Introduction

All Indiana State University Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Degree plans of study include a DNP Scholarly Project. The project is a faculty-guided scholarly experience that provides evidence of your critical thinking and ability to apply action research principles through problem identification, plan development, implementation, and evaluation of a clinical problem. The focus can be at the patient, population, or community level. The terms evidence based practice (EBP) and DNP Scholarly Project are interchanged throughout this handbook.

The Purpose of Evidence-Based Practice in the Doctor of Nursing Practice Curriculum

Research and research utilization are integral parts of evidence-based nursing practice. Nurses prepared at the DNP level provide leadership for evidence-based practice in nursing, and endeavor to translate evidence-based research into their own practice. To accomplish this goal, the DNP nursing student participates as a member of a translational science team and is expected to disseminate and integrate current evidence into practice to improve patient outcomes. As an advanced practice nurse with a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree, you will be able to:

1. Lead project teams that focus on improving quality healthcare.
2. Carry out an evidence-based practice projects through problem identification, proposal development, implementation, and evaluation of the project.
3. Use analytical methods to critically appraise existing literature relevant to nursing practice.
4. Evaluate evidence to determine and implement the best evidence for practice.
5. Design processes to evaluate outcomes of practice and systems of care.
6. Inform the design of databases that generate meaningful evidence for nursing practice.
7. Use information technology systems for the storage and retrieval of data.
8. Develop and submit an evidence-based translational science report on their project.
10. Develop strategies to translate research into professional practice regimens at the individual, population or community level.

The EBP project is a scholarly process to address a theoretically and clinically relevant practice problem. This requires competence in knowledge development activities such as the translation of research into practice, the evaluation of practice, activities aimed at improving the reliability of healthcare practice and outcomes, and participation in collaborative research (DePalma & McGuire, 2005).

The EBP Scholarly project is supervised by faculty members(s) who will work with the student throughout their program. At the completion of APN 891 faculty will identify from the Advanced Practice Nursing Department one faculty member to work with on supervising/chairing your DNP scholarly project.
Before the completion of your final semester, your five chapter project paper will be prepared and submitted to Medatrax as part of the requirements for successful completion of APN 895. In APN 850, information will be distilled from your DNP Scholarly Project final paper (5 chapters) for submission to a peer reviewed journal and/or for a podium or poster presentation. It is not a requirement for your degree that the manuscript which emerges from your project be published prior to graduation however the fully revised and edited five chapter manuscript must be submitted to Medatrax. Portions of the project may be submitted early when significant progress has been made, and the faculty has either recommended it or it is an expectation for a course. The EBP/DNP Scholarly project submission is typically remitted to the faculty mentor after the completion of the project, often with additional help from faculty member(s) who may then be co-authors. An EBP project takes a minimum of 5 semesters to complete, from initial question formation and literature synthesis to formal submission and dissemination. Also see information on Dissemination of Results on page 7.

**Types of Scholarly/EBP or Translational Projects**

Students should follow the AACN Essentials for Clinical Scholarship and Analytical Methods for Evidence-Based Practice for all scholarly projects. In addition, alignment of the DNP Scholarly Project with domain(s) of Boyer’s Scholarship Model ensures the student ability to identify elements of scholarly development and progression (Boyer, 1990).

Throughout the program the student will:

- Collect appropriate and accurate data to generate evidence for advance practice nursing
- Analyze data/current evidence
- Design interventions based on the best evidence
- Evaluate outcomes
- Examine patterns of behavior and outcomes
- Identify gaps in the evidence for practice
- Provide creative solutions(s) for the knowledge gaps
- Evaluate Project to determine best practice for implementation

**Remember the Writing Center!**

The Math & Writing Center currently offers Distance Tutoring in writing for those registered as distance learners through ISU. Students may submit their papers through our Distance Tutoring link and then meet with a tutor in real time through Collaborate (video conferencing software). Please keep in mind that they do not simply copy-edit papers either in person or during distance tutoring. They prefer to work with distance students throughout their time at ISU so that students develop their skills over time. Distance students can also receive help with math.
Call the center at 812-237-2989, and they will arrange to meet you virtually through their Blackboard site. The Writing Center can also be accessed at the URL below:

http://libguides.indstate.edu/c.php?g=423656&p=2894159

Writing the DNP Scholarly Project

There are several strategies that can help you in writing the project. You will need to review what you’ve already written, incorporate recommendations from your faculty member/advisor and committee members, and update and edit your work. The final report describes your question, the purpose for your project, your analytical methods, the findings of your project, and your conclusions and recommendations/implications for practice.

Components of the DNP Scholarly Project

Chapter One: (See APN 891 Paper Rubric for more detail)
1. Introduction and Problem Overview
   a. Background
   b. Significance of Problem
   c. Research Question
      1. Problem of interest
      2. Targeted Population
      3. Intervention
      4. Comparison
      5. Desired Outcome(s)
   d. Summary

Chapter Two: Literature Review (See APN 892 Paper Rubric for more detail)
1. Brief restatement of purpose (Transitional paragraph to link chapters 1 and 2)
2. Search Methodology (key words, databases accessed, range of dates)
3. Synthesis of the literature
   3a. Evidence Based Practice Framework or Theoretical Framework
4. Summary & Conclusion (relates back to literature synthesis)

Chapter Three:
1. Project Design (Quantitative, Qualitative, or Mixed-Methods)
   1a. Integration of Evidence Based Practice Framework or Theoretical Framework
2. Project Methodology
   a. Targeted Population/Cultural Considerations
   b. Setting
   c. Tools/Measures
   d. Validity and Reliability of Measures
   e. Ethical Considerations (Discuss IRB Process Completion)
3. Intervention and Data Collection Plan
4. Preliminary Statistical Analysis Plan
Chapter Four:
1. Results (do not be tempted to add your discussion or comments here)
   a. Demographic Statistical Results
   b. Descriptive Statistical Results
   c. Correlational or Inferential Statistical Results

Chapter Five:
1. Discussion of Results
2. Post-Implementation Insights
   a. Barriers
   b. Facilitators
3. Implications for Practice and Future
4. Recommendations and Conclusions

References

Appendices

Grading

The DNP Scholarly Project is part of multiple courses and assignment expectations; therefore, it is not a separate document outside of your program and curricula. The DNP Scholarly Project will go through committee at the departmental level, but not at the college or university level. It is an expectation that you will publish the work at the conclusion of your program and opportunities throughout the program for publication or components of your work should be examined and capitalized upon. The faculty mentor who supervises and edits your project with you is expected to have co-authorship.

DNP Scholarly Project Advisory Team (PAT)

Students are assigned an advisor upon acceptance into the program. Their advisor or another faculty designee from the Advanced Practice Nursing Department may serve as the student’s project team chair. The project team chair is thereby the leader of the student’s project advisory team (PAT). This project team, spearheaded by the team chair, provides mentorship for the student, assists the student in narrowing the focus of their scholarly project, and facilitates the student’s successful development, implementation and evaluation of the project. The student’s PAT is selected by the student and the advisor/chair.

The PAT is composed of a minimum of two members, including the chair and one additional doctorally prepared ISU nursing faculty member. Additional team members may be added at the discretion of the student and the team chair. The decision to make additions to the team will be based upon the requirements of the student’s project. Any additions to the team will first be selected from faculty within the College of Health and Human Services (CHHS). In the event that the necessary expertise cannot be identified from within the College, other doctorally-prepared ISU faculty may be selected.
Successful completion of APN 891 is evidenced by completion of 100 clinical hours, formal presentation of the student’s scholarly project plan to nursing faculty, appointment of a PAT chair and development of the PAT. Contributing members of the PAT who aid in the development and submission of a student manuscript are entitled to authorship, and students are always first author.

**Project Deadlines and the 890 Course Series**

The APN 890 series (891-895) is designed to help you scaffold your learning on top of your previously developed, multifaceted foundation. The 890 series experience is outlined below.

In the APN 891 course you will identify your problem and the focus of your project. Part of this process takes place in the APN 810 Community Health Planning course taken concurrently with APN 891. A major component of APN 810 is the community health needs assessment. Information from this assessment will help you to determine where the needs and potential problems are within your community or your practice setting. This information becomes the grounding rationale for your project focus and its clear relevance.

At the conclusion of APN 891 you will be required to give a presentation to nursing faculty. The presentation should incorporate information from the needs assessment and your problem statement. You should have a fully realized PICO question at the conclusion of the course. This presentation will help you further refine your project and help you to select your Project Advisory Team (PAT). Students without a fully developed PICO question at the end of APN 891 will not be eligible to progress to APN 892 and may receive a failing grade.

APN 892 is the next course in the 890 series. In 892, you will be tasked with finalizing your project concepts, and refining and honing them into a finite project. Before week three of your 892 course, you should have solidified your PAT and have submitted the form to the link on the APN 892 course site. At the end of APN 892, you will be required to present your final project concepts and ideas to your project advisory team. Students will not be allowed to progress to APN 893 unless they have the full approval of their PAT. The PAT must sign off on the Project Approval form and this must be submitted to the assignment link in APN 892. Failure to do this before the end of APN 892 will result in course failure. Project approval is also dependent upon whether or not the student has fully searched the literature for the best available evidence and has pulled this evidence together into a comprehensive literature review. This activity takes place in the APN 825 Analytical Methods course.

APN 893 is the only scholarly course that is offered in the summer session. The primary objectives of this course are to develop your project implementation plan and to obtain IRB approval for your project. Failure to submit to IRB and gain project approval before the Summer I grade deadline will result in a course failure, and the student will not be able to progress to APN 894.
APN 894 is perhaps the most critical in the series of scholarly courses. Students in APN 894 must implement and execute their scholarly projects within the semester. This includes onsite data collection as applicable. Student’s scholarly projects that have not been completed by the end of APN 894 will receive a failing grade and will not be able to progress to APN 895.

APN 895 is the course wherein you will analyze data from your individual projects and begin to compose your DNP Scholarly Project manuscript. Students will also begin to formulate a dissemination plan. IN APN 850 (taken concurrently with APN 895) students will develop materials for a regional or national presentation and/or complete their final project manuscripts. Students will be required to give a brief presentation of the project outcomes and results to nursing faculty prior to completion of APN 895/850. Failure to meet these requirements will result in either failure of APN 895 or the need for the student to enroll in a 1-5 hour independent study course (APN 890) to finish their project and disseminate their findings during the following semester.

These guidelines will be strictly adhered to. All exceptions to the prescribed timeline must be approved by the PAT chair and the program director.

Graduation Deadlines

See the Academic Calendar and the Sycamore Express website at http://www.indstate.edu/gradexpress/ for important dates and deadlines for application for graduation. Ordering of graduation regalia is completed through the university book store.

Dissemination of Results

It is a requirement that you will share your results with the clinical/organizational site and/or subjects/stakeholders who are interested. For some projects, it is appropriate to share results with the participants. This important step will be followed up on by the PAT Chair and will be completed at a mutually convenient time for the student and community stakeholders/agency staff as promptly as possible. Remember, it is not a right but a privilege to be able to conduct a scholarly project within an agency and/or a community.

To share your results at the local, regional, national, or international level you should seek out a professional conference as a poster or podium presenter. Many conference committees begin looking for abstracts for their spring and summer conferences as much as a full year in advance. Publications that are peer reviewed are desired for manuscript submission. Faculty guiding your project (Project Advisory Team Members) will assist with editing and selection of journal(s). You should examine the journal guidelines for authors carefully for referencing style and submission expectations.
References
