DNP Project Requirements

RUTGERS School of Nursing

Requirements for Development, Implementation, Evaluation and Dissemination of DNP Projects

DEVELOPED: FEBRUARY 2017

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Overview

Rutgers University School of Nursing (RUSN) offers the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) as a terminal degree option for nurses. The purpose of this document is to articulate the requirements for the development, implementation, evaluation, and dissemination of the DNP Project. It is important to note, that the DNP is a degree in nursing, it is not a nursing role. Therefore, students must meet all other curriculum and program requirements for their track. All students receiving the DNP degree, Post-Master's or Post-Baccalaureate (Post-Bacc), are required to complete a project and submit all project requirements prior to graduation.

There are 4 phases to completing this process:

4 Phases of DNP Project	
Phase 1	**Core Courses, Phenomenon of Interests & Networking**
Phase 2	**Planning & Development**
Phase 3	**Implementation & Evaluation**
Phase 4	**Dissemination & Final Steps**

Process for Development:

The RUSN faculty developed these requirements in alignment with the American Association of Colleges of Nursing *DNP Essentials* (2006), White Paper, *Doctor of Nursing Practice: Current Issues and Clarifying Recommendations* (2015), standards from professional organizations, such as the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF), and current evidence-based practice. This document was approved by the faculty on **March 27, 2017**.

The requirements described here supersede any previous policies or instructions.

DNP Requirements Development Process		
Faculty reviewed and discussed previous version (February 2016)	**Debate and Voting** **Full Faculty**	**DNP Document Approval:** **March 27, 2017**

- The faculty anticipate review of this document and process annually.
- All stakeholders are offered training on this process. The training will be updated annually.

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Getting Started: Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Project

All students enrolled in the Doctor of Nursing Practice Program will complete a DNP Project as a requirement for graduation. The DNP Program is an academic project (AACN, 2015). The DNP Coursework and the DNP Project contribute to the completion of the DNP Essentials.

The clinical DNP project is an opportunity to apply skills obtained in the theoretical coursework. 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 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 stakeholders, other scholars, and the public.

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

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

It is also important to note, that the appropriate term now is, ***DNP Project***. The AACN (2015) recommends **against** the use of the word, ***capstone***.

Clarification of DNP versus PhD Scholarship

There are essentially two types of doctoral nursing scholarship. Nurses may choose toward a terminal degree in nursing via a PhD route or a DNP route. Though both types of scholarship may generate new information, DNP scholars do not test hypothesis, theoretical models, or generate information that is considered generalizable (AACN, 2015, p 2). Rather DNP scholars focus on synthesis, translation, implementation, and evaluation of evidence to solve clinical problems. To quote the AACN, "…DNP programs focus on translation of new science, it's application and evaluation," (p.2). The faculty at Rutgers School of Nursing consider the DNP v PhD distinction to be of great importance and therefore, further include the AACN (2015) language here:

> "Following a review of the federal definition of research…the DNP Task Force has concluded that:
>
> The distinction between research-focused and practice-focus scholarship be clarified to state: …Research-focused graduates are prepared to generate knowledge through rigorous research and statistical methodologies that may be broadly applicable or generalizable; Practice-focused graduates are prepared to demonstrate innovation of practice change, translation of evidence, and the implementation of quality improvement processes in specific practice settings, systems, or with specific populations to improve health or health outcomes (AACN, 2015, p.2)."

Table 1.0 Clarification of DNP versus PhD Scholarship

Concept	DNP (Evaluation Principles)	PhD (Research Principles)
Nature of Knowledge	Problem Solving, Translation	Discovery
Nature of Results	Appraisal, Application & Evaluation of Current Knowledge	New Knowledge
Level of Control	Moderate-Low, Variable	High, Precision
Statistical Power	Optional	Essential
Standards	Repeatability & Impact Accuracy, Utility, Feasibility, Worth	Validity Accuracy, Generalizability
Questions	Quality, Value, Significance	Association, Effects
Planning	Evaluation: - Identify a Problem - Engage Stakeholders - Needs Assessment - Implement & Evaluate 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
Description of Program	Objectives: To prepare nurse leaders at the highest level of nursing practice to improve patient outcomes and translate research into practice Competencies: AACN *DNP Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advancing Nursing Practice* (2006) *** Additional competencies dependent on nursing role	Objectives: To prepare nurses at the highest level of nursing science with an ability to conduct research to advance nursing science Competencies: AACN *The Research-Focused Doctoral Program in Nursing: Pathways to Excellence* (2010)
Students	Commitment to a practice-oriented career Strong interest in improving outcomes of patient care and population health.	Commitment to a research-oriented career Strong interest in developing new nursing knowledge and formal scientific inquiry.
Program Evaluation	Outcome: Healthcare improvements and contributions via practice, policy change, and practice scholarship Receives accreditation by nursing accreditor. Rutgers School of Nursing is accredited by CCNE.	Outcome: Contributes to healthcare improvements via formal science. Receives oversight by Rutgers 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*.

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. A *DNP Mapping Activity* is offered in Appendix 1, to assist the student and faculty in ensuring that all *DNP Essentials* are met by the end of the DNP Program.

The DNP Project itself provides an opportunity to operationalize skill 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 Mapping Activity*** with their Final project documentation into the electronic project drop boxes (drop boxes are discussed in a later section). Refer to the full description of these items in the document available at: http://www.aacn.nche.edu/publications/position/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

In addition to the *DNP Essentials*, prior to enrolling in project planning courses, the DNP student must have an ability to formulate answerable clinical questions, complete literature reviews, critically appraise evidence/clinical practice guidelines, and articulate models for translation of evidence into the clinical setting. Students must understand the quality improvement process, be capable of interacting with technology and data, and describe driving forces in global, nation, and local healthcare settings. **The student is charged with identifying a clinical problem, or practice gap, that can be impacted by the DNP Project.** Ultimately, the DNP Student will **develop** a feasible, evidence-based solution. Then, the DNP Student will **implement** the solution, **evaluate** the process, and **disseminate** their findings.

Adherence to Curriculum Plan

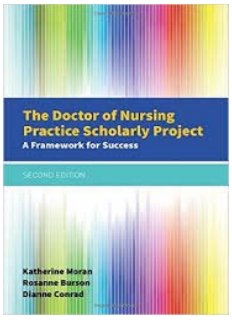
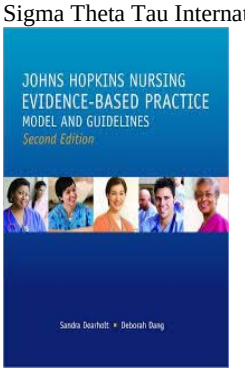
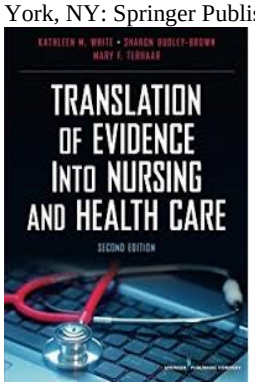
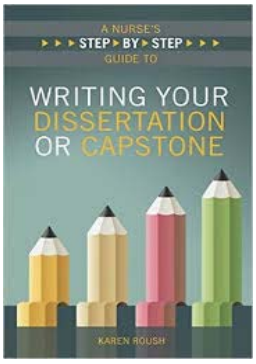
Students are required to adhere to the curriculum plan for their declared track. Students are not permitted to take DNP courses early, out of sequence or without meeting the pre- or co-requisites

described in Syllabus Part A of each course. The Specialty Director for the Track is responsible for student academic advising.

Required Textbooks

The following list describes the required textbooks for DNP Students starting the DNP Project process. Faculty serving in the capacity of DNP Project Chairs, should also be familiar with these textbooks and use them when mentoring DNP Students. Students are reminded that faculty may have additional requirements depending on the course or nature of the DNP Project. The content of these references were used as the foundation of developing the DNP Project courses and related grading rubrics. A brief summation of each is presented here.

Table 1.1 Required Textbooks

Moran, K., Burson, R., Conrad, D. (2016). *The Doctor of Nursing Practice Scholarly Project: A Framework for Success*. Sudbury, MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning, 2nd edition.  Excellent general reference of the entire scope of the DNP Project. It describes the general history of the DNP degree and takes the reader through the process using the DNP Essentials.	Dearholt, S. & Dang, D. (2012). *Johns Hopkins Nursing Evidence-Based Practice Model and Guidelines*. Indianapolis, IN: Sigma Theta Tau International.  The PET Model (Practice Question, Evidence, and Translation Process) guides the student in the process of developing a clinical question, evidence appraisal, and assembling a table of evidence. The appendix of this book contains key worksheets using in Project Planning.
White, K., Dudley-Brown, S., & Terhaar, M. (2016). *Translation of Evidence into Nursing and Health Care*. New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company, 2nd edition.  Reference for the work related to translation. Chapter 8, in particular, talks about the top 15 methods for translating evidence. Helps students develop thoughts on interventions and evaluation plans.	Rousch, K. (2015). *A Nurses' Step-By-Step Guide to Writing your Dissertation or Capstone*. Indianapolis, IN: Sigma Theta Tau International.  This reference is critical for the actual writing process. It offers simple chapter summaries that help ensure students are writing clearly and articulating the elements of their projects.

Setting Up for Success

The DNP Project process is challenging, but rewarding. Being successful will require excellent time management and strong organization skills. Prior to starting the DNP Project process, the student should review the Rousch (2015) proposed, ***Checklist for Success***.

- Do you have a dedicated space to work?
- Have you scheduled regular intervals of time for thinking, reading, and writing?
- Have you prepared yourself and your family?
- Did you read examples of other DNP Projects?
- Did you read the AACN *White Paper*, *DNP Essentials*, and RUSN *DNP Requirements*?
- Do you have a Google Docs, Drop box, or other cloud account?
- Do you have a free conference call account set up for team meetings?
- Are you using bibliographic software, such as EndNote?
- Have you met the Medical Librarian?
- Are you brainstorming your ideas with faculty? In that process have you met a faculty member with similar interests who might serve as a Project Chair?
- Do you know how to set up an appointment at the Writing Center?
- Are you aware of the Student Support Services at RUSN?

The following links may be helpful as you get yourself set up for success. Many of these resources can be accessed on the Rutgers School of Nursing website.

George Smith Library
https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/smith

Ask a Librarian
https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/help_email

Using EndNote (this is free for you as a student)
http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/EndNote

RBHS Writing Center
http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/smith/services/RBHS_writing_center

Student Services
http://nursing.rutgers.edu/students/index.html

Doctors of Nursing Practice
http://www.doctorsofnursingpractice.org/

Phase 1: Core Courses, Phenomenon of Interests & Networking

In this section, we will review the action items for DNP students in Phase 1 of the DNP Project. Even prior to admission, students should begin a brainstorming process regarding the DNP Project. During admission interviews, students have been asked about what potential topics they may be interested in. During **core courses**, students will be guided by faculty in learning which will help develop what is known as a ***Phenomenon of Interest***. In Chapter 5, Moran, et al., (2016), a Phenomenon of Interest is the first step of the DNP Project process. It is a clinical problem or area of concern that is, "**meaningful to the DNP Student and *valued* by the practice setting**." Ideally, the DNP student assembles information for the DNP Project throughout the core courses. Refer to Table 5-2 in Moran, et al., (2016) for the ***Phenomenon Assessment Worksheet***, which may be helpful.

DNP students are encouraged to think creatively and to explore subjects they find interesting. However, the DNP student must also secure a site, or context, in which to implement their DNP Project. The student is required to secure a written, ***Letter of Cooperation*** (Appendix 2) during week 2 of the DNP Project Planning course. In other words, the If the student cannot identify an organization willing to host their project, they may have to develop a new idea. By looking at the national healthcare agenda, students might anticipate some organizational needs. For example, if the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is penalizing an organization for patient readmissions, the organization may be interested in a DNP Project to improve this health care outcome. Students are also encouraged to examine issues related to their nursing role. For example, if a Post-Bacc to DNP student, in training to become a nurse practitioner, consider exploring issues related to the population of focus – family, pediatrics, women's health, and so on.

In Phase I of the DNP Project process, the student should start **networking**. Review the faculty profiles on the RUSN homepage. Talk to faculty with similar interest. Get engaged in the community and in professional organizations. Talk to colleagues and your employer. Talk to clinical preceptors about the challenges they see in the clinical setting. Networking will increase the possibility of connecting a Phenomenon of Interest you enjoy to a project context. The Specialty Director for DNP Projects keeps a working list of potential DNP Projects. Your own Track-Specific Specialty Director will also be invaluable in helping to connect you to potential ideas.

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Training)

All DNP students are required to complete CITI (Collaborative Institutional Training Institute) Training, which is typically done in Phase 1 of the DNP Project. Keep a certificate of completion to **upload to the electronic drop box**. This is the first step in IRB compliance.

To access the training go to: https://orra.rutgers.edu/citi

Phase 2: Planning & Development

When students have completed all core courses and/or other pre-requisites for their track, they will enroll in the appropriate DNP Project Planning course. Your Track Specialty Director will advise you on which course you should take.

DNP Project Checklist

After the drop-add period, all students will be enrolled into an electronic learning platform **[learning management system (LMS)]**, entitled, ***DNP Project Checklist***, which will contain a series of **electronic drop boxes**. Students are required to upload the requested documents as they move through the DNP Project process. The student will not lose access to this platform between semesters. It is intended to create a method for storing critical documents electronically and to promote communication by the RUSN staff and faculty involved in the project process. Since students are not able to visualize this information until they are enrolled in a Project Planning course, a summarized version is presented in Appendix 3, ***DNP Project Checklist***.

DNP Question Development Tool

Students should arrive on Day 1 of their respective DNP Project Planning course with a completed, ***DNP Question Development Tool*** (Appendix 4). The document is adapted from Dearholt & Dang (2012) and ensures that the student has thoughtfully engaged in the development of their Phenomenon of Interest and made contact with an organization that values a potential DNP project.

The DNP Project Team

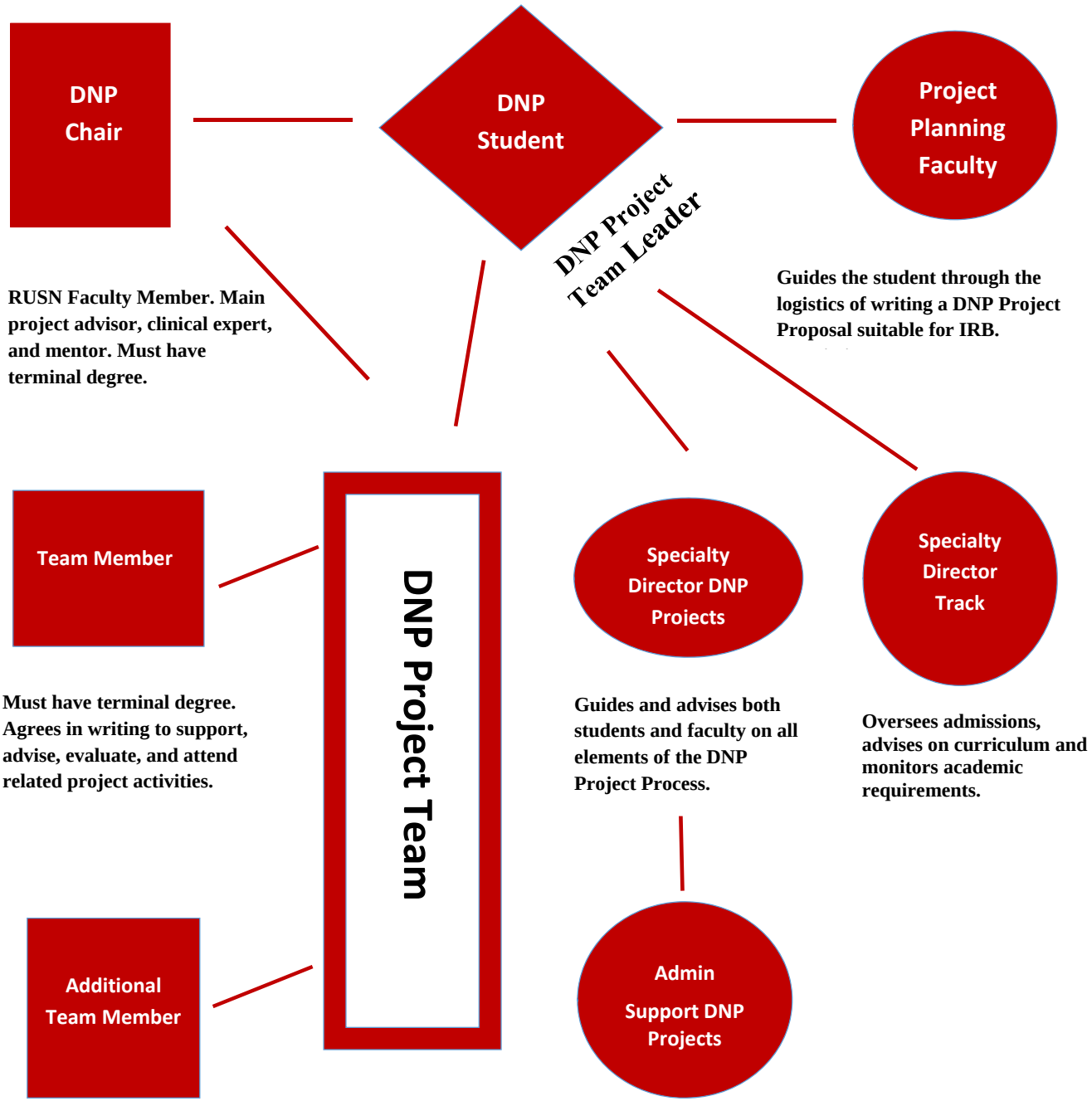
Next, the DNP student must assemble a **DNP Project Team** according to the RUSN requirements. This is should be completed no later than week 2 of the DNP Project Planning course. The DNP Team will work closely with the Project Planning Faculty to advise the student on development of a written project proposal suitable for IRB submission.

Besides the student, the **DNP Chair** is the most critical member of the team. This person must be a Rutgers School of Nursing faculty member with a doctoral degree (DNP, PhD, EdD, MD…). The DNP Chair may offer the student advice and assistance on selection of other Team Members. **Every project is required to have a DNP Chair and at least one DNP Team Member.** The second Team Member is also required to have a terminal degree, but does not have to be a RUSN faculty member. Students often select a physician or other colleague they are working with at the hosting organization. Depending on the nature of the DNP Project, it may or may not be necessary to assemble additional Team Members.

Carefully review the responsibilities of the DNP Project Team. Remember that **DNP Project Team Members must agree in writing** (Appendix 5) to be engaged in the process. This includes advising, review of the project proposal, providing support during implementation, providing the required evaluations, and attendance at all academic DNP presentations. The key elements of each DNP Team Member, the student, and RUSN Faculty and Staff are visually articulated in Figure 1.0

below. In alignment with the recommendations of the AACN White Paper (2015), the RUSN utilizes the term ***DNP Team*** and **not** *DNP Committee*. The AACN recommends against the use of the word, *committee* in regard to DNP Projects so that this process is better distinguished from the elements of a PhD dissertation. A full description of responsibilities will follow in the next section.

Figure 1.0 Roles of the DNP Team



Responsibilities of DNP Team Members

Responsibilities of the Student as Team Leader:

Qualification: Enrollment in appropriate courses as supervised by Track Specialty Director

1. Maintain consistent and effective communication with DNP Chair.
2. Collaborate with Doctoral Chair to schedule meetings for advisement, formal proposal presentation, and other Project related activities.
3. Submit work to the Doctoral Team that demonstrates a high level of leadership and scholarship.
4. Coordinate communication and activity between RUSN and the hosting organization.
5. Ensure compliance to all DNP Project requirements and IRB requirements.

Responsibilities of DNP Chair:

Qualification: Rutgers School of Nursing Faculty Member with terminal degree (DNP or PhD…)

1. Assure eIRB compliance, mentor student throughout the preparation of the DNP project proposal, the project development, implementation, evaluation process, and the Final written DNP Project Document.
2. Collaborate with student to schedule Team meetings, and especially for the proposal presentation and Final DNP project presentation.
3. Lead Team review and approval of the DNP Project Proposal, DNP Experience Plan, DNP Project Log, and Final DNP Project paper, presentations and publications.
4. Communicate effectively with team members.
5. Provide feedback to student on written drafts in a timely manner.
6. Document student progress toward completion of DNP Project requirements.
7. Mentor new faculty who have not previously participated in a DNP Project.

Responsibilities DNP Team Member:

Qualification: Terminal degree is professional area.

1. Advise and critique drafts of the developing DNP Project proposal.
2. Participate in the Team review, approval of the Project Proposal, and Final Project

presentations.

3. Provide feedback to student in a timely manner.
4. Communicate concerns to student and DNP Chair in a timely manner.

Responsibilities of Additional DNP Team Members (if applicable)*:*

Qualification: Ability to make professional contribution of knowledge or skill to DNP Project.

1. Accepts the same responsibilities as the above listed DNP Team Member.

Choosing an Individual versus Group Project

At the doctoral level, students are encouraged to complete individual DNP Projects. During the DNP Project Planning process students frequently inquire about doing a group project. The choice of completing an individual v a group project, must be made at the onset of project planning.

Since this is such a highly debated subject, the AACN (2015) *White Paper* makes the following remarks regarding group projects, "…group projects are acceptable if they are consistent with the aims of the project…" (p. 4). It further adds that, each student must be **INDIVIDUALLY EVALUATED** using a rubric on all elements of project development, implementation, evaluation, and dissemination. Each student must have a clear leadership role on at least one set of aim/objectives. There must also be a record of each student's contribution to the project (AACN, 2015). The RUSN endorses these recommendations.

The faculty at Rutgers School of Nursing set the following requirements for Group Projects:

- The maximum allowance per DNP Project is 2 students.
- The students and DNP Chair must agree to comply with the AACN (2015) recommendations for group work.
- The DNP Project Proposal must include the form, ***Group Project Plan*** (Appendix 6)

If students need further advisement on this decision they should consult Specialty Director for DNP Projects, depending on the nature of their question.

Types of DNP Projects

At Rutgers School of Nursing, all DNP Projects must meet the minimum expectations as outlined by the AACN (2015): 1) change that impacts outcomes; 2) system focus; 3) demonstration of implementation; 4) plan for sustainability; 5) evaluation of process; 6) have a clinical utility or importance; and 7) provide a foundation of future scholarship. There are several different ways these requirements can be operationalized. In Moran, et al., (2016) Chapter 6, Figure 6-3 lists

examples of some of the forms a DNP Project may take. To illustrate these concepts, the following common examples are offered:

Quality Improvement Projects: efforts to improve services to impact a health outcome. According to the IOM, this means of improving safety, effectiveness, and delivering care that is patient-centered, timely, efficient, and equitable (Moran, et al., 2016).

Healthcare Delivery Innovation: examining, developing, implementing, evaluating, new methods for the approach to screening, referral, or disease management (Moran, et al., 2016).

Healthcare Policy Analysis: working to evaluate the historical context of policies to ensure that they are congruent with needs. Student may also examine adherence to policies (Moran, et al., 2016).

Program Development and Evaluation: planning, implementing, and evaluating programs that improve health and impact health outcomes (Moran, et al., 2016).

Systematic Review: methodical evaluation and appraisal of evidence to arrive at a synthesized conclusion. All systematic review projects require completion of skill training, approval prior to Project Planning, and must demonstrate the minimum DNP Project Requirements. Refer to the next section to expand on this policy.

Depending on the skill sets of the DNP student, projects may also have strong technology, information-technology, leadership, or education components. When a clinical problem has been identified, the student can collaborate with the DNP Chair and other stakeholders to determine the best approach. Students are encouraged to review previous DNP Projects, consider current evidence, and collaborate to promote scholarship.

Clarification: Systematic Review Requirements

The **Northeast Institute for Evidence Synthesis and Translation (NEST)** was established in 2004 as a center of excellence with the International **Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI)**. Rutgers School of Nursing is distinguished in its unique affiliation. The JBI methodology for completion of systematic review includes evaluation process for many different types of research and it not limited to only randomized controlled trials. The school is proud of the globally distinguished faculty who are available to train DNP students in this process. To read more about our institute and faculty, go to: http://nursing.rutgers.edu/nest/index.html.

In the AACN (2015) White Paper, expresses concern that systematic reviews do not meet the expectations of DNP Projects. In particular, the paper points out that DNP Projects require elements of implementation, evaluation, and sustainability. Therefore, the systematic review by itself is not appropriate for a DNP Project (AACN, 2015). At RUSN, because of our globally recognized institutes and trained faculty, systematic review is endorsed as a DNP Project **if the following requirements are met**:

1. The DNP student must take the Systematic Review skill training as an elective or workshop prior to starting DNP Project Planning. The process is described on the ***Systematic Review Consultation Form*** (Appendix 7).

2. The DNP student must demonstrate consultation with the Institute faculty to discuss the DNP Project feasibility by completing the ***Systematic Review Consultation Form*** (Appendix 7).

3. The DNP student must still complete the DNP Project Planning and Implementation courses to ensure plans for implementation, evaluation, and sustainability.

Clarification: Education Based Project Recommendations

Almost all DNP Projects involve some element or degree of education. However, educational interventions **alone**, are generally insufficient as DNP Projects. Review the IOM (2011) *Clinical Practice Guidelines We Can Trust.* In Chapter 6, it talks about the best strategies to ensure that healthcare providers adhere to guidelines. You will note, that education in the form of in-service, etc., results in implementation of information into practice only 4-6% of the time (IOM, 2011). However, when education is coupled with other strategies, such as audit and feedback or reminders, a bigger impact is made on the healthcare outcome (IOM, 2011). Students and DNP Teams should discuss this point.

Nursing education is highly valued and extremely important. DNP Projects are **NOT** intended to develop DNP students in the role of nurse educators unless they are already trained and working in that capacity (AACN, 2015). For example, if a Post-Master's DNP student is employed by a school of nursing and wants to develop a project on debriefing practices, then that is appropriate. In contrast if a Post-Bacc to DNP is in training to become a nurse practitioner, it would be inappropriate for them to develop a nursing simulation program for FNPs. They do not have the training or expertise to do the project. Students who aspire to be nurse educators, will need and should seek additional preparation and training in that role (AACN, 2015).

Writing the DNP Project Proposal

The primary purpose of the DNP Project Planning course is to train the DNP student on the process of developing a written DNP Project Proposal. The written proposal is then formally presented to the DNP Project Team and if approved, is then submitted to the Institutional Review Board(s) (IRB). The textbook by Rousch (2015) is an essential part of this process.

To begin this process, the student has completed the ***DNP Question Development Tool*** (Appendix 4), networked with faculty and stakeholders to ensure the hosting organization values the project, and identified/secured a DNP Project Chair. As the work of proposal writing unfolds, a ***Letter of Cooperation*** (Appendix 2) is secured and the DNP Team Members sign the ***DNP Team Signature Form*** (Appendix 5).

The ***DNP Project Proposal Cover***, must be formatted according to the example (Appendix 8) and APA 6th edition must be used throughout the document. A list of ***Required Content*** (Appendix 9) is presented to assist the student with heading labels and table of contents. Depending on the nature of the project, this list may need to be expanded. The Required Content is a minimal expectation. In the next sections, we will further define some of the particular components of the required content.

Concept Map

As part of the DNP Project Proposal, the student will include a concept map. The concept map should take the project model or framework for translation and illustrate how the project will be developed, implemented, and evaluated. For example, if the student is doing a quality improvement project, they would use the PDSA cycle to illustrate how the project steps relate to the model. The grading rubric for the concept map from the DNP Project Planning course is provided (Appendix 10).

Table of Evidence

As a part of the DNP Project Proposal, the student will include a table of evidence that answers the proposed clinical question of the project. To standardize the elements of the table, the students will use the headings and requirements presented (Appendix 11). This document is the assignment developed for the DNP Project Planning course and is adapted from the Johns Hopkins model described by Dearholt and Dang (2012).

Other

In the appendices of the DNP Project Proposal, the DNP student should include copies of the Letter of Cooperation, project consent, recruitment flyer, surveys, measurement tools, evaluation instruments, chart audit forms, the project budge and timeline, concept map, table of evidence, and any other items essential to the project.

Formal Presentation of the DNP Project Proposal

The DNP Student and DNP Chair will work together to assess the progress of the DNP Project Planning. When the written Project Proposal is complete, the student will do a **Formal DNP Project Presentation** to the DNP Team. The presentation should be approximately 1 hour and should summarize the project. Students should use the Rutgers School of Nursing Power Point Template **(available on LMS, DNP Project Checklist)** for formatting the presentation slides. The written Project Proposal must be submitted to the DNP Team at least 2 weeks prior to the presentation to allow time for the DNP Team to review. On the day of the presentation, the DNP student should provide written copies of the paper and the slide presentation for the Chair and Team Member(s).

After the presentation, the DNP Team will complete the ***Project Proposal Evaluation Form*** (Appendix 12) and determine if: 1) the project is approved as written; 2) the project is approved with minor revisions; or 3) if the project is rejected. If the project is not approved, the DNP Team must give written feedback on areas of deficiency. The DNP Team must also give permission for the student to submit the project to the IRB.

Institutional Review Board(s) Requirements

All DNP Projects at Rutgers School of Nursing must be submitted to the Rutgers University Institutional Review Board, also known as IRB. There are NO EXECPTIONS to this rule. If a student is working with a host organization that has their own IRB process, the student must **submit the project to BOTH IRBs**. Generally, this is done simultaneously. Students must also show proof of **CITI Training** (discussed in previous section).

The Rutgers IRB is electronic and thus is often referred to as, "eIRB". To access the site, go to: https://orra.rutgers.edu/eirb. Students will be provided training on the process during the DNP Project Planning course. It is recommended that the student explore the IRB site and incorporate the required IRB Templates and Forms for the Health Sciences into their project documents as the project is developed. When the information is submitted, there is an internal process in which a Rutgers School of Nursing faculty member, Dr. Margaret Sullivan, reviews the application to ensure technical compliance. Then, if the elements are satisfactory, it will go to the next step of review. All of this communication occurs electronically. **Please refer to the eIRB Checklist for DNP Students located in Appendix 13.**

The student can track the status of the project. The student must remain alert to electronic notifications from the IRB and make modifications as requested. When all modifications are made, the student will be notified that the project is approved. To access the Rutgers IRB Templates, go to: https://orra.rutgers.edu/formsandtemplateshealthsci

Students should NOT submit any part of the proposal to the IRB without written permission from the Chair. The *Project Proposal Evaluation Form* with a rating, "Approved as Written," is considered proper documentation for submission and should be included with the IRB submission.

Student cannot begin any part of project implementation until: 1) all IRB approvals are obtained; and 2) the DNP Project Chair gives permission. Students should have IRB approval prior to beginning the Implementation course. Refer to your curriculum and Track Specialty Director for further instruction.

Figure 1.1 Overview of DNP Project Planning Process

Phase 3: Implementation & Evaluation

In Phase 3, the student will engage in the implementation and evaluation of the DNP Project. Upon IRB approval, and with the permission of the DNP Project Chair, the student may begin to execute the project implementation. This may occur before the start of the DNP Implementation Course if the requirements are met.

Students will enroll in a course DNP Project Implementation. The Track Specialty Director is responsible for advising students on course enrollment. **Students should have IRB approval for the project PRIOR to enrollment in the course.** The purpose of the course is to provide support to the student and DNP Team during the implementation process. Students and DNP Teams are also assisted in the project evaluation process and guided through elements of writing the ***Final DNP Project Paper***. Since it is important to disseminate the project's findings, students are instructed in activities such as planning manuscript submission, constructing professional poster presentations, website development, and abstract preparation for professional conferences. They will also be guided through the expectations for the **Final Steps** of the DNP Project Process.

DNP Experience Hours (Formerly Implementation Hours)

The AACN (2015) asserts that to achieve mastery of the *DNP Essentials*, a nurse must complete a minimum of 1,000 beyond the BSN or baccalaureate degree. These hours must be part of an academic program. Work experience is not accepted as a substitute. **The RUSN DNP Program requires 500 DNP Experience Hours to meet this requirement**. To clarify the meaning of this recommendation, examine the following:

Entry to DNP Degree as a Post-Master's student:
Clinical Hours from MSN Program + 500 DNP Experience Hours = 1,000 + hrs.

Entry to DNP Degree as a Post-Baccalaureate student:
Clinical Hours from Advanced Practice Training + 500 DNP Experience Hours = 1,000 + hrs.

Many 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*." It further states, "Faculty

are responsible for assessing student's learning needs and designing experiences that allow students 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. The hours are also intended to operationalize the DNP Project, which is why these hours are sometimes referred to as, ***Implementation Hours***. Students, faculty, and the DNP Team should collaborate to develop the learning objectives and learning evaluation plan for the students. A form ***DNP Experience Plan*** to facilitate this process is presented in Appendix 14.

DNP Experience Plan & Log

During the DNP Project Planning course, students, faculty, and the DNP Team will collaborate to develop the DNP Experience Plan. As activities are planned, the student can then later document them as a log of hours (Appendix 14). This process should begin by having the student complete the ***DNP Mapping Activity*** (Appendix 1). This exercise will help illustrate what the student has experience to date in the DNP core courses and DNP Planning Process. From there, it can be determined what additional experiences will be beneficial in implementing the DNP Project, evaluating the DNP Project, and meeting all of the DNP Essentials. The **DNP Experience Plan should be approved by the DNP Project Chair** prior the DNP Implementation Course. A copy of the approved plan, must be uploaded to the **DNP Project Checklist** platform **LMS**. The student will then use the Plan to confirm completion of hours.

Every DNP Project is unique and the DNP Experience can vary. According to the AACN (2015), DNP Experiences are designed to provide:

- systematic opportunities for feedback and reflection
- in-depth work/mentorship with experts (nursing and other professions)
- opportunities for engagement in the practice environment (not just pt care)
- opportunities to build and assemble knowledge/expertise at a high level
- opportunities to further application, synthesis, and expansion of learning
- experience the context of advance practice within which the Project occurs
- opportunities for integration and synthesis of all *DNP Essentials*

To establish a baseline expectation, the RUSN faculty endorse these points:

- reading is NOT acceptable for the DNP Experience
- general review of literature is NOT acceptable for the DNP Experience
- clinical hours completed in relation to the Advanced Practice Training (for Post-Bacc to DNP students) are NOT counted toward the DNP Experience. For example, the NP

student completes 135 clinical hours for **X** clinical course.

When the student has completed the DNP Experience Hours (500), the DNP Project Chair will sign the DNP Experience Plan & Log. The student will then upload the signed form into the electronic drop box on the **DNP Project Checklist** site **LMS.**

During orientation, the DNP student will be introduced to the idea of tracking project related hours. They will be asked to track all activities they believe to be related to the DNP Project. In the process of developing the DNP Experience Plan & Log, the DNP Chair can review the log to date and approve or deny the listed activity as appropriate to the project. The Chair should ensure that the largest number of hours are dedicated to project implementation and that all activities map to the DNP Essentials. The student may use Word, Excel, or CHART for the DNP Experience Plan & Log. The document must reflect: date of activity, activity description, hours spent on activity, and completion of 500 Experience Hours. The completed DNP Experience Plan & Log, must be uploaded to the electronic drop box on the **DNP Project Checklist** site.

Phase 4: Dissemination and Final Steps

The DNP Project findings must be disseminated. This process takes place in the academic setting and beyond. To meet the RUSN DNP Project requirements, **all DNP Projects** will be disseminated using the 3P's of Dissemination: 1) Final DNP Project **P**aper; 2) **P**oster; and 3) **P**resentation (Moran, et al., 2016). Beyond, the DNP student can evolve the Final DNP Project Paper into a manuscript that is suitable for publication and consider other alternative dissemination strategies. Projects will also be uploaded into the Rutgers University electronic repository RUcore.

Final DNP Project Paper

The DNP student will compose the **Final DNP Project Paper** according to the instructions located in Appendix 15. Basically, the student will take a copy of the Proposal Paper and change it to past-tense (Proposal: "I will do…" v Final Paper: "I did do…and these are the results"). Then the student will present the results, discussion, and implications for clinical practice, healthcare policy, education, and quality. The student will describe plans for dissemination beyond the academic setting and present plans for future scholarship.

The student must submit a copy of the Final DNP Project Paper to the DNP Team at least **two weeks prior to the formal Final DNP Project Presentation** for review. At the Final presentation, students should bring a printed copy for each member of the DNP Team. The student will be required to bind formal copies of the paper and upload the final version into the electronic drop box **AFTER** it is approved in writing by the DNP Team. See instructions for binding, etc. in the **Final Steps** section. Final copies that do not meet the required format for RUSN will not be accepted and the diploma will be withheld until the correct version is received.

Rutgers School of Nursing endorses the recommendation of the AACN to establish an electronic repository of DNP Projects. Therefore, students and faculty should be aware that the Final DNP

Project Paper is subject to being posted in that repository.

Final 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. The student will ensure the poster meets the following minimum requirements:

- Full Title of Project with Student as first author followed by Chair, Team Members
- Introduction/Abstract of 250 words or less
- Methods
- Results
- Discussion
- Short reference list in APA format
- Student contact information

The Final DNP Project Poster dimension requirements will be indicated when the student receives the **Confirmation Email** for the Final DNP Project Presentation. It is the student's responsibility to print the poster and it is advisable to have copies of the poster as a handout to the public attending the presentation. A copy of the poster in PDF must be included in the Final binding of the DNP Project (see instructions in **Final Steps**).

Final DNP Project Presentation

The DNP student is required to give a formal presentation of the DNP Project and its findings/implications prior to graduation. The presentation is open to the public and must be scheduled and completed during the **dedicated sessions for Final DNP Presentations**. To schedule a Final DNP Project Presentation, the DNP Chair should contact Advanced Nursing Practice support team via email with the agreed upon date and time to schedule the presentation. The email should include the DNP Team as well as the DNP student. This should be done concurrently when the DNP student applies for graduation.

The application for the Final DNP Project Presentation is then routed to the DNP Staff. The staff will send an email to the DNP Chair to verify that the student is eligible for Final DNP Project Presentation. When the Chair has verified eligibility, the Final presentation date will be scheduled. The RUSN goal is to facilitate **dedicated sessions for Final DNP Presentations** to accommodate multiple students, multiple faculty, and students from both the Post-Master's and Post-Bacc to DNP Programs. Therefore, students, Chairs, and Team Members should **anticipate Final DNP Presentations to occur in approximately week 10 – week 11** of the semester in which the student graduates. If a student is not approved by the Chair to present by those dates, the student will not graduate until the following semester.

When the Chair has verified that a student is eligible for the Final DNP Presentation, a **Confirmation Email** will be sent to the student (Appendix 16). The Confirmation Email will include the time of the presentation, instructions for set up, poster dimension, and other logistics of the day. If the presentation must be canceled for any reason, it is the student's responsibility to notify the DNP Staff according to the instructions in the Confirmation Email.

The Final oral presentation should be in Power Point format, using the Rutgers School of Nursing slide theme available in the **DNP Project Planning Checklist LMS.** The student must have the **Final DNP Project Poster** displayed and copies of the **Final DNP Project Paper** for the DNP Team Members. The length of the presentation is approximately 45 minutes – 1 hour and will include a formal question and answer session by the DNP Team, followed by the public.

At the end of the presentation, the DNP Team will deliberate as to whether or not the student has meet the DNP Project requirements and complete the **Final DNP Project Evaluation Form** (Appendix 17). The DNP Team will indicate: 1) Meets all DNP Project Requirements; 2) Meets Requirements with Minor Revisions; or 3) Does NOT meet Project Requirements.

Final Steps

After the student has completed the Final DNP Project Presentation, there are **Final Steps** required to close-out the DNP Project:

- Make any changes to the Final DNP Project Paper as recommended by the DNP Team.
- Close out the IRB applications at Rutgers and the hosting organization (if applicable).
- Complete the **Rutgers IRB Closeout Form** (Appendix 18).
- Ensure that all Project related documents are uploaded into the electronic drop-boxes of the DNP Project Checklist.
- Bind the required elements of the DNP Project according to the instructions listed below.

Instructions for Binding the DNP Project

Rutgers School of Nursing is required to keep both electronic and printed copies of all DNP Projects and related Project Documentation. As previously stated, the student will upload all required documentation according to the drop-boxes listed in the DNP Project Checklist **(LMS).** Then, the student will **professionally bind 5 copies** of the DNP Project. The cover must be clear and the binding black with a flat side (see **Figure 1.2**).

The DNP Project **documents MUST be assembled in this order**:

- DNP Project Cover Page (Appendix 19) ***
- DNP Project Final Signature Page (Appendix 20)

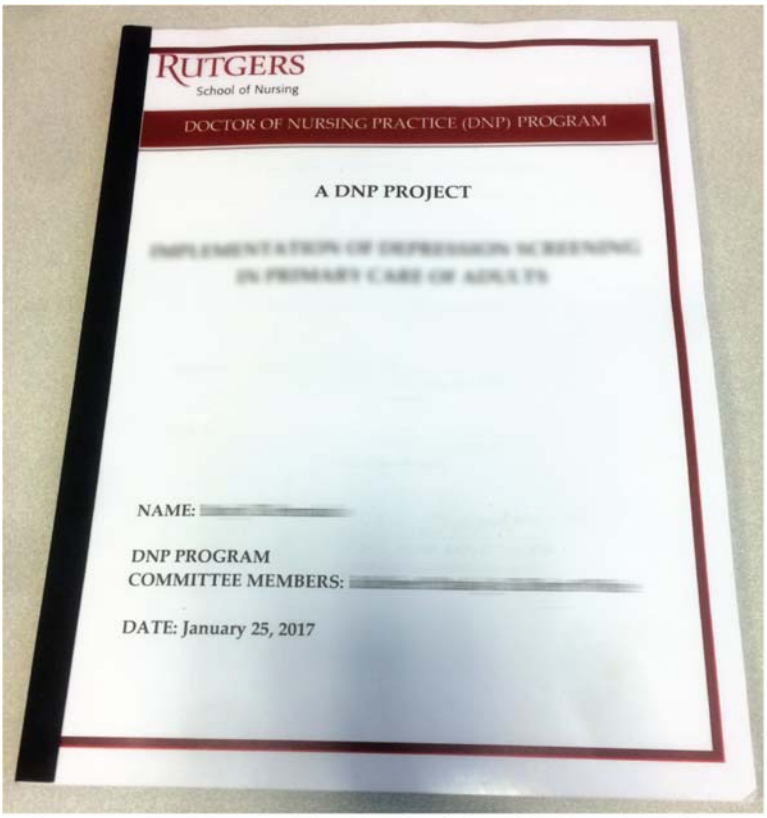
- DNP Project Dedication Page (optional)
- Final DNP Project Paper (with all corrections)***
- Final DNP Project Poster (PDF of Poster)
- Final DNP Project Presentation (Print with 6 slides per page)
- Rutgers IRB Approval
- Rutgers IRB Closeout Form (Appendix 18) ***
- IRB Approval from Hosting Organization (if applicable)
- DNP Project Proposal Evaluation Form (Appendix 12)
- Final DNP Project Evaluation Form (Appendix 17)

***Keep all documents from DNP Project Proposal in the Final DNP Project Paper: Letter of Cooperation; Group Planning Form; DNP Team Signatures, etc.

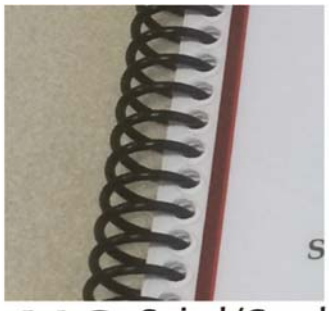
Modifiable versions of these documents are located in the ***DNP Project Checklist platform **(LMS).**

*** On the next page, **Figure 1.2** will demonstrate binding type.

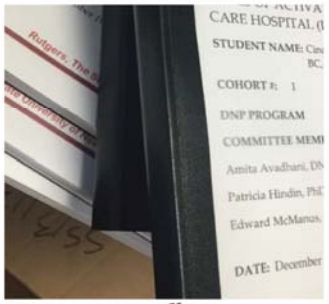
Figure 1.2 DNP Project Binding



Clear cover front, black vinyl back, flat binding (classic coverbind) and single-sided



NO Spiral/Comb binding



YES flat binding

Description: The New DNP Project Cover Page looks slightly different. The point of this figure is to illustrate clear cover front, black vinyl back, flat binding (classic coverbind) and single-sided page requirement. Spiral binding will not be accepted.

On the next page, Frequently Asked Questions will be presented.

DNP Project Repository: RUcore

Students should upload the final DNP Project Paper in the Rutgers electronic repository known as RUcore (Rutgers University Community Repository) through the electronic thesis and dissertations application, RUetd. The link is: https://etd.libraries.rutgers.edu/. The paper must be in the PDF format. Students should consult with the DNP Team to ensure de-identification and privacy of patients and facilities. The student and DNP Team may also determine the level of access to the document and timing of the document's release. For example, the PDF might be available immediately, or the student and DNP Team might choose to delay ("embargo") release of the document for a period of 6 months, one year, or two years. In all cases, the abstract will be available. For additional assistance, please consult the DNP Project specialty Director or the Medical Librarians at George Smith Library.

Frequently Asked Questions

Students, faculty, Chairs, and the DNP Team often have many questions regarding the DNP Project process. The Specialty Director for DNP Projects is available to assist and advise as needed. The following questions are very common:

Q: After IRB approval, can I change elements of my project?

A: Any changes made to any aspect of the DNP Project after IRB approval requires that the IRB is notified. Depending on the nature of what needs to be changed an amendment or addendum may be required and the IRB may need to review the changes and approve them to proceed.

Q: What is the process for changing my DNP Project Chair?

A: Any student wishing to change Chairs must submit a request in writing to the Advanced Practice Division Dean. In the request, the student must indicate the reason for the request and indicate the actions taken to resolve the situation. The Dean will then review the request and communicate the recommendation to the student. A new DNP Team Signature Sheet should then be completed if appropriate. If the student has submitted to the IRB, the IRB must be notified of the change. The student should also be aware that a new Chair may require changes to an existing DNP Project and a meeting to discuss the project should be conducted to assess the project status.

Q: What is the process for changing members of my DNP Team?

A: Any student wishing to change Team Members must submit a request in writing to the Project Chair. In the request, the student must indicate the reason for the request and indicate the actions taken to resolve the situation. The Chair will then review the request and advise the student accordingly. A new DNP Team Signature Sheet should then be completed if appropriate and the IRB notified.

Q: Can I change my DNP Project topic?

A: Yes. However, changing topics will require a new DNP Project Proposal and a repeat of all steps of the process to reflect the new topic.

Q: Can I change the site/context/location of the DNP Project?

A: This is not recommended unless in the event of extreme circumstances. Since DNP Projects are developed to fit a local site/context/location, the project may or may not be transferable. The IRB must be notified of any changes and the Project modified if necessary to fit the new site/context/location. Students should not make this decision independently, consult the DNP Chair.

Appendix 1: DNP Essentials Mapping Activity

A modifiable version of this document is located in *DNP Project Checklist* **(LMS).**

Student: _____ Anticipated Date of Graduation: _____

Specialty: _____ DNP Chair: _____

DNP Essential	Evidence/Assignment Indicating Essential is MEET	Planned DNP Experience
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: _____

DNP Chair Review: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 2: Letter of Cooperation

Students should use RUSN Letterhead and modify the document from the IRB Templates to fit the context of the project.

Example: (Adapted from Rutgers eIRB Template)

Date: *[MM/DD/YYYY]*

Re: Letter of Cooperation For [List of Site Name(s)]

Dear *[Name of PI]*,

This letter confirms that that I, as an authorized representative of *[Organization Name]*, allow the PI access to conduct study related activities at the listed site(s), as discussed with the PI and briefly outlined below, and which may commence when the PI provides evidence of IRB approval for the proposed project.

- **Research Site(s)**: *[List the specific site name(s) and address(es) for all sites which the organization is providing access for PI to conduct research.]*
- **Study Purpose:** *[Briefly summarize the study's purpose and chief aim(s).]*
- **Study Activities:** *[Briefly detail study activities that will commence at the site, such as surveys to be distributed to Site employees, interviews or interventions with patients, or access to database(s), etc.]*
- **Subject Enrollment:** *[Identify subject inclusion criteria and sample size target.]*
- **Site(s) Support**: *[Detail what support the study site(s) agree to provide to further the research, such as provide space to conduct study activities, authorize site employees to identify persons who might qualify for study, distribute questionnaires, retrieve patient data from Site files, provide tissue samples etc.]*
- **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 research, if applicable.]*
- **Anticipated End Date:** *[State the anticipated date you will conclude research activities at the study site.]*

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

Our organization agrees to the terms and conditions stated above. If we have any concerns related to this project, we will contact the PI. For concerns regarding IRB policy or human subject welfare, we may also contact the Rutgers IRB (see orra.rutgers.edu/hspp).

Regards,

[Please ask the representative authorized to grant permission to use the site for research to provide the following]:

[Signature of Research Site Authorized Representative]	[Date Letter Signed]
Signature [Full Name of Research Site Authorized Representative]	**Date Signed** [Job Title of Research Site *Authorized Representative]*
Full Name	**Job Title**

Appendix 3: DNP Project Checklist

A modifiable version of this document is located at *DNP Project Checklist* **(LMS).**

DNP Project Checklist

The purpose of this checklist is to ensure that students, faculty, and other stakeholders are aware of the requirements for each phase of the DNP Project process. Details of each item can be found within the body of the full paper.

These items are minimum expectations.

Phase	Requirement Summary	Completed On
Phase 1: Core Courses, Phenomenon of Interests & Networking	☐ Complete Curriculum as Outlined by TRACK ☐ Read: DNP Essentials, AACN White Paper (2015), and RUSN Requirements ☐ Develop Phenomenon of Interest ☐ Develop Professional Network ☐ Develop Doctoral Skills & Knowledge ☐ Complete CITI Training	
Phase 2: Planning & Development	☐ Enroll in DNP Project Planning Course ☐ Complete DNP Question Development Tool ☐ Assemble DNP Project Team, Secure Signatures ☐ Determine Type of DNP Project ☐ Complete Group Planning Form (if applicable) ☐ Complete Systematic Review Consultation Form (if applicable) ☐ Secure Letter of Cooperation ☐ Write a DNP Project Proposal ☐ Translate the Proposal to meet IRB Requirements*** ☐ Formal Project Presentation to DNP Team	

	☐ With permission, submit the Proposal to IRB ☐ Ensure that all required documents are uploaded to the electronic drop boxes. ☐ Complete DNP Mapping Activity ☐ Develop Plan for DNP Experience Hours	
Phase 3: Implementation & Evaluation	☐ Secure IRB Approval *** ☐ Begin Project Implementation ☐ Analyze and Synthesize Data & Findings ☐ Change the Project Proposal Paper to past-tense and complete the Final Project Paper ☐ Document DNP Experience Hours (500 required)	
Phase 4: Dissemination & Final Steps	☐ Complete application for graduation ☐ Complete application for Final DNP Project Presentation ☐ Final DNP Project Paper (submit 2 weeks prior to Final Presentation) ☐ Final DNP Project Poster ☐ Final DNP Project Presentation ☐ Complete all Final Steps: ☐ Make changes to Final paper if needed ☐ Close out IRB, complete form ☐ Upload all required documents electronically ☐ Bind the DNP Project according to instructions (5 copies required) ☐ DNP Project Repository (RUetd)	

***** Student must meet IRB Requirements for BOTH Rutgers University and hosting organization.**

Appendix 4: DNP Question Development Tool

A modifiable version of this document is located at ***DNP Project Checklist*** **(LMS).**

Student: _____ Specialty Track: _____

TASK: The purpose of this assignment is to help the DNP student focus on development of a clinical question for project planning. The student must thoughtfully answer each of the questions below and submit it to faculty for review along with an appropriate reference list (10-20 citations) used to answer these questions.

What is the observed clinical problem and why is it important?
What is the current practice? Is it effective or not effective? Explain.
How was the problem identified?
Who does the problem impact? (Explain)
☐ Individuals ☐ Population ☐ Institution/System ☐ Other
Based on your current knowledge, what do you think **SHOULD** be done for the problem?
What are the outcomes, quality measures, or indicators that could verify the problem was addressed?
How will your project make a change in clinical practice?

Where, or in what context, will this project take place: Site/Organization: Address: Contact Person: Phone Number: ( ) - Email:
What work have you done so far to investigate the needs of this organization for the project? (Explain)
Have you identified a potential DNP Chair? ☐ YES ☐ NO (The Chair MUST be a full-time Rutgers Faculty with a doctoral degree PhD or DNP) Name: Email: Have you identified a second DNP Team Member? ☐ YES ☐ NO (The DNP Team must have one member besides the Chair, with a terminal degree) Name: Email:
Using PICO(T), state your clinical question for this project:
Checklist ☐ All questions are answered completely and thoroughly. ☐ The reference is list comprehensive and reflects good initial effort. ☐ References are generally less than 5 years old.
Project Planning Faculty Comments: Signature: _____ Date: _____
Recommended Action Items for the Student: 1) 2) 3)

Student NOTES:

Adapted from Dearholt & Dang (2012).

Appendix 5: DNP Team Signature Sheet

A modifiable version of this document is located at ***DNP Project Checklist*** **(LMS).**

All team members should document a communication plan, expectations and timelines for review of work and project planning. **REFER TO REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS FOR EXAMPLES, IF NEEDED.**

DNP Team Signatures

Full Title of DNP Project:_____

_____

DNP Student Information:

Name: _____
Student ID: A#_____ RUSN Email_____
Telephone #_____
Address_____
_____
I have reviewed the Rutgers DNP Requirements and understand my responsibilities: ☐ Y ☐ N

Signature: _____ Date: _____

DNP Chair (Name & Credentials)_____
I have reviewed the Rutgers DNP Requirements and understand my responsibilities: ☐ Y ☐ N

Signature_____ Date _____

Email_____ Telephone# _____

DNP Team Member (Name & Credentials): _____
I have reviewed the Rutgers DNP Requirements and understand my responsibilities: ☐ Y ☐ N

Signature_____ Date_____

Email_____ Telephone# _____

DNP Team Member (Name & Credentials): _____
I have reviewed the Rutgers DNP Requirements and understand my responsibilities: ☐ Y ☐ N

Signature_____ Date_____

Email_____ Telephone# _____

Appendix 6: Group Project Planning Form

A modifiable version of this document is located at ***DNP Project Checklist*** **(LMS).**

Students who are completing a Group DNP Project are required to submit this form to the DNP Project Chair for approval at the beginning of the DNP Planning Process. As outlined in the DNP Project Requirements, only 2 students may work together, students must be individually evaluated, and the Project must comply with the AACN (2015) requirements.

Requirements	**Student A** _____	**Student B** _____
Describe the contributions to overall DNP Project Planning.		
Describe the Aim/Objectives of which student is taking a leadership role.		
Describe contributions to: - Writing DNP Project Proposal - Proposal Presentation - IRB submission - Developing plan for Experience Hours **(each student must do 500 hours EACH)**		
Describe the contributions to: - Project Implementation - Project Evaluation - Data Analysis & Synthesis		
Describe the contributions to: -Final Project Paper -Final Project Poster -Final Project Presentation		
Other project related contributions:		
Student Signatures:		

Approved by DNP Chair:

Name_____ **Date**_____

Appendix 7: Systematic Review Consultation Form

A modifiable version of this document is located at ***DNP Project Checklist*** **(LMS).**

Systematic Review Consultation Form

Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) students who are considering systematic review as a component of the DNP Project must ensure the following requirements are met:

SYSTEMATIC REVIEW		
Orientation	Consider the additional requirements for DNP Projects including Systematic Review	Completed On
Meeting with Institute Faculty	The DNP Student should meet with the NEST faculty to discuss the clinical question and discuss feasibility of a systematic review	Completed On
Skill Training	Complete the Systematic Review Training PRIOR to DNP Project Planning. This can be done in two ways: 1) Elective Course (3 credits) 2) Workshop (1 week)	Completed On
DNP Project Planning	During the DNP Project Planning course, the student will develop a project proposal and meet all other DNP Project Requirements.	Formal DNP Project Presentation
DNP Project Implementation	During the DNP Project Implementation course, the student will operationalize the systematic review findings or components.	FINAL DNP Project Presentation

Comments:

Student Signature_____ Date_____

NEST Faculty Signature_____ Date _____

***** This project must meet criteria for BOTH the NEST/JBI Institute and the DNP Project Requirements of Rutgers School of Nursing.**

Appendix 8: DNP Project Proposal Cover Page

Students should use the APA guidelines for spacing and margins.

Running head: SHORT TITLE 1

Full Title of Project

Student Name

Rutgers School of Nursing

DNP Chair:

DNP Team Member:

DNP Team Member: (if applicable)

Appendix 9: Required Content (DNP Project Proposal)

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

Cover Page

Table of Contents

Abstract

Introduction

Background and Significance

Needs Assessment

Problem Statement

Aims and Objectives

Review of Literature

Theoretical Framework

Methodology
- Setting
- Study Population
- Subject Recruitment
- Consent Procedure
- Risks/Harms
- Subject Costs and Compensation
- Study Interventions
- Outcomes to be Measured
- Project Timeline
- Resources Needed

Evaluation Plan

Data Analysis, Maintenance & Security

Anticipated Findings

Summary

References

Appendices
- Concept Map
- Evidence Table
- Tools
- DNP Team Signature Sheet
- IRB Documents (Consent, Recruitment Flyer, Final Approval, etc.)
- Other Documents appropriate to Project

Appendix 10: Concept Map Requirements

The following rubric is used in the DNP Project Planning course to evaluate the Concept Map developed for the DNP Project.

Student_____

Course Faculty_____

DNP Project Chair_____

Full Title of DNP Project_____

_____

TASK: The purpose of this assignment is to facilitate the translation of a theory/framework into an actionable basis for a DNP Project. The student will collaborate with their faculty and DNP Team to select a project theory/framework. Then, the student will describe how their project is interpreted through that lens. The Final product of the assignment is to create a concept map that can be submitted as an appendix to the DNP Proposal Paper.

Grading

Element of Concept Map	1 Poor F	2 Poorly D	3 Good C	4 Very Good B	5 Excellent A	Comments
Theory or Framework is appropriate to the type of DNP Project						**P/F**
The project's actionable items are described and transcribed using short text						**P/F**
Organization of Information						**P/F**
Visual Appeal						**P/F**

Appendix 11: Table of Evidence Requirements

The following rubric is used during the DNP Project Planning Course to evaluate the Table of Evidence. It is adapted from Dearholt & Dang (2012), Appendix E, Appendix F, and Appendix G. Refer to the text for expanded explanation.

Student_____

Faculty_____

DNP Project Chair_____

Full Title of DNP Project_____

The purpose of this assignment is to assist the student with appraisal of literature that makes a contribution to the clinical question presented in their DNP Project Proposal. This rubric was developed using the required textbook for the course, "Johns Hopkins Nursing Evidence-Based Practice Model and Guidelines."

TASK: The student will present a clinical question. The PICO (T) format is recommended. Then, using the Appendices C, D, and E the student will complete the worksheets for evidence appraisal.

A minimum of 8-10 research studies (Appendix E) and a minimum of 2 non-research pieces of evidence should be evaluated (Appendix F). If students are having a difficult time finding appropriate literature, it is suggested that they consult the medical librarian. The student should then use Appendix G, "Individual Evidence Summary Tool," to create a table of evidence.

***If the student cannot identify relevant research/information to meet the minimum standards, they must consult their faculty member for further instructions on the assignment.

Completed Worksheets will not be scored, but are required to be submitted as evidence of work on the assignment.

20% Each study clearly relates to the EBP Question
20% Each study contains complete information on each entry
20% Meets the min-max for research 8-10 (study designs)
20% Meets the min-max for non-research 2-3 (expert opinion-guideline)
10% Spelling, grammar, and APA format is correct. Landscape format
10% Question and Content is relevant to the DNP Project.
100%

Table Example (Use Appendix G in Johns Hopkins Book)

Article #	Author & Date	Evidence Type	Sample, Sample Size, Setting	Study findings that help answer the EBP Question	Limitations	Evidence Level & Quality

Appendix 12: DNP Project Proposal Evaluation Form

A modifiable version of this document is located at ***DNP Project Checklist*** **(LMS).**

Proposal Approval Form

All DNP Projects require formal presentation to the DNP Team. After the presentation, the DNP Team will complete this form. A copy of the form must be uploaded into the electronic drop box located in ***DNP Project Checklist*** **(LMS).** Students and DNP Team Members should also keep a copy for their records. **Level 3 or higher is required on all components**.

Full Title of DNP Project_____

_____

_____

Name of Team Members

Student(s)_____

_____

DNP Chair_____

DNP Team Member_____

DNP Team Member_____

DNP Team Member_____

Date of Presentation_____

Component	1 Very Poorly	2 Poorly	3 Good	4 Very Good	5 Excellent	Comments
Cover Page, Table of Contents, Abstract (< 250 words), and general formatting meet APA requirements and RUSN instructions.						
I**ntroduction**: Basic overview of project and describes the contribution it will make to **change practice** and **impact outcomes.**						

Component	1 Very Poorly	2 Poorly	3 Good	4 Very Good	5 Excellent	Comments
Background & Significance: The problem or gap is clearly identified. **Description of the problem/gap** includes, the population affected, what is currently happening, why the audience should care, what we currently know, and what we need to find out is articulated. The significance is explained in detail to include the impact/status of the problem/gap on population, cost, policy, education, healthcare systems, and beyond.						
Needs Assessment: The need, feasibility, and resources available are discussed. Congruence of the project to the organization's mission is evident. The student describes logically the contextual/organizational environment. Discusses previous attempts or possible solutions to the problem based on evidence and experience. Was a specific process used? Ex: SWOT, Community Assessment, etc. Describe:						
Problem/Purpose Statement: Problem/Purpose is clearly stated and summarized. Scope of project is realistic and appropriate to DNP Scholarship.						
Clinical Question: The student frames an answerable clinical question related to the problem/practice gap.						
Aims & Objectives: All aims are supported by objectives that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound.						

Component	1 Very Poorly	2 Poorly	3 Good	4 Very Good	5 Excellent	Comments
Review of Literature: Directly relates to answering the posed Clinical Question. Databases used, key terms, and search strategy are described. Evidence is appraised and synthesized into an Evidence Table using the instructions by Dearholt & Dang (2012). The student articulates a written summary of the findings and does not simply regurgitate information.						
Theory/Framework: The theory/framework for the project is described and applicable to operationalizing the project. A concept map is presented.						
Methodology: The overall design of the project correlates to the Aims & Objectives. The student clearly communicates the: Setting, Study Population, and Recruitment Strategy. The consent Procedure, Risk/Harms to Participants, and Cost/Compensation for Participants. The study intervention(s) is/are described in detail. Progress Indicators/Outcomes to be measured are relevant to the project. Tools/Instruments are appropriate. A project timeline and budget/resource list is presented.						
Evaluation Plan: An evaluation plan for the DNP Project Process is included. Evaluation measures, tools, instruments, and measures match the Aims/Objectives and Project Type.						

IRB: All Rutgers IRB requirements are meet. The project is suitable for IRB submission. All organizational IRB requirements are meet.						
Letter of Cooperation is included.						
Formal Presentation of DNP Project: Presentation is presented on Rutgers-School of Nursing templated slides and includes all relevant aspects of the project. The student's appearance and presentation skills meet doctoral expectations.						
Turn-It-In Originality Report is included.						

Comments_____

_____

Describe Corrective Actions if Revisions Required_____
(Use additional paper if necessary)

_____

_____

Select the Outcome of the presentation:

☐ Approved as presented ☐ Approved with minor revisions ☐ Reject proposal

Student Signature_____

DNP Chair Signature_____

DNP Team Member Signature_____

DNP Team Member Signature_____

Date_____

UPLOAD signed form into the ***DNP Project Checklist*** **(LMS).**

Appendix 13: eIRB Checklist for DNP Students

BEFORE YOU FINISH YOUR APPLICATION AND HIT THE SUBMIT BUTTON, HAVE YOU:

☐ Made sure your CITI training and that of your co-Investigators is up to date?

☐ Made sure the title of your proposal and the eIRB submission match EXACTLY?

☐ Described your project BRIEFLY on the main page of the application, stating the type of project, who your subjects will be, and what you will be collecting? Do not paste the full executive abstract of your project proposal here!

☐ Have you listed, at minimum, your DNP Chair (must be a Rutgers School of Nursing Faculty) as a Co-I?

☐ Listed personnel who will be involved directly with participant recruitment, obtaining consent, or data collection as project staff and made sure that they have completed CITI training at RU? If their institution also uses CITI, affiliate them with RU. Follow instructions on the eIRB home page or contact Dean Sullivan with questions.

☐ Listed School of Nursing as a participating RU site?

☐ Listed all cooperating sites/agencies providing access to participants or data as sites? For QA/QI projects or off-site data collection at other agencies, uploaded a letter of support, approval, or data sharing agreement?

☐ Checked multi-site study ONLY if there are separate data collection sites each with its own IRB approval, separate PIs and a site director coordinated by a central site which is serving as the primary IRB? (Having more than one data collection "field" site under one IRB is not "multi-site" in IRB-speak).

☐ <u>If your cooperating agency as its own IRB</u>, have you uploaded a pdf of that approval in the supporting documents section? RU will be the "primary" or "IRB of record" for you, unless the cooperating agency requires otherwise. This should be stated in the approval or you must note this in your application.

☐ Used the appropriate section headings for your methodology (see Protocol types on eIRB site)?

☐ Followed the IRB's guidelines for consent form language (see Guidelines on RBHS IRB site)?

☐ Designed all recruitment and advertising materials following IRB Guidelines?

☐ Used the requested headers, footers, and version number on all your documents including flyers and consent forms?

☐ Uploaded all recruitment and advertising materials?

☐ Understood that the question about retaining the "link" between PHI and your data refers to how long your data will be traceable to individuals and does NOT refer to the required period of record retention?

FINALLY: After clicking "Finish" on the lower right (saves your final application), have you also clicked the **"SUBMIT**" button in the Activity Panel on the left of the screen?

CONGRATULATIONS! Your protocol is now **IN REVIEW.**

Appendix 14: DNP Experience Plan & Log

A modifiable version of this document is located at ***DNP Project Checklist*** **(LMS).**

DNP Experience Plan

The DNP student is required to complete 500 hours dedicated toward the DNP Project Implementation and meeting the *DNP Essentials*. In Project Planning, complete the DNP Mapping Activity (Appendix 1) to assess what you have experienced so far in the DNP Program. Then collaborate with your faculty and DNP Chair to create a list of activities for the DNP Experience that help develop your skills, operationalize your project, or meet the DNP Essentials. The DNP Experience Plan and DNP Experience Log must be approved by the Chair and uploaded into ***DNP Project Checklist*** **(LMS).**

Summary of *DNP Essentials*:

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

Description of Experience Activity	DNP Essential	# of Hours Anticipated	# of Hours Completed
Total # of Hours to be completed:			**500 hours**

Comments_____

_____

Student Signature_____

DNP Chair Approval Signature_____

Date_____

Appendix 15: Required Content for the Final DNP Project Paper

The Final DNP Project Paper must contain all of the required information from the Project Proposal and be expanded to include the following information:

1) Update the Cover Page, Abstract, and Table of Contents

2) Change the Project Proposal Paper to Past Tense

3) After the Methodology section, include the following:

Results

Discussion

- Implications for Clinical Practice
- Implications for Healthcare Policy
- Implications for Quality/Safety
- Implications for Education

Plans for Future Scholarship

Conclusion

Appendices (add to the Appendices from the Project Proposal as appropriate)

*** Do not bind the Final project paper until after the Final DNP Project Presentation. The DNP Chair and DNP Team, must verify that no further revisions are needed. The Final bound product will also include other elements besides the Final paper.

*** The Final DNP Project Paper is an academic product and is not intended for submission to a journal as it is written. The student should work with the DNP Team to identify the right opportunities for publication and modify the document to fit those requirements. This document to demonstrate culmination of doctoral skills developed during the program and mastery of the *DNP Essentials*.

Appendix 16: Confirmation Email for Final DNP Project Presentation

At the same time students apply for graduation, they will submit their information to schedule the Final DNP Project Presentation. The student will receive a Confirmation Email indicating the date, time, location, requirements for poster dimensions, requirements for slide presentations, etc. for the Final DNP Project Presentation.

This is an EXAMPLE. Students should **NOT** mimic these exact instructions as locations and requirements may evolve over time.

RUTGERS
School of Nursing

DNP Final Project Presentation Instructions

Before Presentation

1. Selecting a date to present, first discuss possible dates with your DNP Chair. Once your DNP Chair gives which dates and times available, then ask DNP Team.

2. Send the following to Lynette Tompkins at tompkily@sn.rutgers.edu
   - Your full name and credentials
   - DNP project title
   - Name(s) of DNP Chair and DNP Team (including their credentials)
   - Contact information for DNP Chair and DNP Team (include email address)
   - Desired dates and times for your DNP Project presentation (provide more than one)

3. Bring the following documents with you to your DNP Project Presentation
   - **Project Title Signature Page** (this is the 2nd page of your final project bound copies, and requires original signatures of all the DNP Chair and DNP Team)
   - **DNP Project Final Evaluation (print copy for DNP Chair)**

4. Complete an Application for Graduation

5. Final Study Closure Report Form: If you have an open eIRB application and all of your data study is completed prior to presenting your DNP Project; you must closeout your final study and submit an approved closure report. The form can be obtained at http://rbhs.rutgers.edu/hsweb/forms/cr.html.

6. Graduate Certification Form**:** You must complete, sign and return this form certifying that you have followed the appropriate eIRB closure process and that you are aware that you will be notified by the IRB Office for additional and required information (certification form attached).

After Presentation

Final requirements before receiving your diploma:

1. DNP Project Proposal bound copies:
   - **DNP Project Cover page** is the 1st page to be attached to your bound copies.
   - **DNP Project Signature page** is the 2nd page to be attached to your bound copies.
   - Please printout 5 copies for distribution (to be used when submitting your approved and final DNP Project).

University departments and offices place "holds" on diplomas, and transcripts for students with outstanding financial obligations (of one dollar or greater) with the university.

Appendix 17: Final DNP Project Evaluation Form

A modifiable version of this document is located at ***DNP Project Checklist*** **(LMS).**

Final DNP Project Evaluation Form

All DNP Projects require a Final Paper, Poster, and Presentation to the DNP Team. After the presentation, the DNP Team will complete this form. A copy of the form must be uploaded into the electronic drop box located in ***DNP Project Checklist*** **(LMS).** Students and DNP Team Members should also keep a copy for their records. **Level 3 or higher is required on all components**.

Full Title of DNP Project_____

_____

_____

Name of Team Members

Student(s)_____

_____

DNP Chair_____

DNP Team Member_____

DNP Team Member_____

DNP Team Member_____

Date of Presentation_____

Date of Project IRB Approval_____

Final DNP Products

Component Final DNP Paper	1 Very Poorly	2 Poor	3 Good	4 Very Good	5 Excellent	Comments
Cover Page, Table of Contents, Abstract (< 250 words), and general formatting meet APA requirements and RUSN instructions. Earlier components reflect past-tense. Updated from Project Proposal.						
Results: - Data is clearly presented - Data analysis is appropriate to the project - Tables and Figures are clearly summarized.						

Component Final DNP Paper Cont'd	1 Very Poorly	2 Poor	3 Good	4 Very Good	5 Excellent	Comments
Discussion: Students ties together literature, results, and overall summation of findings. Includes Implications for: - Clinical Practice - Healthcare Policy - Quality and Safety - Education - Other as related to the Project						
Plans for Future Scholarship are articulated.						
Summary: provides closure to all elements of the DNP Project.						
Appendices: expanded to include all relevant tables, figures, and project related materials.						
Turn-It-In Report is Attached.						
Component Final DNP Poster	**1 Very Poorly**	**2 Poor**	**3 Good**	**4 Very Good**	**5 Excellent**	**Comment**
Required Content is present: Full Title of Project with Student as first author followed by Chair, Team Members Introduction/Abstract Methods Results Discussion Short reference list in APA format Student contact information Overall visual appeal.						
Cover Page, Table of Contents, Abstract (< 250 words), and general formatting meet APA requirements and RUSN instructions. Earlier components reflect past-tense. Updated from Project Proposal						
Results: - Data is clearly presented - Data analysis is appropriate to the project - Tables and Figures are clearly summarized.						
Discussion: Students ties together literature, results, and overall summation of findings.						

Includes Implications for: - Clinical Practice - Healthcare Policy - Quality and Safety - Education - Other as related to the Project						
Plans for Future Scholarship are articulated.						
Summary: provides closure to all elements of the DNP Project.						
Appendices: expanded to include all relevant tables, figures, and project related materials.						
Component **Final DNP Presentation**	**1** **Very Poorly**	**2** **Poor**	**3** **Good**	**4** **Very Good**	**5** **Excellent**	**Comments**
Formal Presentation of DNP Project: Presentation is presented on Rutgers-School of Nursing templated slides and includes all relevant aspects of the project. The student's appearance and presentation skills meet doctoral expectations.						
Student Response to Challenges.						
The student responds appropriately to all questions from the DNP Team.						
The student responds appropriately to all questions from the Public.						

Comments_____

_____

Describe Corrective Actions if Revisions Required_____
(Use additional paper if necessary)

_____

_____

Select the Outcome of the presentation:

☐ Approved as presented ☐ Approved with minor revisions ☐ Reject project

Student Signature_____

DNP Chair Signature_____

DNP Team Member Signature_____

DNP Team Member Signature_____

Date_____

UPLOAD signed form into the ***DNP Project Checklist*** **(LMS).**

***Refer to the **FINAL Steps** of the DNP Project Process

Appendix 18: Rutgers IRB Closeout Form

A modifiable version of this document is located in **DNP Project Checklist (LMS).**

_____
(Today's Date)

I, _____, a candidate for DNP Program
(Name)
expecting to graduate on _____ affirm that I have
(Date)
(please check one):

☐ have been formally notified by the RBHS IRB office that my request to close my protocol has been approved. A copy of this approval attached.

☐ have applied to the RBHS IRB office for closure of the IRB protocol related to my PROJECT research. A dated copy of this application and Final report is attached.

I understand that if the IRB does not approve of this closure before the date of the graduation, my diploma may be held. I also understand that if the IRB requests clarifications or amendments to my report that I am responsible for doing so before my University web access and email are terminated. Failure to do so may place my committee chair's name on IRB probation and may adversely affect other students' ability to work with this faculty member.

_____
Signature of DNP Program Candidate

Appendix 19: DNP Project Cover Page

A modifiable version of this document is located on **DNP Project Checklist (LMS).**

RUTGERS
School of Nursing

DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE (DNP) PROGRAM

A DNP PROJECT

TITLE:

STUDENT NAME:

DNP PROGRAM CHAIR
& DNP TEAM MEMBER(S):

DATE:

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

Appendix 20: Closeout Signature Sheet

A modifiable version of this document is located on **DNP Project Checklist (LMS).**

Title:

A Project Presented to the Faculty of the School of Nursing

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Nursing Practice

By

Name of DNP Student
(Type name and credentials)

Approved:_____
(Type name and credentials)
DNP Chair

Approved: _____
(Type name and credentials)
DNP Team Member(s)

Approved: _____
(Type name and credentials)
DNP Team Member(s)

Approval Acknowledged: _____
Track Specialty Director

Approval Acknowledged: _____
Specialty Director DNP Projects

Date: _____