defense

The student’s defense of the capstone project proposal serves as the primary component of the qualifying examination for the DNP program. The members of the DNP Capstone Project Committee may ask additional fundamental and developmental questions, which
cover the first year of DNP coursework, at their discretion. This examination is intended
to determine if a student is prepared and qualified to begin work on the capstone project.
To be eligible to take the qualifying examination and defend the capstone project
proposal, a student must have a DNP Capstone Project Committee in place and have
completed the first two semesters of doctoral course work as specified by the DNP Plan
of Study.

The approval/disapproval of the project by the student’s DNP Capstone Project
Committee will serve as documentation of the student’s performance on the examination.
If a student does not receive approval of the project proposal by the committee, the
student must correct any deficiencies and meet again with the DNP Capstone Project
Committee. Students are allowed to repeat the qualifying exam/capstone proposal
defense once. If the student fails to receive approval for the capstone project after the
second attempt, the student is dismissed from the DNP program.

Once the committee has approved the capstone project proposal, that student is
considered to have passed the qualifying examination. The process for selection of the
DNP Capstone Project Chair and DNP Capstone Project Committee and for development
and approval of the proposal is included in the capstone project guidelines.

DNP Comprehensive Examination/DNP Final Capstone Project Defense

The final defense of the capstone project serves as the comprehensive examination for the
DNP program. This examination serves to determine that the student has met all the
requirements of the capstone project and has completed a project reflective of doctoral
level academic and clinical work.

Approval of the final defense of the capstone project by the DNP Capstone Project
Committee serves as documentation that the student has met all project expectations and
is eligible for graduation, once all academic and clinical requirements have been met. If
a student does not pass the exam, the student must correct any deficiencies and meet
again with the DNP Capstone Project Committee. Students are allowed to repeat the
final defense once. If the student fails the comprehensive examination a second time, the
student is dismissed from the DNP program. Please see the DNP Capstone Project
Guidelines for the guidelines for the capstone project and the final defense.

Students who do not complete the capstone project or do not pass the final defense of the
project before completion of DNP program coursework are required to maintain
registration in a minimum of one credit of coursework each semester until the final
defense of the capstone is completed and approved by the DNP Capstone Project
Committee.
DNP Clinical Scholarship Courses

The clinical scholarship courses are a sequence of four courses designed to provide DNP students with 400 hours of clinical experience with a preceptor and a setting for development and implementation of the DNP Capstone Project.

Clinical Preceptor: Each DNP student will select, with the input of their Initial DNP Academic Advisor or their DNP Capstone Project Chair, a preceptor for their 400 hour clinical experience. The preceptor must be an expert in the clinical, educational, or administrative area in which the DNP student wishes to develop expertise. There are currently very few nurses prepared at the DNP level who can serve as the clinical preceptor for DNP students. Therefore, the clinical preceptor will not necessarily be a DNP-prepared advanced practice nurse. Examples of persons who might fill the position of clinical preceptor include an advanced practice nurse or other professional with a doctoral degree; an advanced practice nurse with considerable experience and recognition as an expert in a particular clinical field; a MD with specialized training and experience; a nurse with an administrative position as the Director, Vice President, President, or CEO within a health care organization; a doctorally-prepared nurse educator; a nurse with a business or other degree; an advanced practice nurse in private practice; etc. The clinical preceptor must hold a position in the organization where he/she can facilitate the DNP student’s access to organizational information, decision makers, and other personnel in order to complete the development and implementation of the DNP student’s clinical project over a year practicum within the organization.

When possible and practical, the DNP student is encouraged to select a clinical preceptor outside of their current work setting. In large organizations, for example, the DNP student would be placed for the clinical scholarship courses with a clinical preceptor outside the department or unit where they are employed. The line between current employment and clinical scholarship hours and project(s) must be clear to the organization, the preceptor, the DNP Capstone Project Committee, and the DNP student. The selection of the clinical preceptor must be determined in consultation with the student’s DNP Capstone Project Chair.

Clinical Site: The clinical site for the clinical scholarship courses is important to the development and implementation of the DNP Capstone Project. DNP students are encouraged to select a clinical site that can provide the facilities and expertise for their growth. The clinical site may be a hospital, a health care system, an insurance company, a public health agency, a school/college of nursing, a research institute, a nonprofit agency, or other organization. The home institution must have a contract with the clinical site. The DNP student should begin discussing possible clinical sites early in the DNP program so that the contract can be in place before the student begins the second semester of study. The Initial DNP Academic Advisor and/or the DNP Capstone Project Chair can assist with locating a suitable clinical site.
Clinical Practicum Requirements

**Background Checks:** All DNP students are responsible for compliance with rules and regulations related to the current Background Check. Under the 1995 amendments to the Vulnerable Adults Act, individuals who provide direct contact service to patients or residents in selected health facilities must undergo a background check. The studies are conducted by the licensing division of the Department of Human Services on behalf of the Department of Health. Even though the student may have had a background check completed at the workplace, an additional check must be done by the home university each year.

Minnesota law requires that any person who provides services that involve direct contact with patients and residents at a health care facility licensed by the Minnesota Department of Health have a background study conducted by the state. An individual who is disqualified from having direct patient contact as a result of the background study and whose disqualification is not set aside by the Commissioner of Health, will not be permitted to participate in a clinical placement in a Minnesota licensed health care facility. DNP students who plan to complete the clinical scholarship courses at facilities outside the state of Minnesota must meet the state Board of Nursing requirements in the state where the student will complete the clinical scholarship courses. Failure to participate in a clinical placement required by the academic program could result in ineligibility to qualify for a degree in this program.

**Immunizations:** Proof of current immunizations is required by clinical agencies. All students born in 1957 or later must be in compliance with the Minnesota College Immunization Law (Minnesota Statute 138A.14). Students are expected to be up-to-date with tetanus and diphtheria boosters (within the last 10 years) and measles, mumps, and rubella immunizations must have been given after the first birthday. A completed health form must be on file.

Clinical agencies usually require the following immunizations:

1. Verification of Rubella Immunity by:
   a. Titer
   b. Vaccine
   c. Disease
   d. Conscientious objection
2. Verification of Rubeola Vaccine (two doses)
3. Verification of Mumps Vaccine
4. Information on Chicken Pox (recommended immunization)
5. Evidence of freedom from tuberculosis. Date and result of last PPD. If PPD is positive, the date and result of last chest X-ray must be provided.
6. Date(s) of Hepatitis Vaccine
7. Diphtheria/Tetanus Booster Date (within last 10 years).

**Clinical Hours:** In order to achieve the DNP competencies, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) states that DNP programs should provide a minimum of
1,000 hours of supervised clinical practice post-baccalaureate. Practice experiences should be designed to help students achieve specific learning objectives related to the *DNP Essentials* and specialty competencies. These experiences should be designed to provide systematic opportunities for feedback and reflection. Experiences include in-depth work with experts from nursing as well as other disciplines and provide opportunities for meaningful student engagement within practice environments.

The DNP Consortium requires students to complete 400 hours of clinical practice within the DNP program. Both direct hours (hours spent in the clinical setting with the preceptor) and indirect hours (hours spent working on the DNP Capstone Project, but not necessarily in the clinical setting) are counted within this total. Each of the Clinical Scholarship Courses requires 100 direct and indirect clinical hours. Sixty percent (60 hours) of the total required hours for each of the clinical scholarship courses must be spent in the physical setting under the supervision of the clinical preceptor. At the end of each Clinical Scholarship Course, the student will submit a log of clinical activities. The hours spent in the physical setting with the clinical preceptor must be initialed by both the student and the preceptor. The student must initial the indirect hours. A copy of the log form is found in Appendix B.

DNP students should be aware that certain nursing specialties may require an additional 600 or more supervised clinical hours within their post-baccalaureate education to qualify for certification testing. Students are responsible for discussing certification requirements with their Initial DNP Academic Advisor or their DNP Capstone Project Chair.

*Licensure:* Students must maintain a current unrestricted or unencumbered registered nursing license, and advanced practice licensure, as applicable in the state(s) in which the student is participating in clinical experiences.
DNP Capstone Project Guidelines

*Initial DNP Academic Advisor:* Upon admission to the DNP program, each student will be assigned an initial advisor. The Initial DNP Academic Advisor may be the graduate program director, the DNP coordinator, an instructor in the DNP program, or another graduate faculty member. Each of the DNP Consortium institutions may assign initial advisors differently. However, all Initial DNP Academic Advisors will be familiar with the DNP program, will have clinical expertise, and will be a member of the graduate faculty. The Initial DNP Academic Advisor will generally provide student direction during the first semester of the program and until the DNP Capstone Project Chair and the DNP Capstone Project Committee have been identified and constituted.

*DNP Capstone Project Chair:* By the end of the second semester of the DNP program, the student should identify their DNP Capstone Project Chair. The DNP Capstone Project Chair may be the student’s Initial DNP Academic Advisor or another graduate faculty member at the parent institution of the DNP student. If the DNP Capstone Project Chair is not the Initial DNP Academic Advisor, the change of advisor must be completed in accordance with the home university policy. The DNP Capstone Project Chair should be a graduate faculty member (graduate research faculty member at Minnesota State University, Mankato) who has interest and experience in the student’s DNP Capstone Project topic or field. Each of the Consortium universities has a list of graduate faculty members available to serve as DNP Capstone Project Chairs. The list includes the faculty members’ area of research interest and clinical expertise.

*DNP Capstone Project Committee:* After the DNP Capstone Project Chair has been identified, the student should meet with that faculty member to constitute his/her DNP Capstone Project Committee. The DNP Capstone Project Committee should be constituted no later than the end of the second semester of the DNP program. The DNP Capstone Project Committee is comprised of a minimum of three (3) graduate faculty members. While the DNP Capstone Project Chair must be from the home institution, the other members of the DNP Capstone Project Committee can be from any of the Consortium universities. The major criterion for inclusion on the DNP Capstone Project Committee is graduate faculty status and expertise in the clinical nursing phenomena of interest, the methodology used in the project, or other knowledge related to the student’s DNP Capstone Project. The student is free to add additional members to the DNP Capstone Project Committee. Additional members may include a faculty member from outside the four Consortium institutions, the clinical preceptor, or other individual(s) with specialized knowledge and expertise relevant to the DNP Capstone Project. Unless the additional members of the committee hold graduate faculty status, they will be non-voting members of the committee.
DNP Capstone Project Overview

According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), doctoral education is distinguished by the completion of a specific project that demonstrates synthesis of the student’s work and lays the groundwork for future scholarship. The DNP curriculum primarily involves mastery of an advanced specialty within nursing practice and methods of practice improvement and change. The DNP Capstone Project must be used to demonstrate mastery of the DNP curricular content. The DNP Capstone Project may take a number of forms. One example of a DNP Capstone Project might be a practice change initiative. This may be represented by a pilot study, a program evaluation, a quality improvement project, an evaluation of a new practice model, or a consulting project. Additional examples of a DNP Capstone Project could include practice-oriented manuscript(s) submitted for publication, a research utilization project, or other practice-based project. The theme that links these forms of scholarly experiences is the use of evidence to improve either practice or patient outcomes.

The DNP Capstone Project produces a tangible and deliverable academic product that is derived from the practice immersion experience (400 clinical hours with a preceptor) and is reviewed and evaluated by a three-member DNP Capstone Project Committee. The DNP Capstone Project documents outcomes of the student’s educational experiences, provides a measurable medium for evaluating the clinical immersion experience, and summarizes the student’s growth in knowledge and expertise. The DNP Capstone Project should serve as a foundation for future scholarly practice within the clinical setting.

DNP Qualifying Examination: Prior to beginning the data collection and/or implementation phase of the DNP Capstone Project, doctoral students must pass an oral qualifying examination. This examination is intended to determine if a student is prepared and qualified to begin work on the DNP Capstone Project. In order to be eligible to take the DNP Qualifying Examination, a student must have an appointed DNP Capstone Project Committee and have completed doctoral course work sufficient to prepare a DNP Capstone Project Proposal. The DNP Qualifying Examination will usually occur at the end of the second semester of full-time DNP study or during the summer semester after the first year of full-time DNP study. The exact timing of the DNP Qualifying Examination will be determined by the student in consultation with his/her DNP Capstone Project Chair.

The DNP Capstone Project Committee will prepare a written evaluation of the student’s performance on the DNP Qualifying Examination. Students who fail some or all parts of the DNP Qualifying Examination may be allowed to retake these parts. This decision is made by the student’s DNP Capstone Project Committee and is based on the student’s overall DNP program performance and the extent of the deficits on the DNP Qualifying Examination. No more than two attempts to pass the DNP Qualifying Examination will be permitted. Second DNP Qualifying Examinations should be scheduled so that sufficient time is provided to address weaknesses identified during the initial examination.
The DNP Qualifying Examination will consist of two parts. First, the DNP student will present orally and in writing, the DNP Capstone Project Proposal. The proposal will contain the following sections: Introduction, Review of the Literature, Identification of the Problem or Issue, Data Collection and/or Project Implementation Plan, and Evaluation Method. The proposal will incorporate the guidelines for IRB approval at the home institution.

Second, the DNP Capstone Project Committee will examine each DNP student over the doctoral coursework taken up to this point in the DNP program. The examination will ensure that the DNP student is ready to undertake the DNP Capstone Project.

**DNP Capstone Project:** The DNP Consortium’s expectations of the written DNP Capstone Project reflect the standards set forth by the Council of Graduate Schools. Specifically, the standards state that the project should (a) reveal the student’s ability to analyze, interpret, and synthesize information; (b) demonstrate the student’s knowledge of the literature relating to the project or at least acknowledge prior scholarship on which the project is built; (c) describe the methods and procedures used; (d) present results in a sequential and logical manner; and (e) display the student’s ability to discuss fully and coherently the meaning of the results. The final written DNP Capstone Project Paper will be an aspect of the graded Clinical Scholarship IV: Capstone and will be evaluated based on specified criteria set forth by the faculty.

Each student will have a three-member DNP Capstone Project Committee to review and approve the DNP Capstone Project as it is being developed. The faculty members on the DNP Capstone Project Committee will evaluate the student’s final performance on the DNP Capstone Project Paper. The DNP Capstone Project and its implications for practice improvement or change will be presented in a scholarly Oral Defense of the DNP Capstone Project Paper. Successful defense of the DNP Capstone Project Paper will be required for completion of the Clinical Scholarship IV course.

**Oral Defense of the Capstone Project:** Each student will complete an oral defense of the DNP Capstone Project. The defense will be a formal presentation of the DNP Capstone Project followed by a question and answer period between the student and the DNP Capstone Project Committee. The formal presentation of the capstone project is open to the public. The question and answer period regarding the DNP Capstone Project paper is closed to the public and involves only the student and the DNP Capstone Project Committee members.

**Oral Examination of the DNP student:** The Oral Examination, conducted between the student and the student’s DNP Capstone Project Committee at the Defense of the Capstone Project paper, will occur after the Oral Defense of the Capstone Project Paper. The Oral Examination of the DNP student is an evaluation of the five student learning outcomes foundational to the DNP program (see p. 4). Measures developed according to the five intended student learning outcomes will be used by the DNP Capstone Project Committee as an indirect measure of student learning. The DNP student may be questioned regarding the material presented in any of the courses taken in the program.
DNP Capstone Project Process

The DNP Capstone Project process is outlined below and illustrates how students will progress with the DNP Capstone Project as they complete the sequence of four clinical scholarship courses. The model of incorporating the capstone project into the clinical course sequence provides students with a structured process for development, implementation, and completion of the applied research capstone.

Clinical Scholarship I: The first clinical course includes 100 clinical hours and is designed to help the DNP student identify, with the help of the DNP Capstone Project Chair and the DNP Clinical Preceptor, a practice problem or issue. During the first clinical course, the student will identify the clinical problem or issue, review the relevant literature using a structured review process, develop a bibliography related to the clinical problem or issue, and produce a written product following specified guidelines.

Clinical Scholarship II: The second clinical course includes 100 clinical hours that allow the DNP student to work with the DNP Capstone Project Chair and the DNP Clinical Preceptor to determine the feasibility of addressing the clinical problem or issue within the context of a specific organization. The DNP student must pass the DNP Qualifying Examination and gain IRB approval for the DNP Capstone Project (if necessary) prior to beginning data collection.

Clinical Scholarship III: The third clinical course includes 100 clinical hours and is the implementation phase of the DNP Capstone Project. In consultation with the DNP Capstone Project Chair and the DNP Clinical Preceptor, the DNP student implements the DNP Capstone Project and collects data related to implementation outcomes.

Clinical Scholarship IV Capstone: The final clinical scholarship course includes 100 clinical hours and culminates in the preparation and submission of the final DNP Capstone Project Paper. The DNP Capstone Project Paper forms the basis for the Oral Defense of the DNP Capstone Project. The DNP student must pass the Oral Defense of the DNP Capstone Project and the subsequent Oral Examination of the DNP student to graduate from the program.

If the student cannot complete the DNP Capstone Project, the DNP Capstone Project paper, or both within the final semester of the DNP program, the student can take a grade of “In Progress” for the Clinical Scholarship IV Capstone course. The DNP student must then take the additional one credit course (NURS 798) each semester until completion of the DNP Capstone Project, the DNP Capstone Project Paper, the Oral Defense of the DNP Capstone Project Paper, and the Oral Examination of the DNP student.
### DNP CAPSTONE PROJECT CLINICAL SCHOLARSHIP COURSES, OUTCOMES, PRODUCTS, AND TIMELINE FOR EXPECTED OUTCOMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Course Outcomes</th>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Product Contents</th>
<th>Capstone Project Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Scholarship I</td>
<td>Identify a clinical practice problem or issue and review the relevant literature</td>
<td>Written paper</td>
<td>Introduction and Review of the Literature with Reference List</td>
<td>Spring Year 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Scholarship II</td>
<td>Develop a clinical project to address an advanced practice problem, considering the clinical context</td>
<td>Written paper, IRB Proposal, and DNP Qualifying Examination with DNP Capstone Committee (Student must pass the DNP Qualifying Examination prior to beginning Clinical Scholarship III)</td>
<td>Methodology and Implementation Process</td>
<td>Summer Year 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Scholarship III</td>
<td>Implement a context-sensitive clinical project</td>
<td>Written paper</td>
<td>Description of the project implementation and the evaluation data collection</td>
<td>Fall Year 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Scholarship IV: Capstone</td>
<td>Evaluate and disseminate clinical scholarship knowledge</td>
<td>Written paper and successful Oral Defense of Capstone Project</td>
<td>DNP Capstone Project paper that includes the products of all the clinical scholarship courses</td>
<td>Spring Year 2 and NURS 798 credits until completed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Academic and Clinical Progression

The following policies are specific to the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, DNP program. Students are also responsible for adherence to the university and graduate student policies of their parent institution (i.e, Metropolitan State University; Minnesota State University, Mankato; Minnesota State University Moorhead; or Winona State University).

Academic and Behavioral Integrity

Academic and Behavioral Integrity is based on the premise that each student has the responsibility to:

1. uphold the highest standards of academic and behavioral integrity in the student's own work,
2. refuse to tolerate violations of academic and behavioral integrity, and
3. foster a high sense of integrity and social responsibility in the DNP program and professional nursing.

In order to protect the integrity of the teaching, learning and evaluation process, all persons involved in the DNP program must respect the principle of academic freedom and to behave with academic and behavioral integrity. Briefly stated:

Behavioral integrity shall consist of demonstrating behaviors that are consistent with expected professional behaviors in the classroom and the clinical setting. Academic misconduct shall consist of any attempt to misrepresent one's performance on any exercise submitted for evaluation.

The primary responsibility for ensuring adherence to the principle of academic and behavioral integrity rests with students and faculty. Any infraction that comes to the attention of any person should be brought to the attention of the faculty member to whose course it pertains.

Possible faculty actions in a case of alleged academic and behavioral integrity misconduct include:

1. For events in which the behavior is determined to be isolated or the result of the student not understanding the specific situation, the student will be advised and/or referred to an appropriate academic resource for remediation or assistance.

2. For incidents where there is evidence that the student intentionally and knowingly violated the academic integrity policy, the faculty member will refer the charges to the Chairperson of the DNP Program Management Council with a recommendation for one of the following: academic
DNP Student Handbook

advisement and/or reprimand; a grade of F or reduction of grade on the specific piece of work; a grade of F or reduction of the grade in the course; or probation, suspension, or dismissal from the program. The final decision regarding action will be made by the Program Management Council.

Conditions that May Lead to Dismissal from the Program

The following are situations in which a student would be dismissed from the DNP program:

1. Violation of academic or behavioral integrity or chemical use and abuse policies.
2. Inability to provide safe patient care in clinical experiences.
3. More than one course grade of “C” or less.
4. Failure to enroll in DNP courses for more than one year.
5. Failure to pass either the DNP Qualifying Examination or the DNP Oral Defense of the Capstone Project/Oral Examination of the DNP Student after a second attempt.

Exceptions to Policy or Requirements

Students requesting exceptions to any academic policy must submit a written request with the rationale for the exception to the Chairperson of the Program Management Council. Students are encouraged to visit with her/his academic advisor or DNP Capstone Project Chair prior to submission of the request for policy exception.

Chemical Use and Abuse

Chemical abuse shall be defined as the misuse of alcohol and other drugs which impair the individual's ability to meet standards of performance in classroom and clinical settings or contribute to inappropriate interpersonal interactions. Chemical dependency is defined as a state of chemical abuse in which there is a compulsion to take a drug, either continuously or periodically, in order to experience its psychic effects or to avoid the discomfort of its absence. Chemical abuse is viewed as a controllable disease that alters the student's level of health and ability to perform his/her duties and responsibilities.

No student shall come to class or clinical settings under the influence of alcohol, controlled substances, or other drugs that affect his/her alertness, coordination, reaction, response, judgment, decision-making, or safety.

When a student is taking medically authorized drugs or other substances that may alter judgment or performance, the student has the ethical responsibility to notify the instructor of the potential or actual alteration.
If a student violates any of these policies, the student will be removed from the current clinical or classroom setting and will be referred to the appropriate source for drug and/or alcohol abuse treatment/assistance. Students in violation of these policies will also be referred to the Program Management Council who will determine the most appropriate course of action for progression in the program which may include dismissal from the program. In all instances, the DNP program will be in compliance with state regulations regarding nursing practice and reporting of chemical use and abuse.
Appendix A

DNP PROGRAM COMPUTER REQUIREMENTS

Hardware

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Processor</td>
<td>Recommend Celeron M, Duo Core, Inter Core 2 Duo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard Drive</td>
<td>40 GB or larger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAM</td>
<td>512 MB minimum, 1 GB recommended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD-ROM</td>
<td>Required, CDRW recommended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DVD</td>
<td>Optional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color monitor</td>
<td>Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network Card</td>
<td>Required, internal wireless compatible with 802.11b or 802.11g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modem</td>
<td>Required for high speed access via cable or DSL broadband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USB Flashdrive</td>
<td>Recommended</td>
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<tr>
<td>Surge Protector</td>
<td>Recommended</td>
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<tr>
<td>Headphones with</td>
<td>Required for Internet meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>microphone</td>
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</table>

Software *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operating System</td>
<td>Microsoft Window XP professional preferred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
<td>Microsoft Office 2003 or Office 2007 (need word processor, PowerPoint, and Excel as minimum programs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virus Protection</td>
<td>Required to access campus networks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* MSUM offers discounted software for current students at eAcademy at http://www.mnstate.edu/it/esoftware.htm

Free Plugins by searching web for each program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plugin</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adobe Reader</td>
<td>Quicktime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Player</td>
<td>Flash</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Consortium
DNP Program Clinical Scholarship Course Student Log Form

Course Number and Name: _______________________________________________

Student Name: __________________________________ Page: _____

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Indirect or Direct</th>
<th>Clinical Practicum Activities</th>
<th>Student Initials</th>
<th>Preceptor Initials</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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