



The University of Akron
School of Nursing

DNP Student Handbook 2026-2027

The University of Akron
College of Health and Human Sciences
School of Nursing

Table of Contents

Doctor of Nursing Practice Overview.....	3
DNP Plan of Study.....	5
Core Courses.....	6
DNP Project Team Roles.....	7
DNP Project Timeline.....	9
DNP Project Guidelines.....	11
Portfolio*	12
Rules, Policies, and Procedures.....	12
Grievance Procedure for Graduate Students.....	16

Doctor of Nursing Practice Overview

The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program at The University of Akron offers doctoral preparation to nurses whose career emphasis is on furthering their direct clinical advanced nursing practice skills (Clinical Nurse Specialist, Nurse Practitioner, Nurse Anesthetist, and Nurse Midwife). The post-BSN DNP program also offers an opportunity for baccalaureate prepared nurses to achieve doctoral preparation in a clinical specialty advanced practice area.

The program is offered in a hybrid format. This means that there is a blend of face-to-face, and distance learning both synchronously and asynchronously based on the course/content/semester.

SCHOOL OF NURSING MISSION STATEMENT

The School offers diverse and comprehensive nursing education programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The programs of study, based on professional standards, prepare individuals to provide nursing care in a variety of settings. The School of Nursing supports nursing research that contributes to the health and well-being of society. The School is committed to serving culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse populations. Through academic and community collaboration, the school promotes excellence in nursing education, research, practice, and service.

GOALS

1. Prepare generalist and advanced practice nurses who are eligible for initial licensure and for certification.
2. Provide a foundation for lifelong commitment to professional development and scholarship through continuing education and advanced study at the master's and doctoral levels.
3. Prepare nurses who are sensitive in caring for diverse populations in a variety of settings.
4. Prepare professional practitioners who integrate leadership roles and ethical standards in a continuously changing health care arena and society.

DNP MISSION STATEMENT

To prepare doctoral level nursing leaders who will advance and transform nursing through evidence-based practice, leading to improved patient outcomes.

DNP PROGRAM OUTCOMES

1. Synthesize nursing history and interdisciplinary knowledge to inform education, practice, and research. Apply ethical decision-making, nursing theories, advanced specialty knowledge, and decision models to enhance clinical judgement and improve the delivery of quality care in diverse healthcare settings.
2. Coordinate person-centered care in partnership with the person and their connection to others (family, important others, community) and the healthcare team, creating care plans that integrate personal preference, advanced nursing specialty-knowledge, evidence-based models, and emerging evidence to provide high-quality care across the health continuum.
3. Manage population health, using evolving methods to collect health data and identify priorities, and consider the impact of social determinants of health on care delivery, as well as advancing equitable population health policies, advocacy strategies, and effective partnerships.
4. Advance the scholarship of nursing by integrating best evidence into practice and demonstrating ethical conduct in all scholarly activities.
5. Lead quality improvement and safety initiatives by incorporating national standards and guidelines, data-driven benchmarks, and risk mitigating strategies to enhance quality and promote a just and safe environment.

6. Coordinate interprofessional activities by applying principles of team dynamics fostering mutual respect, utilizing effective communication strategies, personal expertise, and nursing's unique knowledge to achieve optimal person and organizational outcomes.
7. Create safe, cost-effective, equitable, and accessible care solutions for diverse populations across the continuum of care.
8. Use best evidence and practice to select healthcare technologies and informatics tools to gather, analyze, and evaluate individual and population data, supporting decision-making to enhance care.
9. Model ethical behavior in practice and leadership, integrating the values of professional nursing responsibility and accountability, integrity, collaboration, and advocacy for all persons.
10. Demonstrate leadership and commitment to professional growth through self-reflection, continuous development, mentoring, and advocacy.

DNP Plan of Study

Table 1: DNP Plan of Study

Summer 1	Fall 1	Spring 1
NURS 714 Synthesis and Application of Evidence for Adv. Practice Nurses (3 credits)	NURS 705 Clinical Nurse Scholar I (4 credits)	NURS 710 Advanced Healthcare Statistics (3 credits)
	NURS 700 Information Management in Health Care (3 credits)	NURS 706 Clinical Nurse Scholar II (4 credits)
3 credits	7 credits	7 credits

Table 2: DNP Plan of Study Continued

Summer 2	Fall 2	Spring 2
NURS 712 Fiscal Management in Healthcare (3 credits)	NURS 713 Advanced Leadership in Healthcare (3 credits)	NURS:717 Dissemination for the Nurse Scholar (2 credits)
NURS 715 Fundamentals of Public Health Epidemiology (3 credits)	NURS 708 DNP Project I (3 credits)	NURS 709 DNP Project II (3 credits)
		NURS 707 Clinical Scholar Residency (3 credits)
6 credits	6 credits	8 credits

Note: 37 Total program hours are required to graduate. Students must be enrolled each semester until the DNP Project is complete.

Core Courses

Doctor of Nursing Practice Program

NURS 700 Information Management in Healthcare. This course focuses on nursing informatics to support clinical decision making in advanced nursing practice.

NURS 705 Clinical Nurse Scholar I. This is the first of two seminar courses accompanied by clinical practice with expert preceptors. Focus is on transitioning to the clinical scholar leader role within an identified area of advanced nursing practice. Emphasis is placed on the epistemology underlying advanced nursing practice and the integration of theoretical frameworks and evidence-based practice principles in achieving optimal health outcomes for individuals and groups. This course is comprised of 3 didactic content hours per week and a clinical practicum of 7 hours per week.

NURS 706 Clinical Nurse Scholar II. This is the second of two seminar courses that focuses on translating and integrating theory and scientific evidence into the clinical work of the advanced practice nurse. Culturally-aware approaches are developed to resolve a healthcare issue using theoretic models and principles of evidence-based practice to design innovative interventions. This course is comprised of 2 didactic content hours per week and a clinical practicum of 14 hours per week.

NURS 707 Clinical Scholar Residency. This course is the synthesis of components of clinical scholar leader role that comprises this practicum. Students apply advanced leadership and clinical scholarship skills to developing and evaluating approaches to healthcare problems in a practicum setting.

NURS 708 and 709 DNP Project I and II. Faculty and preceptor directed project that contributes to nursing practice knowledge. The course culminates in an oral presentation and a publishable manuscript. DNP Project students must register for a total of 6 hours, 2 to 6 hours in a single semester, distributed over three semesters if desired.

NURS 710 Advanced Healthcare Statistics. This course focuses on an in-depth examination of descriptive statistics, correlation, regression, multiple regression sets, scaling, nonlinear transformation, missing data, and interactive effects; including manipulation of data, integrating understanding of inference and probability.

NURS 712 Fiscal Management in Healthcare. This course examines the role and the required skills for the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) graduate as a nurse leader in the understanding of the business acumen and the financials of health care.

NURS 713 Advanced Leadership in Healthcare. This course focuses on advanced competencies of doctoral-prepared advanced practice nurses for transformational interprofessional leadership in healthcare to improve patient and population health outcomes. The five key leadership competencies including creating and leading change; self-knowledge; strategic vision; interpersonal communication; and organizational effectiveness are presented with examples and case studies.

NURS 714 Synthesis and Application of Evidence for Advanced Practice Nursing.

This course focuses on concepts, models and methods for implementation of evidence-based nursing practice at both individual clinician and system levels. Competencies for the identification, analysis, synthesis and application of evidence relevant to nursing and health care practice are developed. Factors that facilitate and impede implementing and sustaining evidence-based practice are considered. Students learn skills for identification of clinical problems in advanced practice nursing and promoting adoption and implementation of evidence-based solutions to promote patient health outcomes.

NURS 715 Fundamentals of Public Health Epidemiology. This course introduces principles, methods, and application of epidemiology. The course covers the history of epidemiology, concepts of disease causation and prevention, measures of disease frequency and excessive risk, epidemiologic study designs, causal inference, outbreak investigation and screening. Provides experience with calculation of rate standardization, measures of disease frequency, association and impact, and sensitivity and specificity of screening tests. The course highlights the applications of epidemiology to the understanding of disease etiology, transmission, pathogenesis, and prevention, evaluation and public policy development.

NURS 716 Introduction to Nursing Scholar. This course involves the exploration of nursing scholarship. Emphasis will be placed on various methods used to inform clinical management such as research, evidence-based practice, quality improvement, and program evaluation. Critical thinking skills, evaluation strategies, and professional writing will be developed through the critique of existing literature.

NURS 717 Dissemination for the Nurse Scholar. This course involves the exploration of various methods of dissemination and culminates in dissemination of the DNP project.

DNP Project Team Roles

The student, advisor, faculty co-advisor, and preceptor serve in various roles during the student DNP experience, which facilitates progression and attainment of the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree. For example:

DNP Academic/Project Advisor: At the start of the DNP program, each student will be assigned an advisor. The DNP Academic/Project Advisor may be a DNP/DNAP/PhD prepared faculty member or administrator of the School of Nursing who holds graduate faculty status. All DNP advisors will be familiar with the DNP program and will have clinical/scholarly expertise. The DNP Academic/Project Advisor will provide academic advisement throughout the program. It is the right of a student to change advisors. Should a student wish to change an advisor, the student should contact the Assistant Director of Graduate Programs. The DNP Faculty Advisor works closely with the student to support and assist with the development and revisions of the DNP Project.

Faculty Co-Advisor: The DNP Project faculty co-advisor is another DNP/DNAP/PhD prepared faculty member who holds graduate faculty status. The co-advisor provides

clinical/scholarly expertise, ongoing support, and provides comments/revisions for the DNP Project. The co-advisor works in collaboration with the advisor to provide feedback to the student.

Preceptor: The preceptor should hold a doctoral degree such as a DNP, PhD, MD, PharmD, etc. whenever possible. The preceptor can be from a variety of healthcare disciplines and serves in a consulting role to navigate the clinical setting. For example, a preceptor may facilitate advanced practice experiences and provide entry to various interprofessional team experiences in which they may or may not participate themselves. Clinical preceptors may have varied skill sets, educational credentials, and expertise. Students cannot be precepted by a spouse or family member.

Course designated clinical experiences are facilitated by the preceptor and may include but not be limited to:

- Providing curricular, professional, or programmatic guidance
- Serving as a resource person and/or role model
- Enhancing the learning experiences of the DNP student
- Providing access to a setting or population of patients
- Providing leadership opportunities within the system
- Facilitating interprofessional team leadership experiences

Clinical hours* are logged by the student. Clinical hours may include hours on the DNP Project proposal including development, clinical contact hours, and hours based on participation in leadership activities and committees. The faculty or DNP Coordinator may be contacted to clarify what constitutes clinical hours.

*All students must be able to validate 1040 post-baccalaureate hours upon completion of the program.

DNP Project Timeline

The student will begin formulating the DNP proposal in Clinical Scholar I and II. After incorporating feedback from the practice proposal in CSII, the student(s) may begin the process of readying the proposal for presentation. The process is as follows:

1. The student(s) send the completed and edited version of the proposal to the Advisor for review.
2. The Advisor evaluates and edits the proposal and returns to the student(s).
3. Once the Advisor has given written permission, the student(s) will email the completed proposal to the entire project team to schedule the proposal presentation. The presentation can be scheduled no sooner than **2 weeks** following the date of the scheduling email unless other permission is obtained. All student members of the project team, Advisor, and Co-Advisor must be present at the presentation which can occur virtually. The preceptor should be included on the scheduling email and is welcome to attend. Their presence is NOT required.
4. The DNP Project Proposal Presentation will occur on the scheduled date and is a **20-minute PowerPoint presentation** of the student's DNP Project. The DNP Project Team may ask follow-up questions to determine the readiness to move forward with the IRB application. Revisions may be required. If approved, the **DNP Project Proposal Presentation Approval Form** will be signed by the DNP Advisor and submitted to the DNP assignment folder in Brightspace.

If the project is not approved, the student(s) will work with the DNP Project Advisor to address the concerns. Then the DNP Project Team will meet for a second DNP Project Proposal Presentation. A second failure will result in student dismissal from the DNP Program.

5. Once the project is approved, **the student(s) will work with the DNP Project advisor/preceptor to apply for Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, which must be obtained prior to the student initiating the DNP Project. IRB information for the University of Akron can be found at <https://www.uakron.edu/research/ora/compliance/irb/irbforms.dot>.**

If a student is conducting the DNP Project in a healthcare institution, it may be necessary to seek IRB approval at both the healthcare institution and The University of Akron. The student has the responsibility to contact The University of Akron and the facility's IRB to determine the process for approval. All students must complete CITI Training prior to applying to the IRB.

6. After IRB approval and with written approval from the Advisor, the student(s) may begin DNP Project Implementation.

7. After the completion of the DNP Project implementation (DNP Project 1), the student(s) will work closely with the DNP Advisor to develop and revise the DNP Project Paper.
8. Once the paper is satisfactory and the Advisor has given written permission, the student(s) will email the completed DNP Project Paper to the entire project team to schedule the final presentation. The presentation can be scheduled no sooner than **2 weeks** following the date of the scheduling email unless other permission is obtained. All student members of the project team, Advisor, and Co-Advisor must be present at the presentation which can occur virtually. The preceptor should be included on the scheduling email and is welcome to attend. Their presence is NOT required. This should occur during DNP Project 2.
9. The DNP Project Final Presentation will occur on the scheduled date and is a **20-minute PowerPoint presentation** of the DNP Project. The DNP Project Team may ask follow-up questions for clarification. Revisions may be required. If approved, the **DNP Project Approval Form** will be signed by the DNP Advisor and submitted to the DNP assignment folder in Brightspace.

DNP Project Guidelines

The DNP Project documents the student's educational experiences, provides a measure for evaluating the achievement of the DNP Essentials and DNP program outcomes, and showcases the student's growth in knowledge and expertise as a future DNP scholar. The DNP Project deliverables include a written paper as delineated below and a portfolio in the DNP Student Site. The DNP Project should serve as a foundation for future scholarly practice as a DNP within the clinical setting.

Title Page

Problem Identification/Background

1. Introduction
2. Problem Statement
3. Purpose Statement

Review of Literature

1. PPCO Question Guiding the Literature Search
2. Review and Synthesis of Current Literature

Methods

1. Project Question and Framework
2. Description of Setting and Participants
3. Implementation Plan
4. Protection of Human Subjects
5. Evaluation Plan

Results and Discussion

1. Results
2. Discussion
3. Limitations and Barriers
4. Implications for Nursing Practice
5. Conclusion

Portfolio*

Verification of MSN clinical hours (post-MSN only)

PICOT Question (NURS 705/CSI)
EBP Framework for the PICOT question (NURS 705/CSI)
DNP Project Charter (NURS 705/CSI)
DNP Project Team Approval Form (NURS 705/CSI)
Preceptor CV and License Verification (NURS 705/CSI)

Organizational Assessment (NURS 706/Clinical Scholar II)
DNP Project Proposal and PowerPoint Presentation (NURS 706/CSII)
DNP Project Proposal Presentation Approval Form (NURS 706/CSII)

IRB Approvals Documentation (Submitted prior to or during DNP Project 1)

DNP Project Written Paper and PowerPoint Presentation (NURS 709/DNP Project II)
DNP Project Presentation Approval Form (NURS 709/DNP Project II)
Final DNP Project Manuscript (NURS 709/ DNP Project II)

DNP Project Poster (NURS 717/Dissemination for the Nurse Scholar)
Verification of Dissemination (NURS 717/Dissemination for the Nurse Scholar)

DNP Hours Log (NURS 707/Clinical Scholar Residency)

1. Clean, edited, and updated copies of each item are to be submitted to the DNP Student Site on Brightspace prior to the completion of the course in parenthesis. If revisions are made throughout the program, the revisions should also be submitted to the DNP Student Site.

Rules, Policies, and Procedures

The DNP requires 540 post-master's practice hours. DNP students enter the program with 500 or more hours from their master's program, or they need to complete extra clinical hours in the DNP program to meet these entry criteria. To be accepted, the hours must have been part of a supervised academic program (e.g., degree or certificate). Students must request written verification of the number of hours completed within their master's program. If a student has achieved 1040 post- baccalaureate hours in the master's program, a minimum of 270 hours must still be completed in the DNP residency. In addition, students must complete hours in Clinical Nurse Scholar I and Clinical Nurse Scholar II. Plans will be individualized based on reported hours, and to meet *The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education (2021)*, available at: <https://www.aacnnursing.org/essentials/download-order>

Achievement of the DNP Essentials may occur in the context of direct patient care but may also occur in other settings. It is possible for some practice hours to be met through the DNP Project while others are achieved elsewhere (e.g., work on a policy issue, leadership roles in professional organizations, etc.).

The primary reference for rules, policies and procedures concerning graduate education at The University of Akron is the Graduate Bulletin published by the Graduate School. You may access the Graduate School Bulletin at <http://www.uakron.edu/gradsch/docs/Gradbulletin.pdf>. It is expected that all

graduate students become familiar with the policies and rules contained in this document.

Mandatory Onsite Attendance

DNP courses may have mandatory intensive sessions. They may be either in-person or online. Failure to attend may result in the student failing the course. Please check the [DNP student](#) website and Brightspace frequently for updates and/or changes to the schedule.

Computer Requirements

The DNP program is taught using online synchronous, asynchronously, or via face-to-face meetings depending on the class. All students must have a personal computer with sufficient memory, speed and software capabilities to participate in online activities. Helpful information on computer requirements and Technology Services can be found at <http://www.uakron.edu/it/>. The student may also contact the UA Computer Help Desk @ 330.972.6888 during hours of operation.

Withdrawing From a Course

Students who withdraw from a course must officially complete the process as described by UA policy found in the Graduate Bulletin. Failure to withdraw from a course will result in a grade of “F”.

Entering the Program and Request for Program Leave

Once a student is accepted into the DNP program, if the student chooses not to enter in the semester and year accepted a new application is required for consideration in a subsequent year.

DNP students are admitted annually for a summer start date. Courses are offered summer, fall, and spring. If a student steps out for personal, professional or academic reasons, the student must notify the Assistant Director of Graduate Programs in writing. When the student is ready to re-enroll, a written request must be submitted to the DNP Coordinator to join the next cohort. If the student plans to use previously earned credits, those must fall within the ten-year time limit for obtaining a doctorate. The 10-year timeline always begins with the first course the student takes that applies to the program. Should a student request a leave, the student will still need to enroll in at least one credit for each fall and/or spring semester of their leave per the Graduate School’s continuous enrollment requirement.

Continuous Enrollment Requirement

The Graduate School requires that a doctoral student register for a minimum of one graduate credit as approved by her/his adviser during each fall and spring semester.

Residency Requirement

A DNP student must meet the residency requirements of the School of Nursing. The residency requirements may be met through completion of DNP Project I and II and the Residency course as an immersion experience. In this residency, the student works with the project team including the DNP Project Advisor, DNP Co-advisor, and preceptor. 270 or more clinical hours must be obtained toward the 1040 post baccalaureate hours required for a DNP at The University of Akron. To meet the residency requirements, the student must meet regularly with the DNP Project Advisor to review progress.

Grading Scale

School of Nursing Grading Scale: Grades will be based on a 100% scale. The grades will be carried out 2 decimal places. Rounding will be done on the final grade only, not on individual grades.

A = 94-100%	B- = 80-83%	D+ = 67-69%
A- = 90-93%	C+ = 77-79%	D = 64-66%
B+ = 87-89%	C = 74-76%	D- = 60-63%
B = 84-86%	C- = 70-73%	F = <60%

Grade Requirements

The minimum passing grade for each course is a “B”. Students earning a grade less than a “B” will be required to repeat the course the next time it is offered. A student will not be permitted to enroll in the next course until the course is repeated. A course can be repeated only one time in the DNP program. A second course grade below the grade of “B” will result in dismissal from the DNP Program.

If a student thinks she/he cannot complete the course requirements prior to the end of semester, she/he should immediately notify the course faculty. Assigning a grade of in progress is at the discretion of the course faculty. All coursework must be completed, and an earned grade of “B” must be assigned prior to enrolling in the next course.

Failure to complete the course by the beginning of the next semester will result in a grade of “F”.

Grievance Procedure for Graduate Students

Graduate students should follow the grievance procedure outlined in The University of Akron Graduate Bulletin.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

The faculty members of the School of Nursing strongly support the University position on academic dishonesty and plagiarism. Should the faculty member discover plagiarism, a variety of actions may be taken. One action may be to contact the student to hear their side of the story. The consequence may be to redo the assignment, receive a lower grade, receive an F for the course, or in some cases be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards. Should the student disagree with a faculty member's decision, the appeals process should be followed as written in this DNP Handbook.

Student Code of Conduct: Please be aware of the Code of Student Conduct and the requirement of academic honesty; the availability of accommodations for students with disabilities; and the add, drop, withdrawal, and tuition refund policies:

<https://www.uakron.edu/studentconduct/index.dot>

Library Resources:

Nursing Databases http://libguides.uakron.edu/nursing_databases
LibGuides (for other ideas) <http://libguides.uakron.edu>

Clinical Agency Requirements

All DNP students are responsible for compliance with the rules and regulations of the healthcare agencies. Should the School of Nursing be required to submit an attestation form to the clinical agency, the student must provide all documentation to the School of Student Services Counselor.

Accreditation

The baccalaureate degree in nursing/master's degree program in nursing/Doctor of Nursing Practice program/ and post-graduate APRN certificate program at The University of Akron is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (<http://www.ccneaccreditation.org>).