

DNP Preliminary Exam (Written and Oral) Process

Introduction

There are *two* DNP Preliminary Examinations, 1) the written preliminary exam in the format of a DNP Project Proposal followed by 2) the oral preliminary exam. The student participates in the preliminary exam process with the DNP chairperson and the reader, prior to approval of the clinical consultant.

Steps for the Written Preliminary Exam

1. The student first submits the *Intention to take the new Written Preliminary Exam* form to the Director of Advanced Practice and Graduate Certificate Programs (DirAP) after an initial consultation meeting with the DNP Project Chair and Reader.
2. The written DNP Project Proposal will be 8-10 pages long, double-spaced, 11-12 Times Roman font with 1" margins, not including title page and reference pages. Outline descriptions for two different types of project proposals, quality improvement/intervention-based projects and a policy analysis, are provided below.
3. Upon submission of the written DNP Project Proposal to the Chair, Reader (and possibly the consultant), the DNP Project Committee will be provided 14 working days* to review and grade the written preliminary.
4. The DNP Project committee will provide a Pass/Fail grade within 14 working days* of submission. In the event of a split vote (when only two faculty are reading the proposal), the DirAP will read the proposal and provide the final decision within one week. The committee members will provide the student with feedback regarding project content that requires elaboration.
5. Once the student passes the written exam, the Chair will submit the *DNP Written Preliminary Exam Completion Approval* form to the DirAP.
6. In the event of an unsuccessful attempt at the written exam, please refer to the DNP Handbook.
7. Following successful completion of the written preliminary exam, the student and DNP Project Committee will agree on the date of the DNP Oral Preliminary Exam. The student must complete the DNP Oral Preliminary exam within six (6) weeks after passing the written exam..
8. The student will complete the *Intent to take the Oral Preliminary Exam* form and submit this form to the DirAP.

*Working days are normal workdays: Monday through Friday excluding University holidays and faculty approved vacation days.

Steps for the Oral Preliminary Exam

1. Pass written preliminary exam.
2. The student will prepare a 20-minute PowerPoint presentation that includes:
 - A review of the DNP Project proposal



- Elaboration on areas of required content that need more depth based on feedback from the written exam provided by committee members.
3. The student will provide a pdf or printed copy of the PowerPoint presentation to the committee minimally 48 hours before the scheduled oral preliminary exam. (Committee preference). Please make sure the slides are readable.
 4. The DNP Project Committee will determine the Pass/Fail for the Oral Preliminary Exam at the time of the oral exam and the Chair will submit the *DNP Oral Preliminary Exam Completion Approval* form to the DirAP.
 5. In the event of an unsuccessful attempt of the oral examination, please refer to the DNP Handbook.



OUTLINE DESCRIPTION FOR DNP PROJECT PROPOSAL FOR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT OR INTERVENTION-BASED PROJECTS

Cover page:

DNP PROJECT WORKING TITLE:

When writing, please use the section headings in the rubric. Subheadings may be used in long sections to facilitate organization. The paper is to be 8-10 pages so concise development of the essential information is very important

| Required Content (page allotments are a strong suggestion, but not mandatory) |
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| <p>Goal and Objectives of the DNP Project (suggested 1 page)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe the problem (e.g., need for clinical change/improvement or policy analysis) and why this change or analysis is important.• State the overall goal of your project.• State the project objectives (measurable) – no more than three (3) <p>State Aim (optional), Goals and Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• AIM—Broad general purpose for undertaking this translation of research into practice project.• Goal—Statement of specific purpose for project.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Set the foundation for writing your objectives.• Objectives—State specific and measurable steps or outcomes that lead to the goal:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Help set program priorities○ Monitor progress toward goal○ Set targets for accountability○ Provide framework for program evaluation○ Sets the foundation for planning activities <p>SMART objectives: Objectives should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specific: who, what and where. Use action verb.• Measurable: how much change?• Achievable: Realistic? Program resources?• Relevant: relates directly to program activity goals.• Time-bound: when objective will be achieved |
| <p>Significance to Nursing (suggested 1—2 paragraphs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The “So what” for nursing. Briefly state the significance of the problem/question to nursing, including how this project will improve patient outcomes.• State the impact of the problem i.e., economics, affected numbers etc. |



State of the Science (suggested 1.5—2.5 pages)

- State and use the PICO(T) question to review the existing literature relevant to the DNP project objective.
- Summarize your literature review, including a summary statement regarding the evidence for the major aspects of your project.

Theoretical Framework (suggested 1 page)

- Describe the theoretical framework that will guide your DNP Project.
- If this is a not a nursing theory, explain how your theoretical framework fits with the nursing metaparadigm.

Methodological Framework

- If your methodological framework differs from your theoretical framework:
 - Discuss the relationship between the theoretical and methodological frameworks.

Method of DNP Project (suggested 4-6 pages for this section)

Design

- What project design are you using (e.g. quality improvement, practice implementation, or policy analysis etc...)
- Explain why this method is the best for your purposes.

Setting

- Where will you complete your project?
- Why is the site the ideal location?

Organizational Culture

- Briefly describe the organizational culture
- Provide the rationale for use of the identified setting.
- Who are the stakeholders?

Participants

- Who are your participants and why?
- How many participants and why?
- Provide relevant participant data: include age, and language, race/ethnicity and socio-economic information.
- If participants are excluded substantiate your reason for the exclusion.

Indicator Measures

- These should match your objectives.
- Explain how you will evaluate your objectives.
- Describe indicator measures you will use to evaluate/analyze these stated objectives.

Procedure

- Describe the steps about the Who, What, When, and Where of your project with sufficient detail that someone else could implement your project
- How will you collect the data, justify your approach?
- Lay out the timeline for your project start to finish



Evaluation Plan

- How will you evaluate/analyze the results?
- What kind of results would make your project a success?
- What kind of results would indicate that your project might need changes in the future?
- What kinds of results indicate that your project is sustainable?
- Explain how the change will be sustained after completion of your project.

Dissemination

- How will you share your results at the site of your project implementation?

OUTLINE DESCRIPTION FOR DNP PROJECT PROPOSAL FOR POLICY ANALYSIS PROJECTS

Cover page:

DNP PROJECT WORKING TITLE:

When writing, please use the section headings in the rubric. Subheadings may be used in long sections to facilitate organization. The paper is to be 8-10 pages so concise development of the essential information is very important

| Required Content (page allotments are a strong suggestion, but not mandatory) |
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| <p>Goal and Objectives of the DNP Project (suggested 1 page)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the problem (e.g., need for clinical change/improvement or policy analysis) and why this change or analysis is important. • State the overall goal of your project. • State the project objectives (measurable) – no more than three (3) <p>State Aim (optional), Goals and Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AIM—Broad general purpose for undertaking this translation of research into practice project. • Goal—Statement of specific purpose for project. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Set the foundation for writing your objectives. • Objectives—State specific and measurable steps or outcomes that lead to the goal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Help set program priorities ○ Monitor progress toward goal ○ Set targets for accountability ○ Provide framework for program evaluation ○ Sets the foundation for planning activities <p>SMART objectives: Objectives should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific: who, what and where. Use action verb. • Measurable: how much change? • Achievable: Realistic? Program resources? |



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relevant: relates directly to program activity goals.• Time-bound: when objective will be achieved• |
| Significance to Nursing (suggested 1-2 paragraphs) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The “So what” for nursing. Briefly state the significance of the problem/question to nursing, including how this project will improve patient outcomes.• State the impact of the problem i.e., economics, affected numbers etc. |
| State of the Science (suggested 1.5 pages) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• State and use the PICO(T) question to review the existing literature relevant to the DNP project objective.• Summarize your literature review and <u>include a summary statement</u> regarding the evidence for the major aspects of your project. |
| Policy Analysis Framework (suggested 1 page) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe the policy analysis framework that will guide your DNP Project.• If this is a not a nursing theory, explain how your theoretical framework melds with the nursing metaparadigm. Methodological Framework <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe the methodological framework, <i>if it differs</i> from your policy analysis framework• Explain how the methodological framework is the best for your purpose. Relationship between theory and methods <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss the relationship between the theoretical and methodological frameworks, if needed. |
| Method of DNP Project (suggested 4-6 pages for this section) |
| Environment for Policy Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Define the environment of your health policy (i.e. administrative/regulatory feasibility, technical/effectiveness feasibility, political feasibility, and economic feasibility) |
| Stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe how you will determine key stakeholders.• Who is part of your project and why?• How many stakeholders and why?• Include background and rationale for the choice of stakeholders.• Are there any individuals you would exclude? Why, why not?• How will you collect the data from your stakeholders and why? |
| Setting to secure stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where will you secure your stakeholders?• Why is this the ideal source for the project?• Lay out the <u>timeline</u> for your project start to finish |
| Data for Policy Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe what qualitative information and quantitative data you would use to establish and evaluate your policy.• Describe any existing legislation, opinions etc. to be reviewed• What questions will you pose to stakeholders? |



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| Policy Alternatives Selected <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe the steps about the Who, What, When, and Where of your project with sufficient detail that someone else could implement your project• Describe how you plan to generate your policy alternatives.• Explain how the alternatives fit your goals and objectives.• Describe how you will determine the criteria for evaluation of your policy alternatives. |
| Decision makers for the Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe who you believe the decision makers could be?• Describe how you will calculate economic cost of each policy alternative. |
| Evaluation Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How will you evaluate/analyze the results?• What kind of results would make your project a success?• What kind of results would indicate that your project might need changes in the future? |
| Dissemination <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How will you share your results beyond this project? Who will have access to your analysis? |