

*Minnesota State Colleges and
Universities*

*Consortium Doctor of Nursing Practice
Program*

DNP Nursing Student Handbook

2008 – 2009

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

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INTRODUCTION

This student handbook is designed for graduate students enrolled in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Consortium Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Program. The DNP program provides nurses with opportunities for practice-based doctoral education. The DNP Program is taught by the graduate nursing faculty of these four universities:

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

Advanced practice nurses and leaders from the associated clinical facilities of these institutions also participate in the education of these nurses.

The DNP Program addresses the increased complexity of today's health care environment and the national call for improved preparation of nurse leaders in advanced nursing practice.

The DNP Program features a plan of study that:

- builds upon previous education of nurses currently practicing in a variety of advanced roles (e.g., nurse administrator, nurse educator, clinical nurse specialist, nurse anesthetist, nurse practitioner, nurse midwife).
- emphasizes leadership in advanced practice, preparation for research utilization/translation of research to practice, and doctoral level clinical experiences in evidence-based practice, quality improvement, and organization/systems thinking.
- is structured around the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice, and focuses upon the development of skills and knowledge needed for increasingly complex roles in practice, teaching, and leadership.
- provides five semesters of doctoral level didactic and clinical coursework utilizing a variety of approaches, including distance learning technologies, that facilitate access for students in remote areas while providing opportunities for discussions and clinical experiences with advanced nursing leaders and experts throughout Minnesota and the nation.

Doctoral Education in Nursing (Research or Practice Focus)

The DNP is an alternative for doctoral education that is new to Minnesota and many parts of the United States. Traditionally, doctoral level education in nursing has been research and theory based Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and Doctor of Nursing Science (DNS, DSN, or DNSc)

programs. AACN (2006) provides the following description of the differences between the practice based DNP and the traditional research focused PhD, DNS, or DNSc:

“Research- and practice-focused doctoral programs in nursing share rigorous and demanding expectations, a scholarly approach to the discipline, and a commitment to advancement of the profession. Both are terminal degrees in the discipline, one in practice and one in research. However, there are distinct differences between the two degree programs. For example, practice-focused programs understandably place greater emphasis on practice, and less emphasis on theory, meta-theory and research methodology and statistics than is apparent in research-focused programs.”

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

AACN. (2006). The Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice. Retrieved from <http://www.aacn.nche.edu> on October 12, 2007.

DNP Student Learning Outcomes

Based on the AACN Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice (2007), five student learning outcomes are expected for the DNP program. These are the ability to:

1. evaluate scientific underpinnings that contribute to translation of nursing research to improve practice.
2. evaluate nursing actions that influence health care outcomes for individuals, families, and populations.
3. use knowledge gained through evaluation of nursing actions that influence health outcomes to improve care delivery, patient outcomes, and systems management.
4. evaluate evidence pertaining to direct care of patients and management of care for individuals, families, systems, and populations.
5. translate evidence gained through evaluation of direct care of patients and management of care for individuals, families, systems, and populations to improve practice and implement health policy.

DNP Consortium Overview

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities DNP Consortium structure is unique in the country. The management structure of the DNP Consortium is depicted in Figure 1. The governance and activities of the DNP Consortium are conducted through two councils, Consortium Council (CC) and Program Management Council (PMC). The PMC is comprised of four graduate nursing faculty members (one from each of the parent institutions) and four graduate nursing program leaders (one from each of the four parent institutions). Each parent institution has one alternate PMC member. The PMC is responsible for:

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

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

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

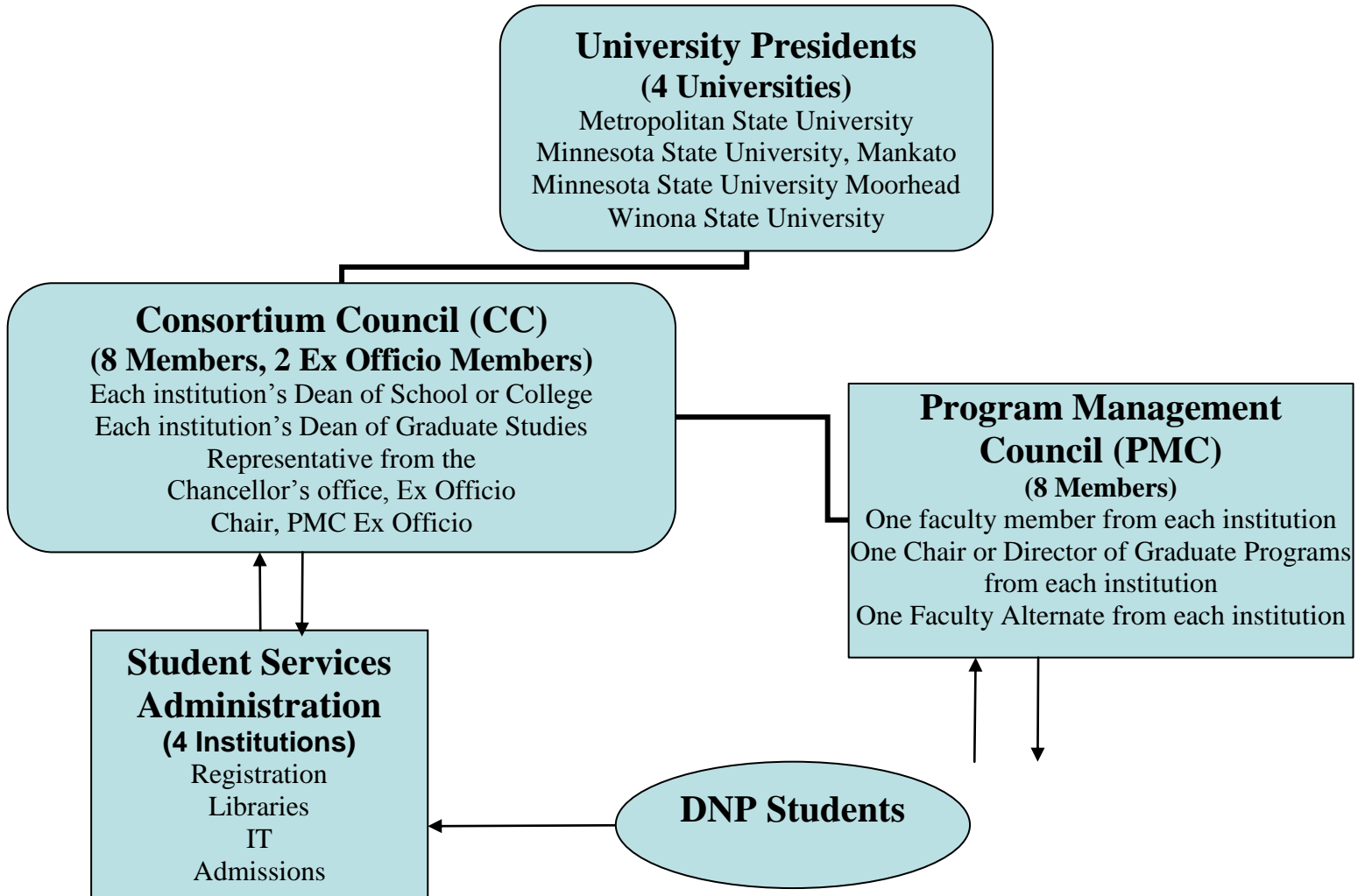


Figure 1. DNP Consortium Management Structure

DNP Program Contact Persons

The Co-Chairpersons of the PMC for the 2008 – 2009 academic year are Suzanne Narayan, Ph.D., R.N. from Metropolitan State University and Barbara Matthees Ph.D., R.N. from Minnesota State University Moorhead.

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

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

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

Minnesota State University Moorhead; Contact Person - Jane Bergland
(berglajat@mnstate.edu), Phone 218.477.4697

Winona State University; Contact Person - Phyllis Gaspar
(pgaspar@winona.edu), Phone 507.285.7123

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

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

Academic Requirements

Academic Advising

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

DNP Program Requirements

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

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

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

A minimum total of 72 credits are required for graduation.

Students are required to successfully pass:

- DNP Qualifying Examination/DNP Capstone Project Proposal Defense
- DNP Comprehensive Examination/DNP Final Capstone Project Defense

Students who do not complete the capstone project or do not pass the final defense of the project before or concurrent with completion of DNP program coursework are required to maintain registration in a minimum of one credit of Nurs 798 Continuing Registration each semester until the final defense of the capstone is completed and approved by the DNP Capstone Project Committee.

DNP Plan of Study

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

	Fall		Spring	
Year 1	NURS 700: Theoretical Foundations for Nursing Practice	4	NURS 702: Clinical Scholarship and Analytical Methods for Advanced Nursing Practice	4
	NURS 701: Applied Biostatistics	4	NURS 740: Clinical Scholarship I *	3
Summer	NURS 704: Clinical Prevention and Population Health	4		
	NURS 750: Clinical Scholarship II*	3		
Year 2	NURS 706: Organizational and Systems Leadership	4	Doctoral Level Practice Concentration Specialty Required Elective**	4
	NURS 760: Clinical Scholarship III*	3	NURS 770: Clinical Scholarship IV: Capstone*	3
Credits		22		14
Credits in DNP Program				36
Credits Transferred in from Master’s Degree				36
Total DNP Program Credits				72

*Includes 2 credits (100 hours) clinical and 1 credit seminar (25 hours)

**Can be taken any semester

Computer Requirements: See Appendix A

DNP Course Descriptions

NURS 700, Theoretical Foundations for Nursing Practice

Credits: 4 semester credits

Prerequisite: Admission to the DNP program

Course Description:

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

NURS 701, Applied Biostatistics

Credits: 4 semester credits

Prerequisites: Admission to the DNP program; Graduate Level Statistics Course

Course Description:

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

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

Credits: 4 semester credits

Prerequisites: Nurs 700 & Nurs 701

Corequisite: Nurs 740

Course Description:

This course focuses on the conduct of clinical scholarship. Content includes transformational research approaches and evidence-based practice processes, including epidemiological methods. Evaluation methods of clinical practice change outcomes on individuals, groups, populations, and systems are addressed.

NURS 704, Clinical Prevention and Population Health

Credits: 4 semester credits

Prerequisite: Nurs 700, Nurs 702, & Nurs 704

Corequisite: Nurs 750

Course Description:

The conceptual foundations of culturally sensitive clinical prevention and population health in advanced nursing practice will be evaluated. A global perspective to clinical prevention and population health that bridges illness and preventive care models will be investigated and designed.

NURS 706, Organizational and Systems Leadership

Credits: 4 semester credits

Prerequisite: Nurs 700, Nurs 702, Nurs 704, Nurs 740, & Nurs 750

Corequisite: Nurs 760

Course Description:

Organizational and systems leadership skills critical for culturally sensitive nursing practice to improve healthcare and outcomes are enhanced. Focus is on transformational leadership, measurement of outcomes, data driven decision-making, and the business realities of leading within healthcare.

NURS 740, Clinical Scholarship I

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

Prerequisite: Nurs 700, Nurs 701

Corequisite: Nurs 702

Course Description:

This clinical seminar focuses on collaboration of interprofessional teams and the roles of advanced practice nurses within this collaboration. Development of a framework for identifying, implementing, and evaluating a collaborative effort is emphasized.

NURS 750, Clinical Scholarship II

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

Prerequisite: Nurs 700, Nurs 702, & Nurs 740

Corequisite: Nurs 704

Course Description:

Develop, implement, and evaluate culturally-sensitive approaches to improve health status/access patterns and/or address gaps in care of populations within a community of focus whether locally, nationally, or globally.

NURS 760, Clinical Scholarship III

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

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

Corequisite: Nurs 706

Course Description:

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

NURS 770, Clinical Scholarship IV: Capstone

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

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

Corequisite: None

Course Description:

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

Nurs 798 Continuing Registration

Credits: 1 semester credit (May be repeated twice)

Prerequisite: Nurs 770 and consent of instructor

Course Description:

This course allows continuing enrollment in the Consortium DNP program to complete the capstone project. It continues registration after completion of all other course requirements and may not be used to meet any other program or graduation requirement.

Elective Courses

The DNP program requires that each student complete four credits of elective coursework that will enhance their expertise within their specialty area or the content area of their DNP Capstone Project. The elective credits must be at the doctoral level and can be taken at any of the Consortium home institutions or at another accredited academic institution. All coursework to be considered for transfer into the DNP program must be completed after the student is enrolled in the DNP program. The elective coursework must be approved by the student's academic advisor.. Elective DNP courses will be listed in the class schedules for each home institution.

Grades

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

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

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

Grade/Policy Appeal

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

Transfer Credits

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

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

DNP Degree Completion Timeline

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

DNP Qualifying Examination/DNP Capstone Project Proposal Defense

The student's defense of the capstone project proposal serves as the primary component of the qualifying examination for the DNP program. Fundamental and developmental questions, which cover the first year of DNP coursework, will be asked at the qualifying examination. This examination is intended to determine if a student is prepared and qualified to begin implementation of the capstone project. To be eligible to take the qualifying examination and defend the capstone project proposal, a student must have a DNP Capstone Project Committee and have completed at least two semesters of doctoral course work as specified by the DNP Plan of Study.

DNP Comprehensive Examination/DNP Final Capstone Project Defense

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

DNP Clinical Scholarship Courses

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

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

Clinical Preceptor: Each DNP student will select, with the input of their initial DNP Academic Advisor or their DNP Capstone Project Chair, a preceptor for their 400 hour clinical experience. The preceptor must be an expert in the clinical, educational, or administrative area in which the DNP student wishes to develop expertise. There are currently very few nurses prepared at the DNP level who can serve as the clinical preceptor for DNP students. Therefore, the clinical preceptor will not necessarily be a DNP-prepared advanced practice nurse. Examples of persons who might fill the position of clinical preceptor include an advanced practice nurse or other professional with a doctoral degree; an advanced practice nurse with considerable experience and recognition as an expert in a particular clinical field; a MD with specialized training and experience; a nurse with an administrative position as the Director, Vice President, President, or CEO

within a health care organization; a doctorally-prepared nurse educator; a nurse with a business or other degree; and an advanced practice nurse in private practice. The clinical preceptor must hold a position in the organization where he/she can facilitate the DNP student's access to organizational information, decision makers, and other personnel in order to complete the development and implementation of the DNP student's clinical project over a year practicum within the organization.

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

Clinical Practicum Requirements

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

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

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

Clinical agencies usually require the following immunizations:

1. Verification of Rubella Immunity by:
 - a. Titer

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

Malpractice Insurance: Prior to beginning the first clinical scholarship course in the second semester of the DNP program, each student must purchase their own malpractice insurance as required by their area of specialty practice. This insurance must cover the educational and clinical experiences within the DNP program. Malpractice insurance provided by one's employer will not substitute for this requirement. Proof of insurance coverage must be presented to the academic institution prior to Clinical Scholarship I.

Name Tag: Students are required to wear a DNP student name tag indicating their home academic institution during clinical practicum hours. An exception to this requirement must be discussed with the clinical scholarship course faculty and the student's preceptor.

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

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

The Consortium DNP Program requires students to complete 400 hours of clinical practice within the DNP program. Each of the Clinical Scholarship Courses requires 100 direct and indirect clinical hours. Sixty percent (60 hours) of the total required hours for each of the clinical scholarship courses must be spent in the physical setting with the supervision of the clinical preceptor. The remaining 40 indirect hours may be spent working on the DNP Capstone Project, but not necessarily in the clinical setting. At the end of each Clinical Scholarship Course, the student will submit a log of clinical activities. The direct hours spent with the clinical preceptor must be initialed by both the student and the preceptor. The student must initial the indirect hours. A copy of the log form is found in Appendix B.

DNP students should be aware that certain nursing specialties may require an additional 600 or more supervised clinical hours within their post-baccalaureate education to qualify

for certification testing. Students are responsible for discussing certification requirements with their initial DNP Academic Advisor or their DNP Capstone Project Chair.

DNP Capstone Project Guidelines

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

DNP Capstone Project Chair: By the end of the second semester of the DNP program, the student should have identified their DNP Capstone Project Chair. At some of the home institutions the DNP Capstone Project Chair will be assigned in the first semester. At other home institutions, the DNP Capstone Project Chair will be assigned in the first clinical scholarship course. The DNP Capstone Project Chair may be the student's Initial DNP Academic Advisor or another graduate faculty member at the parent institution of the DNP student. The DNP Capstone Project Chair should be a graduate faculty member (graduate research faculty member at Minnesota State University, Mankato) who has interest and experience in the student's DNP Capstone Project topic or field. Each of the Consortium universities has a list of graduate faculty members available to serve as DNP Capstone Project Chairs. The list includes the faculty members' area of research interest and clinical expertise.

DNP Capstone Project Committee: After the DNP Capstone Project Chair has been identified, the student should meet with that faculty member to constitute his/her DNP Capstone Project Committee. The DNP Capstone Project Committee should be constituted no later than the end of the second semester of the DNP program. The DNP Capstone Project Committee is comprised of a minimum of three (3) graduate faculty members. The DNP Capstone Project Chair must be from the home institution the second member of the DNP Capstone Project Committee can be from any of the Consortium universities, although a second member from the home institution is encouraged. The third committee member can be from any of the Consortium universities or can be a faculty member from outside the four Consortium institutions, the clinical preceptor, or other individual(s) with specialized knowledge and expertise relevant to the DNP Capstone Project. The major criterion for inclusion on the DNP Capstone Project Committee is graduate faculty status and expertise in the clinical nursing phenomena of interest, the methodology used in the project, or other knowledge related to the student's DNP Capstone Project. If the third committee member does not hold graduate faculty status, arrangements can be made for temporary adjunct graduate status or other status that will permit voting on the DNP Capstone Project. These arrangements will be developed within the home institution with consultation from the

graduate program director and the DNP coordinator. The student is free to add additional members to the DNP Capstone Project Committee. Unless the additional members of the committee hold graduate faculty status, they will be non-voting members of the committee.

DNP Capstone Project Overview

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

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

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

Students are required to submit the final version of the capstone project proposal to their committee at least two weeks prior to the Qualifying Examination. Faculty require a two week time frame for review of drafts and revisions of the project proposal.

The DNP Capstone Project Committee will prepare a written evaluation of the student's performance on the DNP Qualifying Examination. Students who fail some or all parts of the DNP Qualifying Examination may be allowed to retake these parts. This decision is made by the student's DNP Capstone Project Committee and is based on the student's

overall DNP program performance and the extent of the deficits on the DNP Qualifying Examination. No more than two attempts to pass the DNP Qualifying Examination will be permitted. Second DNP Qualifying Examinations should be scheduled so that sufficient time is provided to address weaknesses identified during the initial examination.

The DNP Qualifying Examination will consist of two parts. First, the DNP student will present the DNP Capstone Project Proposal orally and in writing. The proposal will follow the IRB guidelines at the home institution and generally will contain the following sections: Introduction, Review of the Literature, Identification of the Problem or Issue, Data Collection and/or Project Implementation Plan, and Evaluation Method.

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

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

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

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

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

Students are required to submit the final version of the Capstone Project to their committee at least two weeks prior to the Oral Defense. Faculty require a two week time frame for review of drafts and revisions of the project.

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

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

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

DNP Capstone Project Process

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

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

Clinical Scholarship II: The second clinical course includes 100 clinical hours that allow the DNP student to work with the DNP Capstone Project Chair and the DNP Clinical Preceptor to determine the feasibility of addressing the clinical problem or issue within the context of a specific organization. Each student will develop an IRB proposal using the format specified by their home institution. The DNP student must pass the DNP Qualifying Examination and gain IRB approval for the DNP Capstone Project at their home institution and at the clinical site (if necessary) prior to beginning data collection or project implementation.

Clinical Scholarship III: The third clinical course includes 100 clinical hours and is the implementation phase of the DNP Capstone Project. In consultation with the DNP Capstone Project Chair and the DNP Clinical Preceptor, the DNP student implements the DNP Capstone Project and collects data related to implementation outcomes. Each student will produce a paper that details the implementation process following specified guidelines.

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

If the student cannot complete the DNP Capstone Project, the DNP Capstone Project paper, or both within the final semester of the DNP program, the student can take a grade of “In Progress” or “Incomplete” for the Clinical Scholarship IV Capstone course. The DNP student must then take the additional one credit course (NURS 798) each subsequent semester until completion of the DNP Capstone Project, the DNP Capstone Project Paper, the Oral Defense of the DNP Capstone Project Paper, and the Oral Examination of the DNP student. NURS 798 can be repeated twice to allow one year for completion of the program.

**DNP CAPSTONE PROJECT CLINICAL SCHOLARSHIP COURSES,
OUTCOMES, PRODUCTS, AND TIMELINE FOR EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

Course	Course Outcomes	Product	Product Contents	Capstone Project Timeline
Clinical Scholarship I	Identify a clinical practice problem or issue and review the relevant literature	Written paper that critically reviews the literature relevant to the proposed DNP Capstone Project	Introduction and Review of the Literature with Reference List	Spring Year 1
Clinical Scholarship II	Develop a clinical project plan to address	The written paper will be the Project Proposal (IRB	Complete description of the project, including	Summer Year 1

Course	Course Outcomes	Product	Product Contents	Capstone Project Timeline
	an advanced practice problem, considering the clinical context	format if appropriate). The Proposal will be submitted to the DNP Capstone Committee in the format used at the home university. (Students must pass the DNP Qualifying Examination prior to beginning Clinical Scholarship III)	methodology and the implementation and evaluation processes	
Clinical Scholarship III	Implement a context-sensitive clinical project	Written paper	Description of the and project implementation and the evaluation data collection	Fall Year 2
Clinical Scholarship IV: Capstone	Evaluate and disseminate clinical scholarship knowledge	Written paper in publishable format. The DNP student selects a target publication and follows the format for that publication. Successful Oral Defense of Capstone Project	DNP Capstone Project paper that synthesizes the project results for publication	Spring Year 2 or 1 credit of NURS 798 until the DNP Capstone Project paper and final Oral Defense of the Capstone Project are completed (up to one year)

Academic and Clinical Progression

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

Academic and Behavioral Integrity

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

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

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

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

Plagiarism is not tolerated in the DNP program. Students are required to use APA style manual for correct citation and formatting of all written work. If a student does not a clear understanding of what is considered to be plagiarism they can check the following resources:

Faculty reserve the right to check student written work for plagiarism by using on-line and other electronic resources (e.g., Turn-it-In.com). At the beginning of the DNP program students are required to sign a release giving permission for faculty to check for instances of plagiarism using electronic referencing services.

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

Faculty will refer the charges to the Chairperson of the DNP Program Management Council with a recommendation for one of the following: academic advisement and/or reprimand; a grade of F or reduction of grade on the specific piece of work; a grade of F or reduction of the grade in the course; or probation, suspension, or dismissal from the program. The final decision regarding action will be made by the Program Management Council.

Conditions that May Lead to Dismissal from the Program

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

1. Violation of academic or behavioral integrity or chemical use and abuse policies.
2. Inability to provide safe patient care in clinical experiences.
3. More than one course grade of "C" or less.
4. Failure to enroll in DNP courses for more than one year.

5. Failure to pass either the DNP Qualifying Examination or the DNP Oral Defense of the Capstone Project/Oral Examination of the DNP Student after a second attempt.

Exceptions to Policy or Requirements

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

Chemical Use and Abuse

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

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

When a student is taking medically authorized drugs or other substances that may alter judgment or performance, the student has the ethical responsibility to notify the instructor of the potential or actual alteration.

If a student violates any of these policies, the student will be removed from the current clinical or classroom setting and will be referred to the appropriate source for drug and/or alcohol abuse treatment/assistance. Students in violation of these policies will also be referred to the Program Management Council who will determine the most appropriate course of action for progression in the program which may include dismissal from the program. In all instances, the DNP program will be in compliance with state regulations regarding nursing practice and reporting of chemical use and abuse.

Appendix A

DNP PROGRAM COMPUTER REQUIREMENTS

Hardware

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

Software *

Operating System	Microsoft Window XP professional preferred
Programs	Microsoft Office 2003 or Office 2007 (need word processor, PowerPoint, and Excel as minimum programs)
Virus Protection	Required to access campus networks

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

Free Plugins by searching web for each program

Adobe Reader	Quicktime
Real Player	Flash

