



2014 DNP Synthesis Project Guidelines

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School of Nursing

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INTRODUCTION

Chapter

1

Clinical doctoral degrees are distinguished by the completion of a scholarly project that demonstrates synthesis of the student's work and lays the groundwork for future practice scholarship. The DNP Synthesis Project (DSP) is a scholarly experience that implements the principles of evidence-based practice under the guidance of a doctoral committee. The purpose of these guidelines is to guide the student and committee in creating, developing, implementing and completing the scholarly project.

Unlike a dissertation, the project may take a number of forms. The theme that links the project forms is the use of evidence to improve either clinical outcomes or to resolve the gap between evidence and implementation of the evidence in clinical practices and community policies. The goal is to complete a project that results in an effective, lasting change. This requires accurate identification and assessment of a need or problem, in-depth knowledge of the literature coupled with the ability to critically analyze and synthesize the research and the creativity to translate the evidence into an effective and feasible plan of action.

One essential component of a DSP is the inclusion of the “system” in all aspects of project development from assessment to evaluation. A system can be defined in many different ways. It can be a clinic, hospital unit, a group of clinics, a patient population or a community. The system includes all facets of the place or population with which you plan to implement your project. Also, an important piece of a DSP is to impact practice. The project should not be limited to reporting the findings, but should also include an ongoing, sustaining, specific, and feasible plan for improving a specific program or practice.

Any proposed deviation from these *Guidelines* must be referred to the Doctorate of Nursing Practice (DNP) Coordinator, School of Nursing (SON) Director, Dean of the College of Health and Human Services, and Dean of the Graduate School for approval before the project is completed and approved. The rules in this *Troy University DNP Synthesis Project Guidelines* take precedence over previous publications issued prior to this date of

publication. Please consult the Troy University webpage www.troy.edu for the most current version of this publication.

The work that the student has done, short of final preparations of the project, is outside the province of these *Guidelines*. The assumption is made that the project is complete, a comprehensive outline of the main text has been prepared, and the final draft has been examined and approved by the project chair and committee, and the time for word processing the final form is at hand. The *Guidelines* also assume that the student has good command of the English language. Questions regarding the format of the project that are not adequately answered in the *Guidelines* may be directed to the DNP Coordinator, School of Nursing Director, Dean of the College of Health and Human Services, and Dean of the Graduate School.

DNP STUDENT'S ROLE, RESPONSIBILITIES & PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

Chapter 2

Role of the DNP Synthesis Project Student

The project process is driven by the student. The student should work closely with the project chair throughout the life of the project. The chair is considered the primary project adviser. The student should consult with the chair concerning project requirements and procedures beyond the scope of these *Guidelines*. **In summary, although the project chair may provide significant assistance, the final project and the time frame in which it is completed depend upon the engagement of the student.**

General DNP Student Responsibilities

The DNP student is expected to:

- Become familiar with and comply with all relevant policies and procedures as set forth by the DNP Program of the School of Nursing and Troy University.
- Take an active part in planning his/her individualized plan of study.
- Select a graduate faculty member as Project Chair for the DSP in NSG 8810 – DNP I. The student is responsible for:
 - Initiating contact with faculty members whom s/he is considering as the Project Chair.
 - Selecting and getting the Project Chair selection approved and in collaboration with the Project Chair select at least one other doctorally prepared faculty member to be on the committee. Committee meeting times must be determined at the time of committee selection.

- Submitting a signed copy of the DSP Advisory Committee Forms (Appendix A) to the Project Chair and other committee member(s) for signature and subsequent submission to the DNP Program Coordinator.
- Select a topic by discussing potential ideas with Project Chair by:
 - Selecting a DNP project, based on current evidence, in collaboration with the Project Committee and approval of the DNP Program Coordinator.
 - Communicating with the Project Committee on a regular basis regarding progress as directed in the DNP course(s).
 - Scheduling committee meetings necessary for completion of course and program requirements.
 - Complying with committee directions regarding revisions in a timely manner.
- Maintain continuous enrollment in the program and report problems that delay progress in completing the degree requirements to the Project Chair and the DNP Program Coordinator. If it becomes necessary to withdraw from a course or the program, the student must initiate a consultation with the Project Chair for advisement.
- Submit to the Project Committee a proposed DSP topic and a written proposal by the deadline as established in NSG 8810: DNP I and NSG 8820: DNP II.
- Take necessary action with Project Chair and DNP course faculty regarding completion of incomplete course work and change of grade.
- Submit in writing to the Registrar's Office, Project Chair, and DNP Program Coordinator any changes in name and/or address.
- Submit all materials required for graduation on time.
- Submit a copy of the final DSP draft with signed Final Competency Evaluation Form to the Graduate School. The final DSP draft may be printed on regular printing paper for Graduate School review. The Graduate School will review final DSP draft for adherence to approved format. The DSP will be returned to the student if format corrections are needed. The student must gain format approval from the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to intended date of graduation.

- Complete DSP submission form (Appendix F) and two copies of the DSP in pdf format to the library at least two weeks prior to the intended date of graduation.

Project Formatting Requirements

The student has the responsibility to present to the chair, for final approval, a well-written manuscript that is free from error. The student is responsible for editing. If the student needs editorial assistance, assistance should be obtained before the final draft is presented to the chair. Students are warned that preparation of the written project can be an extremely expensive undertaking. Each student should have a clear understanding in advance with typists, printers, and any agency involved in photographic work or drawings as to the costs involved. The Graduate School will not act as referee in disputes between students and others in such matters.

The student must follow the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* for publication practices and style rules. The *Troy University DNP Synthesis Project Guidelines* will take precedence. The document will be reviewed by the Office of the Graduate School for adherence to formatting requirements. The DSP should NOT be written in first person.

Font Formatting

A 12 point Times New Roman font should be used consistently throughout the document. A smaller font size may be used in the tables and figures if its use enables the positioning of a table onto one page. The font size of tables and figures should be no smaller than 8-point and no larger than 14-point. Within a specific table or figure font size should not vary by more than 4 points.

Margins

The margins for each page of the DSP including preliminary pages, text, and references must meet the following specifications, measured from the edge of the paper to the text:

- Left (binding edge) 1.5 inch*

- Right 1 inch
- Top 1 inch
- Bottom of text 1 inch
- **Note: Extra space is needed for binding (if applicable)*

Pagination

The pages preceding the Title page must be numbered consecutively in lowercase Roman (v, vi, vii...) numerals beginning with the dedication page. Fly (blank) pages that begin each thesis are neither numbered nor counted. Starting with the title page and continuing throughout the thesis, each page must be accounted for and/or numbered.. Although the title page is counted, a number is not placed on the title page itself.

Spacing

The thesis is double spaced throughout. Single-spacing is only permitted for quoted material to increase its impact within the text and for tables. Single-spacing may be used for table titles, headings, figure captions, footnotes, and long quotations. References may also be single-spaced within the reference but require two spaces between references, if in accordance with the approved style manual.

Judicious triple- or quadruple-spacing can improve appearance and readability. Such spacing is appropriate after chapter titles, before major subheadings, before footnotes, and before and after tables in the text.

Tables, Figures and Appendices

All tables and figures must fall within the stated margins. Each element of a table or figure must be large enough and sharp enough to be legible. Style of type affects legibility. Initial capitals and lowercase letters generally are easier to read than all capitals, and regular type is easier to read than bold face. The size of lettering should be no smaller than 8-point and no larger than 14-point. Within a specific table or figure font size should not vary by more than four points.

Number all figures consecutively with Arabic numerals throughout the body of the thesis and its appendices. Number figures in the order in which they are first mentioned in the text.

Placement. Tables and figures are inserted after, but as near as possible to the text they illustrate or in the appendices.

- Tables and figures of one-half page or less in length may appear on the same page with text. If larger than half-page, they must be placed on their own page.
- Two or more small tables or figures may be placed together on a single page.
- Wide tables or figures may be placed horizontally. The table should be placed so that the top of the table is nearest the 1.5" (left) binding side. The placement of the table or figure, vertical or horizontal, does not alter the position of the page numbering requirements set forth in this guidebook.
- The number of the table and its title are placed above the top line of the table.
- The number of the figure and its caption are placed below the last line or bottom edge of the figure.

Citations of tables and figures. When making reference to a table/figure in the body of the text, the full word and number should be used, thus: Figure 1.1 or Table 3.1.

Appendices An appendix serves the purpose of allowing the author to provide the reader with detailed information that would be distracting to read in the main body of the thesis. Common kinds of appendices include an evidence table, a sample questionnaire or other survey instruments used in research, etc.

Projects may have more than one appendix. If the project has only one appendix, label the cover page "APPENDIX", centered horizontally and vertically, in all capital letters, and without punctuation. If the project has more than one appendix, label the cover page "APPENDICES", centered horizontally and vertically, in all capital letters, and without punctuation. Do not provide individual cover pages for each appendix when there are multiple appendices. Identify individual appendices with capital letters (Appendix A, Appendix B, etc.) in the header in the order in which it is mentioned in the main text. Each appendix must have a title. The title is positioned at the upper margin, centered, and in all capital letters. In the text, refer to appendices by their labels (i.e. Appendix A). A list of the Appendix or Appendices and corresponding page should be included in the Table of Contents.

Parts of the DSP

Every DSP is composed of three parts:

- Preliminary Pages
- Text Pages

- Reference Material

Preliminary Pages

- **Fly Page (REQUIRED).** The fly page is a blank page at the beginning of the thesis used to protect the work. It is neither counted nor numbered.
- **Title Page (REQUIRED).** The format of the title page must be exactly as shown in the Title Page Example. The student's name should be spelled exactly as it will be on the diploma. The date on the title page must indicate the month (May) and year that the student will actually receive the degree.

The title serves as a guide for others who wish to gain more information about what has been done in the research. Modern search and retrieval systems use the words in the title to locate the work. Consider using key words in the title so that general searches will locate your work. Therefore, it is doubly important to select a title that gives a meaningful and concise description of the contents of the project.

- The title page is counted but not numbered.
- Type the title of the thesis study in capital letters; double space if longer than one line; centered at the top of the page.
- Return 8 lines and type "by".
- Double-space and type the student's name, centered, in capital letters, in full as it will appear on the diploma.
- Return 8 lines, type "A DNP Synthesis Project" centered, in capital letters.
- Return 8 lines and type:

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Doctor of Nursing Practice
in the Graduate School of
Troy University
- Return 10 lines and type MONTH < MAY > and <INSERT YEAR> of graduation in capital letters.

- See Appendix G for a sample Title Page
- **Final Competency Evaluation Page (REQUIRED).** After all of the corrections recommended by the DSP chair, DSP committee, and the Dean of the Graduate School have been made and the DSP has been successfully defended, the final competency evaluation page must be signed by the DSP chair, the DSP committee members, the DNP Coordinator, the chair of the department, the dean of the college, and the Dean of the Graduate School. A Final Competency Evaluation Page printed on bond paper with original signatures is required for all bound University copies of DNP Synthesis Projects. A minimum of two bound copies are required by the University.
 - The Final Competency Evaluation page is counted but not numbered.
 - Type the title of the DSP double space if longer than one line; centered at the top of the page.
 - Return 4 lines and type:

Submitted by <Insert Name of Student> in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Nursing Practice
in the Graduate School of
Troy University

- Return 4 lines and type centered “Accepted on behalf of the Faculty of the Graduate School by the DNP Synthesis Project committee:”
- Return 4 lines, draw a signature line and date line.
- Return 1 line, type <Insert Name and Degree of DNP Synthesis Project Chair>.
- Return 1 line, type Chair.
- Return 2 lines, draw a signature line.
- Return 1 line and type <Insert Name and Degree of Committee Member (s)>.
- Repeat the two previous lines so that all committee members’ names are included.
- Return 4 lines, draw a signature line and date line

- Return 1 line, type <Insert Name of the College Dean>
 - Return 1 line, type “Dean of the <Insert Name of the College>”
 - Return 4 lines, draw a signature line and date line
 - Return 1 line, type “Dianne L. Barron, Ed.D.”
 - Return 1 line, type “Associate Provost and”
 - Return 1 line, type “Dean of the Graduate School”
 - Return to bottom line of the page, type <Insert MONTH, YEAR> of the graduation date (Only the months of May or July).
 - Refer to Appendix E for an example.
- **Abstract (REQUIRED).** The abstract should contain a rationale or justification for the project. Generally, a brief account of the purpose, need, and significance of the investigation is given. DSP objectives are clearly but concisely stated. The methodology, results, and principle conclusions are summarized.

The abstract of a DNP Synthesis Project should fit on one page, be double-spaced, and not exceed 250 words. This word limit and the format have been specified so that the abstract will more easily conform to the requirements of doctoral abstract databases. The title of the DSP is repeated above the abstract.

- The abstract page should be counted but not numbered.
- Type “Abstract” ; centered one inch from the top of the page.
- Double-space and type the title of the DSP in capital letters; double-space if the title extends beyond one line.
- Double-space and type the author’s name in full as it will appear on the diploma; centered.
- Double-space and without indent, begin the text of the abstract.
- The abstract must be double-spaced and meet paper and margin requirements.
- The abstract should be a single paragraph with no more than 250 words.
- The abstract must not exceed one page.

- The abstract must not include any figures, illustrations or tables.
- See Appendix H for a sample Abstract.
- **Human or Animal Subjects Review Form (REQUIRED).** This form is not optional. All students must include a completed Human or Animal Subjects form in the DNP Synthesis Project, even if human or animal subjects were not used. The student is responsible for submitting his or her application to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval *before research is begun*.

The Human or Animal Subjects Review form must be reviewed and signed by the thesis chair and the chair of the Troy University Institutional Review Board (IRB). A Human or Animal Subjects Review Form printed on bond paper with original signatures is required for all University copies of DNP Synthesis Projects. A minimum of two DSP copies are required by the University. A copy of the Human or Animal Subject Review Form is illustrated in Appendix F.

- **Dedication (OPTIONAL).** A heading of “Dedication” should be typed and centered at the top of the page. The Dedication should be brief.
 - Type “Dedication” in capital letters centered one inch from the top of the page.
 - Return two line spaces (one double space). Begin typing the text.
 - The text must be double-spaced and centered on the page.
 - If used, it should be brief.
 - Pagination sequence begins at this page with small Roman numerals.
 - See Appendix I for a sample Dedication.
- **Acknowledgements (OPTIONAL).** The heading “Acknowledgements” is typed without punctuation and centered at the top of the page; double space to begin text. Text should be left justified, double spaced, and in indented paragraph form. Only persons who provided professional help should be acknowledged. The Acknowledgements should be concise and to the point
 - Type “Acknowledgements” centered one inch from the top of the page.
 - Double space. Begin typing the text.
 - The text must be left justified, double-spaced, and in indented paragraph form.

- Count and number the page, using small Roman numerals.
- See Appendix J for a sample Acknowledgements.
- **Table of Contents (REQUIRED).** The heading, “Table of Contents”, is typed in capital letters, without punctuation and centered one inch from the top of the page. Double space; type “Page” right justified. Single space and begin listing at the left margin three line spaces below the heading. The list should include titles of parts, sections or chapters, and their principal subdivisions. The list contained in the Table of Contents must be worded exactly as division or subdivision is worded in the body of the DSP. The listing of subdivisions should be of consistent detail for all sections of the Table of Contents. See Table of Contents example for an example format.
 - Type “Table of Contents” without punctuation; centered one inch from the top of the page.
 - Return two line spaces. Type “Page” right justified in upper and lower case.
 - Single space; begin listing left justified with initial page number of the entry right justified.
 - The titles of the sections, and at least the primary and secondary subdivisions should be listed. They must be worded exactly as they appear in the body of the thesis, and typed in all capital letters.
 - Single-space within each entry and double-space between.
 - All material that follows the Table of Contents should be listed; no preceding material is listed.
 - Only the List of Appendices is included in the Table of Contents. (Note: Within the Table of Contents, the section division “Appendices” or “Appendix” is capitalized, however, the list of individual appendices are indented and presented in upper and lower case.
 - Count and number page, using small Roman numerals.
 - See Appendix K for appropriate format.

Headings. Chapter (or section) headings are in uppercase and lowercase letters. Additionally, they are centered one inch from the top of the page. These are generally organized into sections. Examples may be the headings of the primary pages (e.g., Abstract, Acknowledgments, Table of Contents, References, List of Figures, List of Tables, etc.). If the chapter heading is more than one line, the lines can be of different length and double spaced. The text generally begins two line spaces (one double space) below section headings.

First order headings are in uppercase and lowercase letters, centered, and boldface. Examples include **Background of the Problem, Models/Theories, and Literature Review and Synthesis of Evidence....**

Second-order headings are typed in uppercase and lowercase letters, boldface, flush with the left margin, and on a separate line. The text begins two spaces below second-order headings. Indent 0.5" for paragraphs, and continue return text flush with left margin.

Fourth-order headings are in uppercase and lowercase letters, boldface, italicized, indented 0.5" (in line with text), and end the heading with a period. Text should follow immediately after the heading (do not start text on the following line). Example: *Text.*

Fifth-order headings are in uppercase and lowercase letters, italicized, indented 0.5" (in line with text), and end the heading with a period. Text should follow immediately after the heading (do not start text on the following line). Example: *Text.*

The subdivisions within a section do not begin on a new page unless the preceding page is filled. If there is not (or insufficient) room for the complete heading and at least two lines of type at the bottom of a page (see orphans and widows), the new subdivision should begin on the next page. It is never correct to carry over the last few words of a paragraph. It is preferable to add an extra line, rather than continue a portion of a line.

What Constitutes an Acceptable DNP Synthesis Project Endeavor?

The student and the Project Committee shall reach an agreement as to the scope of the DNP project. The statements below present a philosophical stance rather than precise evaluative criteria.

- The problem to be explored should be relevant and important to nursing practice and be such that the result of the exploration shall improve patient outcomes and nursing practice.
- The problem must be based on current evidence and grounded in an evidence-based model or other appropriate model/framework directed toward the improvement of patient outcomes and nursing practice.
- The quality of the project should lend itself, in part or in whole, to publication in a refereed journal.

Graduating DNP Student Responsibilities

Post-Master's students must complete all DNP requirements within five (5) years; Post-BSN students must complete all DNP requirements within eight (8) years. It is the student's responsibility for seeing that all requirements are met and important deadlines observed. Sequential steps to be accomplished in order to graduate include:

1. Completion of all required courses.
2. Completion of DSP with successful defense.
3. Application submitted for graduation by the published deadline.
4. Submission of a completed and signed DSP to the required departments according to the Graduate Catalogue.
5. Adherence to all required graduation policies and deadlines.

Critical Elements for Writing

In addition to providing required and appropriate content for all written assignments in the school's courses, students must use the following critical elements for writing:

- Write according to protocol specified in the latest edition of the APA style manual (*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*).
- Write assignments using standards of English grammar, spelling, syntax, abbreviations, and format, consistent with University policies.

- Use language consistent with scientific, nursing, and related health disciplines.
- Write without plagiarizing (including self-plagiarizing).
- Cite page numbers when quoting an author's words, and include appropriate references as dictated by APA style manual.
- Submit written assignments that are consistent with protocols for length, format, style, and conditions stated above, by the deadline date established by the faculty.

DNP Synthesis Project

Each student must register for NSG 8810 – DNP I, prior to beginning any work on the DSP project. The student must continue to register for all subsequent DNP courses (and co-requisites) each semester until the DSP is completed and successfully defended. The DSP is presented in the form of a written project and oral defense before the student's Project Committee, other SON faculty members, students, and other invited guests. The DSP must address questions of significance to the discipline and practice of nursing.

Sequence of the DNP courses are as follows:

NSG 8810 1 credit hour	DNP Synthesis of EBP I: Project Identification
NSG 8820 1 credit hour	DNP Synthesis of EBP II: Project Development
NSG 8830 3-5 credit hours	DNP Synthesis of EBP III: Project Implementation
NSG 8840 3-5 credit hours	DNP Synthesis of EBP IV: Project Evaluation

Professional Behavior, Dress, and Appearance

Students are expected to maintain professional behavior at all times while in the DNP Program. Students are expected to show respect for clients, faculty, staff, and student colleagues at all times and in all forms of communication. Maintaining an atmosphere of collegiality among students, preceptors, and faculty is also expected in order to foster a positive learning environment. Students are expected to display professional behavior, such as honesty, punctuality, maturity, and respectful communication with faculty at all

times. This includes (but is not limited to) face-to-face and all electronic/online environment communication. Unethical or unprofessional behavior results in disciplinary action to the student, ranging from verbal or written warning, to withdrawal from the course or clinical setting, or to dismissal from the program.

Advanced practice nurses are professionals, and professional clothing and behavior is expected at all times when representing the nursing profession or Troy University School of Nursing. Appropriate professional attire is required based upon setting or agency dress code. Students arriving at a clinical site in inappropriate clothing may be asked to leave the site.

Clinical disposition is the character, manner and presentation of a person. Students should have positive and effective clinical dispositions, even in adverse circumstances. Clinical disposition concepts that are essential for success in clinical and educational settings include flexibility, persistence, ethical behavior, reliability, sensitivity and respect for others at all times.

Students are required to wear an official Troy University School of Nursing identification badge that includes the student's name and title as DNP Student as outlined per DNP course guidelines. Specific clinical agencies may require that their institutional ID badge be worn as well.

THE DNP SYNTHESIS PROJECT CHAIR

Chapter 3

Selecting the DNP Synthesis Project Chair

The DNP student is required to identify/select and reach agreement with a graduate faculty member to serve as a DSP Chair who will supervise his or her DNP project. The DNP Chair may not have a relationship with the DNP student that could pose a potential conflict of interest (e.g., relative, friend, or colleague). It is of value to consider a number of variables when choosing the faculty member who will act as DSP Chair. These should include:

- Evidence of current interest and involvement in scholarly research/knowledge that is consistent with the topic of the DNP student.
- Experience in chairing a DSP and advising doctoral students.
- Can work well with the student in an area of common clinical interest.

The DSP Chair serves as the leader of the DNP student's DSP Advisory Committee, mentors the student, assists the student to focus the area of interest, and guides the DNP student in the project's development, proposal, approval, implementation, evaluation, and dissemination.

Role of the DNP Synthesis Project Chair

Service as a DSP Chair is a serious engagement of time and academic commitment. While the DSP process is driven by the DNP student initiative, the role of the DSP Chair is significant as she/he serves as the primary advisor to the DNP student. Ideally, the DNP student will remain engaged and work closely with the DSP Chair throughout the life of the DNP Project.

Responsibilities of the DNP Synthesis Project Chair

Advise DNP student on DNP requirements, process, and procedures for DSP approval beyond the scope of these *Guidelines*.

- Advise DNP student in registering for DNP work as specific courses and meeting course expectations (NSG 8810 DNP Synthesis of EBP I: Project Identification, NSG 8820 DNP Synthesis of EBP II: Project Development, NSG 8830 DNP Synthesis of EBP III: Project Implementation, and NSG 8840 DNP Synthesis of EBP IV: Project Evaluation). Consult with DNP course faculty if any problems or questions arise.
- Assist DNP student in the selection of the DSP Advisory Committee members, completion and submission of Project Advisory Committee Assignment Form (Appendix A). Assist the DNP student with the appointment of replacement committee members when a position is vacated for any reason.
- Advise the DNP student with various topics considered applicable for a DSP that would make a practice impact in nursing, specifically Advanced Practice Nursing.
- Assist in development and approval of a structured timeline for the DSP to ensure completion of DNP Project, program requirements, and graduation.
- Meet and communicate with the DNP student on a regular basis to provide guidance and direction. Direct committee meetings with the DNP student as required in the DNP courses, more, if indicated to ensure DNP student's progression on DNP Project.
- Approve the DNP student's project topic.
- Assist the DNP student in all stages of project development including (but not limited to) the formulation of goals, objectives, locating a setting for the project implementation, analyzing data, setting up criteria for evaluation, and identification of appropriate venue for dissemination of the DNP Synthesis Project (e.g., professional journal, professional conference poster or presentation, or etc.).
- Advise the DNP student regarding procedures for applying and gaining approval from Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Troy University and if needed IRB of agency setting.

- Provide timely feedback to DNP student after reviewing DSP drafts with incorporation of DSP Advisory Committee's feedback. Approve revised drafts and distribute to DSP Advisory Committee.
- Determine outcome of DNP student's Initial Competency Evaluation for Project Initial Defense and submit form (with chair and all committee member's signatures) to the DNP Program Coordinator (Appendix D). The Initial Competency Evaluation will occur during the semester in which the student takes NSG 8820 DNP DNP II: Project Development.
- Evaluate DNP student's ePortfolio throughout program as updated and prior to Initial Competency Evaluation and Final Competency Evaluation.
- Notify the DNP Program Coordinator, the Director of the School of Nursing, the Dean of The College of Health and Human Services, and the Dean of the Graduate School of scheduled Final Competency Evaluation for Project Defense.
- Determine outcome of DNP student's Final Competency Evaluation Form and submit form (with chair and all committee member's signatures) to the DNP Program Coordinator, the Director of the School of Nursing, the Dean of The College of Health and Human Services, and the Dean of the Graduate School for their signatures (Appendix E).
- Coordinate grade for DNP coursework with DNP course faculty and assign approval of Final Competency Evaluation. If a DNP student fails to pass the Final Competency Evaluation, a plan for remediation will be developed by the DSP Chair, the DNP Program Coordinator, and the DNP student. This plan will then be submitted to the Dean of the College of Health and Human Services and the Director of the School of Nursing for approval within 2 weeks of the date of the Defense.
- After formal approval from the Office of the Graduate School, advise DNP student on the appropriate number of final copies required to be send to the library.
- Advise and assist the DNP student as needed in completing paperwork on an appropriate schedule for DSP approval and graduation.
- Attend and assist in graduation ceremonies for the DNP student.

Change of the DNP Synthesis Project Chair*

Should a conflict arise between the DNP student and the DSP Chair:

- Step 1: The DNP student and DSP Chair should attempt to resolve the conflict informally.
- Step 2: If the issue is not resolved at Step 1, two options are available for consideration. First, if the DSP Project Chair wants to continue as chair of the DSP Project, a second qualified faculty member can be requested to act as Co-chair and the DSP Chair and Co-chair will meet simultaneously with the DNP student in the future to alleviate any problems. The second option is available if the DSP Chair no longer wishes to chair due to the conflict or if the DNP student wishes to request a change in the DSP Chair. In either case, the DSP Chair or DNP student shall request in writing a conference with the DNP Program Coordinator and/or the Director of the School of Nursing (if the DNP Program Coordinator is the DSP Chair). Her/his request must be a formal request and address the DNP student's concerns and document Step 1 procedure.
- Step 3: Within ten working days of receipt of the request, the DNP Program Coordinator and/or the Director of the School of Nursing shall meet with the DSP Chair and DNP student, either singly or together (if the option of a Co-chair is preferred, this person shall be included in the conference as well). If the DNP Program Coordinator and/or the Director of Nursing support the request for a change, she/he shall mandate and approve the addition of a Co-chair or assign a new DSP Chair; the decision is final; the matter is closed.
- Step 4: In the event the DNP Program Coordinator and/or the Director of the School of Nursing cannot reach a decision, the request shall be forwarded to the Dean of the College of Health and Human Services for a decision and new assignment of a chair, if necessary. This decision is final.

**Note: In the event of a change of DSP Chair, the DNP student may or may not be permitted to continue with the same DNP Project. The new DSP Chair will decide if the DNP student will be required to develop a new project and proposal.*

If the DSP Chair leaves the Institution during the DNP student's tenure, the DNP student will work with the DNP Program Coordinator to determine an appropriate course of action. If the DSP Chair is the DNP Program Coordinator, the DNP student will work with the Director of the School of Nursing or the DNP Courses core faculty to determine the course of action.

THE DNP SYNTHESIS PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Chapter 4

Selecting the DNP Synthesis Project Advisory Committee

The DSP Chair will assist the DNP student in selecting the members of the DSP Advisory Committee. The member(s) of the DSP Advisory Committee may not have a relationship with the DNP student that could pose a potential conflict of interest (e.g., relative, friend, or colleague). It is of value to consider a number of variables when choosing the faculty member(s) who will serve on the DSP Advisory Committee. These should include:

- Evidence of current interest and involvement in scholarly research/knowledge that is consistent with the topic of the DNP student.
- Experience in chairing a DSP and advising doctoral students.
- Can work well with the student in an area of common clinical interest.

The DSP Advisory Committee usually consists of only two members (DSP Chair and one committee member). However, after consultation with the DSP Chair, the student may elect to select others to serve as a member of the DSP Advisory Committee. Members and additional members may be selected outside of the School of Nursing, but must hold a graduate degree or specialty certification, be an expert in the student's area of interest, or have direct contact with the population/setting the student is utilizing in the DSP (especially, if the DNP student is a distant campus student). Once members are selected by the DNP student, members will sign the DSP Advisory Committee Assignment Form (Appendix A). The form is then submitted to the DNP Program Coordinator and becomes a part of the DNP student's record.

Role of the DNP Synthesis Project Advisory Committee Members

The DSP Advisory Committee assists the DSP Chair in mentoring the DNP student, assisting the DNP student to focus the area of interest, and guiding the DNP student in the project's development, proposal, approval, implementation, evaluation, and dissemination in order to improve the quality of the DSP with additional insight, input, and construction

Responsibilities of the DNP Synthesis Project Advisory Committee Members

The responsibilities of the DSP Advisory Committee Member is to:

- Guide the DNP student in the planning and development of the DNP Project.
- Assist the DSP Chair in critical review of the readiness of the DSP proposal for presentation.
- Provide timely feedback to DSP Chair and DNP student after reading, reviewing, and editing DSP drafts.
- Mentor the DNP student during the implementation and evaluation phases of the DNP Project.
- Assist with the methodology, statistical analysis, re-writing, or another area within his/her expertise to improve the quality of the DNP Project.
- Determine and approve the DNP student's eligibility for the Initial Competency Evaluation and the Final Competency Evaluation.
- Attend and evaluate the DNP student's performance on both the Initial Proposal and Final DSP Evaluation presentations.
-

Change in DNP Synthesis Project Advisory Committee Membership

If a DSP Advisory Committee member is unable to complete his/her tenure due to extenuating circumstances, he/she may request to be relieved from service on a DSP Advisory Committee. A formal written request with a brief explanation should be submitted to the DSP Chair who will forward the request to the DNP Program Coordinator, the Director of the School of Nursing, and/or the College of Health and Human Services Dean/Associate Dean or the Dean for the Office of the Graduate School. If the request is

granted, a replacement will be assigned by the DSP Chair with the DNP Program Coordinator's or School of Nursing Director's consent. The DSP Chair will inform the DNP student.

DNP Synthesis Project Advisory Committee Meetings

The progression of the DNP student throughout the DSP process is monitored by the committee during scheduled meetings. The purpose of the meetings is to assist the DNP student in the development of a topic for his/her DNP Project, a plan for the DSP process, and attainment of DSP goals, objectives, and a timeline. These can occur face-to-face on-campus, via Centra conferencing, Skype, or other formats as agreed upon by the DSP Chair and the DNP student. Meeting times will be determined and agreed upon by the DSP Chair and the DNP student and when possible will occur during regular business hours. The first meeting will occur early in NSG 8810 DNP Synthesis of EBP I: Project Identification course, after acquiring a DSP Chair and DSP Advisory Committee by the DNP student for the DNP Project. Thereafter, the committee will meet as required in the DNP courses, or more, to evaluate the DNP student's progress towards the completion of the DNP degree requirements.

The DNP student in collaboration with the DSP Chair is responsible for completing minutes for the first committee meeting and submitting the Report of DSP Advisory Committee Meeting Form (Appendix B) to the DNP Program Coordinator. The DNP student is responsible for preparing minutes following each DSP Advisory Committee meeting and submitting them to the DSP Chair and the DSP Advisory Committee.

At the meeting, where the DNP student presents the DSP Proposal, all committee members will review and approve the proposal or provide recommendations for revision. When the DSP Proposal has been approved, the DSP Chair submits the DSP Proposal Form (Appendix C) and the Initial Competency Evaluation Form (Appendix D) to the DNP Program Coordinator within two weeks of the date of the committee meeting.

CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION OF DNP SYNTHESIS PROJECT

Chapter 5

Initial Project Proposal

Students collaborate with their Chair and Committee in the development of the written proposal. It is required that students defend their proposals during NSG 8820. At a time determined by the Project Chair and Member, the student delivers a 10-20 minute oral presentation using PowerPoint to the Committee describing the key components of the project proposal. The student must be prepared to answer questions from the committee following the presentation.

The initial proposal defense may be held at a Troy University School of Nursing or using interactive distance technology such as Skype at the discretion of the committee. The student is responsible for scheduling the defense presentation after coordinating with the Committee Chair and Committee members.

The DNP student must successfully defend their proposal in order to meet NSG 8820 course requirements and progress in the program. A written evaluation with recommendations as appropriate will be given to the student at the completion of the initial defense presentation. All Committee members and the Chair will sign the Initial Proposal Defense Evaluation form. A copy of the form will be submitted to the DNP Coordinator.

If a student fails to pass the initial proposal defense, a plan for remediation and a second proposal defense will be developed by the Committee Chair, the members and the student. The plan will be submitted to the DNP Coordinator for approval within one week of the date of the meeting. Failure to successfully pass the second proposal defense will result in failure of NSG 8820.

Suggested Timeline for Initial Written and Oral Proposal Defense. The timeline for the written and oral defense is as follows:

- The first draft of the proposal should be to the Committee Chair ***at least four weeks*** before the Proposal Defense.
- The revised draft and PowerPoint should be to the Project Committee at least two weeks prior to the scheduled Defense.
- The final copy and Powerpoint should be submitted to the Project committee at least one week prior to the Proposal Defense.

The timeline may alter depending on the contract with your Committee Chair.

Format for initial proposal. The paper must be written using current APA style and 12 point font. The length of the proposal may vary, but is usually 20-30 pages excluding title page and appendices. The proposal contains the following elements:

Title page

Introduction

Background of the Problem

Significance of the Problem to Nursing and the Organization or System

Problem Statement

Purpose

Models/Theories

Evidence-Based Practice Model

Mid-range Nursing Theory

Literature Review and Synthesis of Evidence

Description of the Literature Search (eg: keywords, inclusion criteria, databases, # articles meeting search criteria)

Literature Synthesis

Evaluation of the Strength of the Evidence

Project Plan and Methodology

PICO

Measurable Process Objectives and Anticipated Outcomes

Anticipated Sample

Setting (site description and rationale for choice of setting)

Resources available for project

Intervention (if applicable)

Tools (including reliability and validity)

Procedures

Plan for Evaluation

Formative (plan for evaluating process objectives)

Summative (plan for data analysis of outcomes)

Plan for Dissemination

Conclusion

Potential Impact for Nursing Practice, Organization and System

References

Appendix

Evidence Table

Institutional Review Board. Scholarly projects require approval from the Troy University Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to the implementation of the project. IRB approval is necessary in order to protect human subjects. Dissemination of the findings is also an expectation of the DNP graduate, thus IRB is also required.

Completion of and proof of Troy University's IRB exam is required prior to submission of the IRB application. This requirement is completed in conjunction with NSG 8820. The IRB application is submitted **only** after the Chair and Committee have formally approved the student's project proposal and the Chair has approved the IRB application. Additional IRB approvals may be required from the agency or institution in which the project will be implemented. If there are additional IRB applications, the committee chair approves the IRB application before submitting to the agency or institution. It is the responsibility of the student to ascertain this requirement prior to the submission of the TROY IRB. Implementation of the project starts after Troy University and any other

required IRB approvals are received. The TROY IRB meets from 9:00-11a.m. (CST) on the third Thursday of each month except December and July.

Final Defense Procedure

All presentations must be scheduled in advance and the presentation will be facilitated by the Committee Chair. The Chair will introduce the candidate and provide information about the student. The student will conduct a 30 minute Power Point presentation. The DNP student will make a 20-30 minute presentation, after which the Chair will open the floor for questions/discussion from the Committee and audience. Following questions and discussion, the audience will be excused and the Committee may pose additional questions about the project to the student. The DNP student is then excused while Committee members deliberate on the outcome of the presentation.

During this time, the committee members will determine the outcome of the final defense and sign the Final Competency Evaluation Form. All members of the Committee will sign the DSP Final Evaluation form. A copy of the form will be submitted to the DNP Program Coordinator, the Director of the School of Nursing, the Dean of the College of Health and Human Services, and the Graduate School Dean for signatures.

If a student fails to pass the final defense presentation, a plan for remediation will be developed by the Committee, the DNP Coordinator and the student. Failure to pass the second presentation will result in dismissal from the program. The Final project must be submitted at least **2 weeks** prior to the end of the semester for the student to be eligible for graduation. Once the Committee has agreed that the student has met all project requirements for graduation, the student will submit an electronic version of the Final Written paper to the DNP Coordinator.

Timeline for Final Written and Oral Presentation. The timeline for Final Written and Oral Presentation is:

- The student must submit date and time requests to the DNP coordinator no later than **4 weeks** after the first day of the final semester.
- A first draft of the final Project Paper must be submitted to the Committee Chair at least **8 weeks** prior to the scheduled Defense.

Scheduling the Final Defense. Students will meet with his/her committee within the first four weeks of the student's final semester. The student and committee should determine a timeline for the final semester and a projected date for the defense. The Project Defense must be scheduled no later than **four weeks** prior to graduation. It is the student's responsibility to coordinate times with the Committee members. The classroom space and Vtel must be available for the desired dates as well. The student will submit the Defense Dates Form (posted on the NSG 8840 Blackboard site) to the DNP coordinator's office no later than 4 weeks after the first day of the last final semester. A date and time will be scheduled based on availability and on a first come, first serve basis. Students will be notified of their date via email. All student presentations times and dates will be posted in NSG 8840.

Format for Written Project Paper

The proposal must be written in current APA format using 12 point font. All final papers should be of sufficient length to fully reflect the student's project. Most papers are approximately 35-40 pages in length. The final paper should include:

Required Preliminary pages

Background of the Problem

Significance of the Problem to Nursing and the Organization or System

Problem Statement

Purpose

Models/Theories

Evidence-Based Practice Model

Mid-range Nursing Theory

Literature Review and Synthesis of Evidence

Description of the Literature Search (eg: keywords, inclusion criteria, databases, # articles meeting search criteria)

Literature Synthesis

Evaluation of the Strength of the Evidence

Project Plan and Methodology

PICO

Measurable Process Objectives and Anticipated Outcomes

Sample

Setting (site description and rationale for choice of setting)

Resources available for project

Intervention (if applicable)

Tools (including reliability and validity)

Procedures

Evaluation

Formative evaluation (of process)

Summative Evaluation

Statistical Results

Discussion of Findings/Outcomes

Limitations

System and Practice Impact

Implications for Organizational and Systems Change including Sustainability

Recommendations for Nursing Practice

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Tools

Doctor of Nursing Practice

DNP Synthesis Project Advisory Committee Form

Name of Student:

The Advisory Committee is composed of a student’s Project Chair, and at least one other faculty member. It is the responsibility of this committee to guide a student in planning the Project Proposal, which will serve as the blue-print for the student’s project. The committee also will review, suggest revisions, and approve the Project Proposal. The Committee and Project Chair must approve the Project Proposal before it is submitted to the Dean. The committee will also guide the student throughout the implementation, evaluation and dissemination portions of the Project.

I request the following individuals listed below to serve on my DNP Project Advisory Committee.

_____ Printed Name, Student	_____ Signature	_____ Date
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If you are willing to serve on the Committee indicated above, please sign as indicated below.

_____ Printed Name, Chair	_____ Signature	_____ Date
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_____ Printed Name, Member	_____ Signature	_____ Date
--------------------------------------	--------------------	---------------

_____ Printed Name, Member	_____ Signature	_____ Date
--------------------------------------	--------------------	---------------

_____ DNP Program Coordinator	_____ Date	
----------------------------------	---------------	--

Student:

_____ Project Chair: _____

Date of Meeting: _____

Advisory Committee Members Attending:

Outline (filled out prior to meeting):

Minutes of Meeting:

TROY UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF NURSING
DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE
INITIAL COMPETENCY EVALUATION FORM

Signature,

Date

DNP Program Coordinator

Name of Student: _____

Date and Time: _____ Place of Examination: _____

Proposed Title of Project: _____

Results of Evaluation: Pass Not Pass

Evaluation Remarks:

Project Committee:

_____ Printed Name, Chair	_____ Signature	_____ Date
_____ Printed Name, Member	_____ Signature	_____ Date
_____ Printed Name, Member	_____ Signature	_____ Date
_____ Printed Name, Student	_____ Signature	_____ Date
_____ DNP Program Coordinator	_____ Date	

Improving The Use of Electronic Medical Records in a Family Practice Setting

Submitted by Elizabeth Elliott Jones in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Nursing Practice
in the Graduate School of
Troy University

Accepted on behalf of the Faculty of the Graduate School by the DNP Synthesis project committee:

Jean Orlando, Ph.D., RN
Chair

Date

Dorothea Orem, DNP, RN

Patricia Benner, Ph.D., RN

Amy Spurlock, Ph.D., RN
DNP Program Coordinator

Diane Weed, Ph.D., RN
Director of School of Nursing

Mark Tillman, Ph.D.
Interim Dean of the College of Health & Human Services

Dianne Barron, Ed.D.
Associate Provost and
Dean of the Graduate School

Date

MAY, 2015

HUMAN OR ANIMAL SUBJECTS REVIEW FORM
for

Name of Student

Title of Research Project

This research project has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board and approved as follows (the appropriate block must be checked by either the Thesis chair or the Chair of the Institutional Review Board):

- Neither humans nor animals** will be used and this research is certified exempt from Institutional Review Board review by the thesis committee chair.

- Human participants** will be used and this research is certified exempt from Institutional Review Board review by the Chair of the Institutional Review Board.

- Human participants** will be used and this research was reviewed and is approved by the Institutional Review Board.

- Animal participants** will be used and this research was reviewed and is approved by the Animal Research Review Board.

Signature of DSP Committee Chair	Date
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Signature of Chair of Institutional Review Board	Date
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Improving The Use of Electronic Medical Records in a Family Practice Setting

by

Elizabeth Elliott Jones

A DNP Synthesis Project

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Nursing
Practice in the Graduate School of Troy University

MAY, 2014

Abstract

Improving The Use of Electronic Medical Records in a Family Practice Setting

Elizabeth Elliott Jones

Begin text of abstract here (no indentation). The abstract should be a single, double-spaced paragraph with no more than 250 words and must not exceed one page.

Dedication

This DNP synthesis project is dedicated to my wonderful mother, Jean Watson, whose love and support remain with me.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the dedication and support of my committee chair, Dr. Betty Neuman, without whom I would not have learned as much as I have during doctoral study.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to my committee members, Dr. Martha Rogers and Dr. Kathryn Kolcaba for guidance along my journey and excellent editorial skills.

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