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Welcome to the Doctor of Nursing Practice Program

The faculty and staff at UNC Charlotte and Western Carolina University (WCU) welcome you to our collaborative dual degree Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program, a unique effort between UNC Charlotte and WCU. We are proud to offer our dual program to students interested in advancing their clinical practice, scholarship and leadership skills. Our DNP program is a practice-focused doctoral program designed to prepare Post Master’s Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) to lead innovation in nursing practice and healthcare.

The DNP program educates nurses prepared in advanced practice nursing roles (NP, CRNA, and CNS) or health systems/organizational leadership to provide leadership in clinical inquiry, scholarship, policy, and innovation in health care. The DNP degree prepares graduates to analyze systems of care and provide transformational leadership to improve patient safety, quality of care, and implement evidence-based culturally competent care practices. Students are able to specialize in one of two areas: advanced clinical practice or systems/population practice. Translation of research findings into evidence-based practice is emphasized throughout the program, and broad goals of the program include the ability to interpret, analyze, and apply research findings to clinical and systems/population level practice settings, determine and measure system and population outcomes, manage information systems, and use appropriate technology for health and risk management and communication.

The Doctorate of Nursing Practice (DNP) represents the highest level of preparation in nursing practice and leadership. The program, offered in a hybrid format, allows students the benefit of the strength of a combined faculty and an enhanced pedagogical instruction while experiencing both urban and rural health care perspectives. Students alternate semesters of participation on-site at UNC Charlotte and WCU as a means of implementing this unique approach.

We are committed in preparing competent and compassionate healthcare professionals who will achieve the DNP as the terminal degree in Nursing for practice, and this handbook serves as a guide to the program. Information in the handbook is specifically designed to make clear the curriculum requirements and progression criteria for the DNP program. It is our hope that you will find the handbook helpful as you progress through the program.

On behalf of the faculty, staff and administration, we wish you much success as you pursue your doctoral education with us through the Dual DNP Program at UNC Charlotte and WCU. Our goal is that you experience a supportive, innovative and rich learning environment as you complete your degree and educational journey.

Dee Baldwin, PhD, RN, FAAN
Associate Dean/Director of the School of Nursing
UNC Charlotte

Judy Neubrander, EdD, FNP-BC
Director of the School of Nursing
Western Carolina University

For general DNP program information: Contact Dr. Charlene Whitaker-Brown, Program Coordinator at UNC Charlotte, cdwhitak@uncc.edu or Dr. Sarah Mannle, Program Director at WCU, semannle@email.wcu.edu.
General Information

Introduction

This student handbook is designed for graduate students enrolled in the dual degree Post-Masters Doctor of Nursing Practice Program at the University of North Carolina Charlotte and Western Carolina University. The dual DNP degree program provides Master’s prepared nurses with opportunities for practice-based doctoral education. The DNP program is taught by the graduate nursing faculty and advanced practice nurses and leaders from both universities and the community.

The DNP program has been developed to meet recommendations of the American Association of Colleges and Nurses (AACN), the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF), the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA) and American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP).

The dual Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree offered by the UNC Charlotte and Western Carolina University prepares graduates to analyze systems of care and provide transformational leadership that will improve patient safety, quality of care, and implement evidence-based (translational) culturally competent care practices. Graduates from this program will be able to interpret and apply research findings to practice settings, determine and measure system and population outcomes, manage information systems and use appropriate technology for health and risk communication. DNP graduates will have the skills and abilities to substantially contribute to system reform to achieve goals articulated by the Institute of Medicine, the National Academy of Sciences, and the National Quality Forum.

The Philosophy, Mission, Core Values and Goals of the School of Nursing at UNC Charlotte can be found in the School of Nursing Student Handbook, http://nursing.uncc.edu/student-resources/student-handbooks

The Philosophy Mission, Core Values and Goals of the School of Nursing at Western Carolina University can be found in the School of Nursing Graduate Student Handbook, http://www.wcu.edu/WebFiles/PDFs/Graduate_Nursing_Student_Handbook_2012-2013.pdf

Note: This handbook is incorporated into the UNCC School of Nursing Student Handbook for located at http://nursing.uncc.edu/student-resources/student-handbooks

Program Outcomes

Upon completion of the DNP program, graduates will:

- Analyze and integrate evidence from nursing science with evidence from other relevant scientific disciplines to form a scientific foundation for advanced practice in nursing.
• Apply clinical scholarship, scientific evidence, and analytical methods to improve health care outcomes.
• Develop and evaluate systems to enhance safety and quality of health care.
• Advocate and participate in collaborative interdisciplinary efforts to improve health outcomes at the practice/organization, community, state and national levels.
• Engage in culturally competent and ethically sound advanced nursing practice.
• Demonstrate leadership in the improvement of patient outcomes and transformation of health care delivery.
• Directly manage complex health problems of clients or develop and implement organizational systems to facilitate access and navigation of the health care system.

**Figure 1: Essential Elements of Analysis, Leadership, and Practice in the DNP Program**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of complex health problems</td>
<td>Knowledge of health care delivery systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnosis of problem</td>
<td>Advocacy for health policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence based practice</td>
<td>Communication skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Health indicators</td>
<td>Cultural competence and humility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social determinants of health</td>
<td>Ethics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Practice**

Advanced practice specialty knowledge
Mastery of advanced practice specialty skills
Cognate knowledge relative to specialty
Design and coordination of services
System of care factors affecting patient outcomes

**DNP Core Competencies**

Students are expected to master the core competencies reflected in *The Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice* (2006):

Dual DNP Program Overview

The DNP Advisory/Oversight Committee is composed of the DNP Program Director/Coordinator, two additional elected DNP program faculty members from each school who are involved in practice, a DNP student representative from each School, and the Associate Directors of the Graduate Division from each school as Ex-officio members.

Responsibilities of the Advisory/Oversight Committee include:

1. Approvals of admission recommendations from each school.
2. Recommendations for changes to courses and curriculum.
   a. Advisory/Oversight Committee makes recommendations to WCU and UNCC curricula committees.
   b. Each school makes curricular changes per their internal approval processes.
3. Student progression through the program
   a. Dual DNP handbook with differences for each program noted in handbook.
   b. DNP Scholarly Project guided by DNP committee.
   c. Approvals of completed DNP Scholarly Projects.
4. Recommendations for graduation.
5. Other Program issues that may arise.

Each appointed DNP Coordinator/Director is directly responsible to the School of Nursing administration. The WCU Coordinator is directly responsible to the Director, School of Nursing at WCU and the UNC Charlotte Coordinator is directly responsible to the Associate Dean/Director, School of Nursing at UNC Charlotte. The DNP Coordinator/Director communicate with each other and are the leaders of the Advisory Committee. The Director of the School of Nursing at WCU and the Director of the School of Nursing at UNC Charlotte collaborate and ensure overall success of the Dual DNP Program.

Curricular issues identified by the DNP Advisory Committee (See Organizational Chart for DNP Program) are considered and changes approved through normal channels at each school. Students will be enrolled at the admitting university and will be subject to all policies of the admitting school and university.

DNP Program Contact Persons

UNC Charlotte:

- Dr. Charlene Whitaker-Brown (704-687-7964 / cdwhitak@uncc.edu) – DNP Program Coordinator
- Dr. Ilana Chertok (704-687-7967 / ichertok@uncc.edu) – Associate Director of Graduate Division

Western Carolina University:

- Dr. Sarah Mannle (828-654-6402 / semannle@email.wcu.edu) – DNP Program Director
Dr. Linda Comer (828) 654-6499 / lcomer@wcu.edu – Executive Associate Director, School of Nursing

Organization Chart for Dual DNP Program

Curriculum Plan

The Doctor of Nursing Practice program requires 42 post-master’s graduate semester credit hours and completion of a total of 1000 clinical hours (including 500 hours in the same clinical practice specialty from the MSN program). Applicants who completed fewer than 500 hours in their MSN program will be expected to complete additional clinical hours in order to achieve the total of 1000 for the DNP program. All students will be required to complete the curriculum that includes a sequence of courses as listed in the plan of study that follows.
Doctorate of Nursing Practice (DNP)
Dual DNP Program of the University of North Carolina Charlotte and Western Carolina University
Program of Study for DNP Post Masters Admission  (42 Semester Hours)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FALL Semester @ UNCC (8)</th>
<th>SPRING Semester @ WCU (8)</th>
<th>SUMMER Semester @ UNCC (9)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NUDN 8140/NSG 814 Foundations and Applications of Evidence Based Practice (3)</td>
<td>NSG 818/NUDN 8145 Leadership and Project Planning (3)</td>
<td>HLTH 6202/NSG 802 Community Epidemiology (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUDN 8150/NSG 815 Healthcare Program Evaluation and Quality (3)</td>
<td>NSG 817/NUDN8147Applied Biostatistics (3)</td>
<td>NUDN 8160/NSG 816 Global Health &amp; Social Justice (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUDN 8441 or NSG 883 Clinical Residency and Project Development I (2) TAUGHT AT EACH UNIVERSITY (Individual projects directed by faculty at each school)</td>
<td>NUDG 884 or NUDN 8442 Clinical Residency and Project Development II (2) TAUGHT AT EACH UNIVERSITY (Individual projects directed by faculty at each school)</td>
<td>Elective (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face to face ORIENTATION @ UNCC</td>
<td>Face to face ORIENTATION @ WCU</td>
<td>Elective taken at either university</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FALL Semester @ WCU (9)</th>
<th>SPRING Semester @ UNCC (8)</th>
<th>SUMMER Semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSG 822/NUDN 8220 Health Care Policy and Ethics (3)</td>
<td>NUDN 8260 /NSG 826 Leadership, and Healthcare Systems (3)</td>
<td>Summer to complete elective and/or finish project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSG 885 or NUDN 8443 Clinical Residency and Project Development III (3) TAUGHT AT EACH UNIVERSITY (Individual projects directed by faculty at each school)</td>
<td>NUDN 8444 or NSG886 Clinical Residency and Project Development IV (2) TAUGHT AT EACH UNIVERSITY (Individual projects directed by faculty at each school) Project Presentation (face to face with Committee)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Didactic Courses taken by all students at UNC Charlotte during Academic Year (12):
- Foundations and Applications of Evidence Based Practice (3)
- Healthcare Program Evaluation and Quality (3)
- Leadership, and Healthcare Systems (3)
- Communication for Technology and Transforming Healthcare (3)

Didactic Courses taken by all students at WCU during Academic Year (12):
- Leadership and Project Planning (3)
- Applied Biostatistics (3)
- Health Care Policy and Ethics (3)
- Economic & Financial Aspects of Healthcare System (3)

Didactic Courses taken by all students at UNC Charlotte during Summer (6):
- Community Epidemiology (3)
- Global Health & Social Justice (3)

Courses taken by only students at admitting campus (9)
**Student Enrollment Status**

Full time enrollment status for the DNP program at UNC Charlotte School of Nursing is defined as taking a minimum of 9 semester credits for fall and spring semester and 6 semester credits for summer semester, except when fewer credits are needed for graduation.

Full time enrollment status for the DNP program at WCU SON is defined as taking a minimum of 9 credits for the fall and spring semester and 5 credits for summer semester.

The program of study for full time students is a minimum of 2 years (5 semesters)

**Student Advisement**

Each student will be assigned an advisor on admission by his or her respective university. The advisor is to mentor the student and provide advice and academic support as needed to complete the program of study plan. The courses are designed to be taken in a sequence to support the terminal DNP Scholarly Project. It is important not to deviate from the plan of study. Any deviation from the plan of study may prolong graduation from the program. Plans of study should be reviewed with your academic advisor every semester to ensure accurate enrollment in courses. The academic advising process is determined by each school.
Overview of Clinical Residency Requirement & Scholarly Project Development Process

Overview

The Clinical Residency requirement and Scholarly Project development are inextricably connected and completed in four courses titled, Clinical Residency and Project Development I, II, III & IV. Students meet the requirements for both components in the four Clinical Residency and Project Development courses and through Scholarly Project Committee approval of the completed Scholarly Project presentation.

Student learning opportunities during each Clinical Residency and Project Development course are designed to enrich the student’s knowledge and practical skill foundations in areas that will facilitate development and completion of the DNP Scholarly Project.

A. Course Requirements for Clinical Residency:

The clinical residency component of each clinical residency and project development course is comprised of four components: clinical hours, clinical learning contract, reflective journal, and scholarly activities. A brief description of each component follows.

1. Clinical Hours

The clinical hours are completed during the four residency course sequence and are designed to facilitate student clinical learning specific to the student’s primary area of interest and consistent with the DNP Essentials and specialty competencies. These experiences include in-depth work with experts in nursing as well as other disciplines and systematically provide for meaningful student engagement within practice environments for feedback and reflection. Student learning opportunities are designed to enrich the student’s knowledge and practical skill foundations in areas that will facilitate achievement of the DNP Scholarly Project. The following list offers examples of possible clinical opportunities and potential directions for the Scholarly Project related to evidence-based practice change or outcome enhancement:

1. Work to change practice based on the evidence in your institution.
2. Provide clinical leadership (i.e. advance practice committee in your institution, State or National level).
3. Learn a new skill or procedure (precepted experience) that will enhance your ability to translate evidence into practice.

For Post-Masters DNP students, a minimum of 500 academically supervised hours will be required in the DNP Scholarly Project and Clinical residency courses. Students may
choose their own clinical sites including their current work environment if their clinical role is an expanded role different from their employment role. Proficiency may be acquired through a variety of methods (case studies, practice contact hours, completing specified procedures, demonstrating experiential competencies, or a combination of these elements) and according to the agreed upon Learning Contract created in the Clinical Residency courses with the course faculty and clinical expert. Clinical learning contracts will be approved by course faculty in the Clinical Residency and Project Development courses I, II, III & IV.

2. Clinical Learning Contract

Each student will develop an individualized DNP Learning Contract in collaboration with the course faculty and clinical expert during each residency course. Students are also expected to develop a professional portfolio. The development and maintenance of a professional electronic portfolio reflects students’ self-responsibility in their own learning, actively constructing how competencies are met, under faculty guidance, teaching and mentoring. The portfolio will include residency learning contracts, DNP Scholarly Project Committee form, scholarly activities assigned throughout the curriculum, CV, scholarly project and submitted manuscript.

The purpose of the clinical learning contract in each residency course is to increase the student’s exposure to and involvement in doctoral level clinical practice under the direction of a clinical expert. The student is responsible for identifying and proposing a collaborative arrangement with a clinical preceptor who has practice expertise or works in a clinical setting of interest. Student approval must be obtained, affiliation agreements, developed, and clinical requirements fulfilled according to the requirements of the student’s respective home university and School of Nursing policies prior to beginning a clinical residency experience. Input from the clinical expert is important as the contract is developed. The student and clinical expert must establish mutually agreed upon objectives and evaluation criteria. The specific objectives, requirements and evaluation criteria will depend on the practice focus in which the student is participating, the student’s level of education and the student’s educational needs. The clinical learning contract will be approved by course coordinators in Clinical Residency and Project Development courses I, II, III & IV. Clinical hours will be documented in the Learning Contract and uploaded to the electronic portfolio. A brief description of how the objectives were met at the end of the residency should be included.

3. Reflective Learning:

All students will participate in reflective learning as a means of integrating clinical leadership and inquiry into previous or current practice. Students will synthesize what has been learned and reflect upon how the course content was integrated into their practice.
Formal, professional reflection allows the student to integrate ethics, health policy, collaboration and health information technology. This allows them to synthesize what has been learned. Students will reflect back on clinical cases, common diagnoses, and population concerns and discuss how ethics were considered, how informatics was used with team members, patients and families, how health policy and politics were considered, and how health disparities were impacted in those situations. Students will outline how they used their leadership skills in those situations, demonstrating what was learned about their work, their strengths, and what more they could bring to the situation. These reflective narratives will be embedded in course discussions, and may be uploaded into the on-line portfolio as a part of their course requirements.

4. Scholarly Activities

Students participate in multiple academic and scholarly activities. For example, students are expected to attend conferences, seminars, journal club, grand rounds, morbidity and mortality meetings, patient conferences, practice based lectures, interdisciplinary committees, quality improvement committees and any other opportunities available at their site. Each student is expected to post a minimum of at least ten scholarly activities during residency. In addition, students are required to be involved and contribute to interdisciplinary initiatives. The scholarly activities should support the objectives in the Learning Contract. Scholarly and competency-related activities are to be uploaded into the on-line portfolio.

Students must submit documentation of fulfillment of DNP competencies in the electronic DNP student portfolio for each clinical residency and project development course, including documentation of practice hours, clinical contracts, and other activities related to DNP competencies.

B. Requirements and Process for DNP Scholarly Project Development & Completion

The DNP Scholarly Project is a project that brings together the practice and scholarship aspects of the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree. It is designed to address complex practice issues that affect groups of patients, health care organizations, or health care systems utilizing informatics, technology, and in-depth knowledge of the clinical and behavioral sciences. The clinical scholarship required in the DNP Scholarly Project reflects mastery and competency in the student’s area of expertise.

Development of the DNP Scholarly Project is facilitated through each of the Clinical Residency courses. The actual DNP project is evaluated by the Scholarly Project Committee and culminates in a scholarly presentation and article submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Students may choose to work in private practices, clinics,
inpatient units, hospital systems, and other institutions and communities in the assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation of outcomes of the DNP Scholarly project.

The student, the practice setting, and the student’s DNP Scholarly Project Committee must jointly agree upon the scholarly initiative. The student must complete any required IRB approvals prior to implementing the project. A brief description of the Clinical Residency course activities facilitating the DNP Scholarly Project follows.

- **Clinical Residency and Project Development I:** Course content focuses on the following:
  - Development of Topic
  - Establishment of PICOT question
  - Review of Literature

- **Clinical Residency and Project Development II:** Course content focuses on the following:
  - Developing a proposal
  - IRB Process – CITI Training

- **Clinical Residency and Project Development III:** Course content focuses on the following:
  - Steps for project implementation
  - Documenting outcomes of DNP Scholarly Project.
  - DNP role development

- **Clinical Residency and Project Development IV:** Course content focuses on the following:
  a. Steps for writing the final project
  b. Strategies and processes for disseminating information including steps in preparing a manuscript and public presentations

C. **Sites for Clinical Residency/Project Development**

Students are responsible for securing a site for their Clinical Residency and DNP Project development. A current site of employment or another site may be utilized when the project identified is not within the current job duties. The site must be approved by the faculty teaching the Clinical Residency and Project Development I course and DNP Coordinator/Director. Once the site is approved the student is responsible for submitting the appropriate paperwork to their admitting university. It is estimated that 3-6 months may be required to secure the appropriate contractual agreement to use the site for the DNP Scholarly
Project; therefore, students are encouraged to begin securing a site in the first semester of the program. Students may not begin their project until a site agreement has been signed.
DNP Scholarly Project Process and Timeline

DNP Scholarly Project and Committee

The DNP Scholarly project begins with the selection of the committee guiding the project. Selection of the committee chair occurs early in the first semester of the program. Additional members will be selected by the end of the first semester. The DNP Scholarly Project Committee monitors the progression of the student through the project process. The student and committee will meet at least once during each semester, either at the on-campus immersions, via electronic media formats such as Skype, GoToMeeting, or other distance formats agreed upon by the Chair, committee members, and student.

The DNP Scholarly Project is guided by the DNP Scholarly Project Committee. The student is responsible for:

- Choosing the committee members with input from his/her chair during the initial semester of enrollment.
- The composition of the DNP Scholarly Project committee is expected to include a minimum of one doctoral prepared (PhD, DNP, MD or any other doctoral prepared individual) regular faculty member with graduate status from either the UNC Charlotte or WCU School of Nursing, and a clinical expert from the practice area. The chair must come from the student’s admitting university. UNC Charlotte requires one additional faculty member that is appointed by the graduate school.
- The student is responsible for completing the DNP Scholarly Project Committee form (Appendix A).

The Committee is responsible for:

- Guiding the student through the project planning, implementation, and evaluation.
- Determining the successful completion of the project requirements. Failure to successfully present the DNP scholarly project more than twice will result in termination from the program.

Steps and Timeline for Project Completion and Work with Committee:

Each semester students are expected to work with their committee to reach certain milestones in completing their Scholarly Project in order to graduate on time. The milestones are as follows.

- First Semester
  - Selection of committee chair
  - Selection of Committee members (submission to graduate school)
  - Topic approval by chair and committee (submission to graduate school)

- Second Semester
- Third Semester
  - IRB preparation and submission
- Fourth semester
  - Project Implementation
- Fifth Semester
  - Presentation of Scholarly Project
  - Submission of Scholarly Project to Graduate School (check academic calendar of home institution to see submission deadlines)

Explanation of the steps:

1. **Topic Approval.** Students make an oral and written presentation to the DNP Scholarly Project Committee for approval and feasibility of their topic. Student must provide a power point presentation describing the key components of the project proposal at the end of the first semester (Appendix C). If a student fails to pass the oral presentation, the committee and the student will develop a remediation plan.

2. **Presentation and approval of project proposal.** Students submit a written proposal to their committee in advance of an oral presentation. Students make a formal presentation to their committee of their scholarly project proposal (Appendix D). A student is allowed a second attempt to present their proposal to the committee if they are unsuccessful the first time. Failing the proposal presentation on the second attempt will result in dismissal from the program.

3. **IRB approval.** The student works with their chair to secure IRB approval from the appropriate institutions. Typically IRB approval at the institution where the project will occur is the first step followed by approval at the admitting university.

4. **Presentation and Approval of Scholarly Project.** Students submit their written project to their committee in advance of an oral presentation. Students make a formal public presentation to their committee and invited guests of their scholarly project proposal (Appendix E). The process for scheduling and announcing the presentation will vary by campus. A student is allowed a second attempt to present their proposal to the committee if they are unsuccessful the first time. Failing the proposal presentation on the second attempt will result in dismissal from the program.

1. Write the final scholarly project following the outline in Appendix B (Guidelines for DNP Scholarly Project Manuscript)
2. Schedule the public presentation of the scholarly project to the Committee and invited guests at least 3 weeks prior to the deadline for final submission to the Graduate School. Check the campus academic calendar for deadlines.
3. Provide evidence of submission of a manuscript for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.
Institutional Review Board (IRB)
Research conducted at UNC Charlotte and WCU is subject to a wide range of federal and state policies established to ensure ethical conduct in research. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) ensures respect, fairness and safety in human subjects’ research. All DNP Scholarly Projects must be submitted to the IRB at the clinical site as well as the student’s home university for review and approval prior to beginning any project. Specific instructions for each university IRB are:


Sites for the DNP Scholarly Project
Students are responsible for securing a site for their DNP Scholarly Project. A current site of employment or another site may be utilized when the project identified is not within the current job duties. The project and implementation site is formally approved by the DNP Scholarly Project Committee. The student is responsible for submitting the appropriate paperwork to their admitting university.

Degree Completion and Graduation
To graduate from the DNP program the student must successfully complete the coursework, meet the clinical hour requirement, and implement and present a scholarly project.

Use of Degree Credentials
There is no degree credential for doctoral candidacy. Although sometimes used, the DNP(c) designation is not an accepted convention to indicate doctoral candidacy. A doctoral candidate should continue to use the degree initials that have been earned. It is appropriate to state that one is a doctoral candidate in text form, e.g., in the biographical information that accompanies a published article. It is acceptable to use the DNP credentials only after one has successfully completed the degree.

Time Limits for Degree Completion
All graduation requirements must be completed within 8 years from enrollment in the first course as outlined in the University Graduate Catalog of the student’s admitting university.

Amount of Transfer Credit Accepted
DNP students may transfer up to 6 graduate semester credit hours (with a grade of B or better) with approval of the DNP Program Director and the universities Graduate Schools.
Financial Aid
Contact the respective admitting institution’s financial aid office for information:
  UNCC: https://finaid.uncc.edu/

Grades Required
A student must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 in all course work taken in the program. A student who accumulates two grades of C or any grade of U will automatically be terminated from the DNP program.

Grading and Appeal Policies
Please refer to each university’s Graduate Catalog for a complete description of grading and appeal policies as it relates to the admitting university.
  UNCC: http://catalog.uncc.edu/graduate-catalogs
  WCU: http://catalog.wcu.edu/index.php

Grading Scale: The following scale will be used for grading all nursing course-related activities and deriving the final course grade.
  A  90-100
  B  80-89
  C  70-79 (Only allowed one C)
  U or F  ≤ 69

Student Complaints
Student issues or complaints regarding the program that are not related to grades, should be taken to the Program Coordinator/Director at the students’ admitting university. Issues that cannot be resolved at the level of the Program Coordinator/Director will be taken to the Chief Nursing Administrator of the Dual DNP Program.

Dual DNP Program Instructional Technology Requirements
Appendix F presents the minimum instructional technology requirements adopted by both universities for this program. In order to be successful in completing the DNP courses in traditional and in hybrid instructional formats, students need solid, basic set of computer skills. The skills needed include, but are not limited to:
  • Basic skills in using a word processor and perform tasks such as cutting and pasting and creating presentations in presentation software.
  • Saving your files in several different formats and locations
  • Uploading files in online applications
  • Downloading and installing software
  • Internets skills should include, using email and file attachments, using your browser effectively, making bookmarks, chatting and using search functions. This is a Hybrid program. A computer with the software and hardware listed on the IT form are required
to attend this program. It is **highly recommended** that you have a laptop with the listed requirements on the IT form and bring it to orientation and classes.

Each student is expected to have Internet access and access to a laptop computer with web cam and microphone capability and the following software:

- Microsoft Office (Word, PowerPoint, Excel)
- SPSS
- Endnote

**Clinical and Health Requirements**

All students are expected to maintain currency with regard to the home university and School of Nursing policies regarding health status, immunizations, criminal background check, drug screening, and professional liability insurance. These requirements must be fulfilled in order to participate in nursing program activities and the DNP clinical residency. Refer to the specific requirements for the university and School of Nursing at your admitting institution.

**UNCC:**

University: [http://studenthealth.uncc.edu/required_immunizations.htm](http://studenthealth.uncc.edu/required_immunizations.htm).

School of Nursing: [http://nursing.uncc.edu/student-resources/clinical-agency-mandates](http://nursing.uncc.edu/student-resources/clinical-agency-mandates).

School of Nursing Student Handbook: [http://nursing.uncc.edu/student-resources/student-handbooks](http://nursing.uncc.edu/student-resources/student-handbooks).

**WCU:**


School of Nursing:

[http://www.wcu.edu/WebFiles/PDFs/Graduate_Nursing_Student_Handbook_2012-2013.pdf](http://www.wcu.edu/WebFiles/PDFs/Graduate_Nursing_Student_Handbook_2012-2013.pdf)
### Tentative Schedule for On-Campus Immersion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Fall Semester</th>
<th>Spring Semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 day orientation and immersion on the UNC Charlotte campus (1st week of classes)</td>
<td>3 day immersion at WCU Biltmore Park, Asheville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One day at the end of the semester at home University for Topic Approval presentations</td>
<td>One day at the end of the semester at UNCC in Charlotte for Project Proposal presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>3 day immersion at WCU Biltmore Park, Asheville</td>
<td>3 day immersion at UNCC in Charlotte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One day at the end of the semester at home University for Immersion Debriefing</td>
<td>Participation in Research Day at WCU (UNCC?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Doctoral Defense scheduled by student and Committee Chair at home University</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** During the first, second, fourth, and final semesters, students are required to come to campus for 3 immersion days and a presentation day at the end of the respective semester. There is no immersion during the Summer semester.


****Students will follow the policies of the university where they are admitted. For specific policies not addressed in this handbook, please refer to the student’s respective admitting university’s handbooks. In the event there are differences in policy between the institutions, students will follow the policy and procedures of the admitting institution.
Appointment Of Doctoral Dissertation Committee
Or DNP Scholarly Project Committee

Name (print): ___________________________ ID #: ______________________

Degree/Major: ______________________________________________________

E-mail: ________________________________

Tentative Topic: ______________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Student’s Signature: ___________________________ Date: _
**Dissertation Committee Or DNP Scholarly Project Committee:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chair:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Print Name, Sign, and Date)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member:</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Print Name, Sign and Date)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Member:</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Print Name, Sign and Date)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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<tr>
<th>Member:</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Print Name, Sign and Date)</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Print Name, Sign and Date)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate Faculty Representative:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Print name, Sign and Date)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate Program Director:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Print Name, Sign, and Date)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

May 2014
Doctor of Nursing Practice—WCU
Clinical Scholarly Project Committee Form (Appendix A)
(Form available at: DNP Homeplace)

Appointment of Doctoral Project Committee

Name (print): _______________________________  92#: __________________
Degree/Major: _______________________________
Address: __________________________________________
E-mail: __________________________________________
Tentative Project Topic:
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

DNP Project Committee:
Chair:
(Print Name, Sign, and Date)
Member:
(Print Name, Sign, and Date)
Member:
(Print Name, Sign, and Date)
Member:
(Print Name, Sign, and Date)

APPROVED:
DNP Program Director: _______________________________
(Print Name, Sign, and Date)
Graduate Nursing Program Director: _______________________________
(Print Name, Sign, and Date)

STUDENT APPROVAL: I agree to the above information and hereby grant Western Carolina University a limited, non-exclusive, royalty-free license to reproduce my project, in whole or in part, in electronic form or paper form and make available to the general public at no charge.

DNP Candidate Signature: ____________________________ Date: ______________

July 2013
The final written product for the DNP Scholarly Project is a manuscript that will be submitted for publication. The student will follow the author guidelines of the journal when writing the manuscript including formatting instructions.

- University Signature Page
- Title Page
- Acknowledgements
- Abstract
- Introduction/Background
- Problem Statement
- Purpose of the Project
- Clinical Question
- Literature Review
- Conceptual/ Theoretical Framework
- Project Design
  - Methodology
    - Subjects
    - Setting
    - Tools/Measures
    - Intervention and Data Collection
- Project Analysis (including translation and impact on practice, fiscal impact)
- Project Findings/Results
- Significance or Implications
- Recommendations (Maintaining/Sustaining the Change)
- References
- Appendices
UNC Charlotte/WCU Dual DNP Program  
Clinical Scholarly Project Topic Approval (Appendix C)

(This form will be attached to the respective university’s Graduate School form)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT COMPONENT</th>
<th>ORAL PROPOSAL</th>
<th>WRITTEN PROPOSAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| DNP Project Topic Summary  
is concise, accurate, and provides project topic overview | n/a | n/a |     |      |
| Problem/Focus  
Background information:  
Description of given population  
Epidemiological data support significance  
Political environment for practice change  
Brief review of evidence to support project problem | S | Comments | S | Comments |
| Problem/change clearly identified in PICOT format |     |      |     |      |
| Problem appropriate for DNP project |     |      |     |      |
| Scope of proposed change realistic and appropriate |     |      |     |      |
| Clinical Site Identified to implement project |     |      |     |      |

Evaluation of DNP Topic Proposal:  
- _____Approved as Presented  
- _____Approved with Recommendations  
- _____Not Approved

Additional Comments:

---

Chair Signature:  
Date:

Committee Member Signature:  
Date:

Committee Member Signature:  
Date:

---

cc:  
- _____Student File  
- _____DNP Program Coordinator/Director  
- _____Associate Director of Graduate Division

**Approval Status Legend:**  
S=Satisfactory; U=Unsatisfactory; NR=Needs Revision; NA=Not Applicable

Rev. 6/28/12
Petition For Topic Approval-Doctoral

Name: ________________________________ ID #: 800 __________________

PhD  EdD  DNP  Major: ________________________________ Date Topic Defended: __________________

(Circle One)

Proposed Topic: __________________________________________________________

PETITION FOR TOPIC APPROVAL:  Passed _____________  Failed
ARE HUMAN SUBJECTS INVOLVED? A "human subject" is any living individual about whom an investigator conducting research obtains data through intervention (physical procedure or manipulation), interaction (interviews, questionnaires, surveys), or other interpersonal communication.

Yes: ____ No: ____ (If yes, attach approval by the UNC Charlotte Human Subjects Committee.) IS ANIMAL RESEARCH INVOLVED?

Yes: ____ No: ____ (If yes, attach approval by the UNC Charlotte Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee.)

DOES RESEARCH INVOLVE RECOMBINANT DNA?

Yes: ____ No: ____ (If yes, attach approval by the UNC Charlotte Institutional Biosafety Committee.)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Chair: 
(Print Name, Sign and Date)

Member: 
(Print Name, Sign and Date)

Member: 
(Print Name, Sign and Date)

Member: 
(Print Name, Sign and Date)

Graduate Faculty Representative (Doctoral Only): 
(Print Name, Sign and Date)

Graduate Program Director: 
(Print Name, Sign and Date)

After all signatures have been obtained, submit this form to the Graduate School, Cato Hall.

August 2014
### UNC Charlotte/WCU Dual DNP Program

**Clinical Scholarly Project Proposal Approval Form (Appendix D)**

(This form will be attached to the respective university’s Graduate School form)

**Student Name:**

**Project Title:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT COMPONENT</th>
<th>ORAL PROPOSAL</th>
<th>WRITTEN PROPOSAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S Comments</td>
<td>S Comments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Abstract**
- n/a

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>S Comments</th>
<th>S Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Background of the problem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem statement – PICOT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope of proposed change realistic and appropriate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conceptual Framework/Theory:**
- S Comments
- S

- Described, evident and applicable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence of Synthesis</th>
<th>S Comments</th>
<th>S Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research and evidence of the clinical issue supported/influenced clinical project</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Environmental Context**
- S Comments

- Need, feasibility and sustainability clearly presented
- Benchmarks and supporting data provided

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>S Comments</th>
<th>S Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short and long term objectives/outcomes outlined</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives/outcomes stated in feasible and measurable terms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation measures linked to objectives/outcomes and conceptual framework</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods/Implementation Plan</th>
<th>S Comments</th>
<th>S Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate for objectives/outcomes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear rationale for actions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting and group clearly identified</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROJECT COMPONENT</td>
<td>ORAL PROPOSAL</td>
<td>WRITTEN PROPOSAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools/measures described</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources/supports and risks/threats noted</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing plan developed</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Appropriate evaluation plan</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Timeframe for Completion</strong></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Comments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reasonable and complete</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Necessary Supports (Finances and Resources)</strong></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate to meet objectives/outcomes</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides rationale for resources, revenues, and expenditures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describes appropriate funding sources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Site/Facilitator</strong></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site is appropriate for project</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources to support project available</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing and Organization</strong></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APA format followed appropriately; clear writing; copyrights obtained as appropriate</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluation of Proposal:  
- _____Approved as Presented  
- _____Approved with Recommendations  
- _____Not Approved  

Additional Comments:

Chair Signature: __________________________ Date: ________
Committee member Signature: __________________________ Date: ________
Committee member Signature: __________________________ Date: ________

cc:  
- _____Student File  
- _____DNP Program Coordinator/Director  
- _____Associate Director of Graduate Division

Approval Status Legend: S=Satisfactory; U=Unsatisfactory; NR=Needs Revision; NA=Not Applicable
### UNC Charlotte/WCU Dual DNP Program

**Clinical Scholarly Project Presentation Approval Form (Appendix E)**

(This form will be attached to the respective university’s Graduate School form)

**Student Name:**

**Project Title:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT COMPONENT</th>
<th>ORAL PRESENTATION</th>
<th>WRITTEN DOCUMENT</th>
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<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Abstract</strong></td>
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<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background of the problem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem statement - PICOT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context for the impact of the DNP Scholarly Project</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conceptual Framework/Theory:</strong></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Described, evident and applicable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evidence of Synthesis</strong></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and evidence of the clinical issue supported/influenced clinical project</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesis table</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environmental Context</strong></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need, feasibility and sustainability clearly presented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benchmarks and supporting data provided</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcomes</strong></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short and long term objectives/outcomes outlined</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Objectives/outcomes stated in feasible and measurable terms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation measures linked to objectives/outcomes and conceptual framework</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Methods/Implementation Plan</strong></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate for objectives/outcomes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear rationale for actions and methods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting and group clearly described</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools/measures described and linked to measures and objectives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Data collection described</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods of analysis clearly described for each measurement including appropriate statistical tests</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Time Frame</strong></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Comments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completed within projected time frame</td>
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<td><strong>Findings</strong></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Comments</td>
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<td>PROJECT COMPONENT</td>
<td>ORAL PRESENTATION</td>
<td>WRITTEN DOCUMENT</td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organized</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linked to problem statement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Described the extent to which the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>objectives were achieved</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Discuss interpretation of results and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appropriate statistical analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost savings</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Scope of Project**
- Describe locally, nationally, and internationally impact
- Recommendations/Implications addressed for problem statement, supporting organization, key stakeholders, and other settings.

**Impact of Project**
- Discuss dissemination plan (local, regional & national)
- Describe next steps
- Discuss how current regulations/policies influence the next steps

**Project Synthesis**
- Evidence candidate demonstrated practice inquiry skills including appraising and translating evidence into practice within the project
- Evidence of candidate's ability to lead DNP scholarly project
- Ability of candidate to articulate state of current knowledge as it relates to advanced practice nursing in the health care system

**Writing and Organization**
- APA format followed appropriately; clear writing; copyrights obtained as appropriate

**Evaluation of Proposal:**
- [ ] Approved as Presented
- [ ] Approved with Recommendations
- [ ] Not Approved

**Additional Comments:**

Chair Signature:  
Date:

Committee Member Signature:  
Date:

Committee Member Signature:  
Date:

Committee Member Signature:  
Date:
cc: ______Student File
     ______DNP Program Coordinator/Director
     ______Associate Director of Graduate Division

Approval Status Legend: S=Satisfactory; U=Unsatisfactory; NR=Needs Revision; NA=Not Applicable

Rev. 6/28/12
Dissertation And Scholarly Project Defense Report For Doctoral Candidates

Please submit this form to the Graduate School the day after your defense. The title entered below is the official title of your dissertation or scholarly project and cannot be changed after submission of this form.

Name: _______________________________ ID #: 800________________________

Degree/Major: _______________________________

☐ Dissertation Defense Date: ________________ Passed: ____ Failed: ____

☐ Scholarly Project Defense Date: ________________ Passed: ____ Failed: ____

Official Title-Please Print Clearly: ________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Student’s Signature: __________________________ Date: ________________
Committee Signatures:

Chair:                                                                 (Print Name, Sign and Date)

Member:                                                              (Print Name, Sign and Date)

Member:                                                              (Print Name, Sign and Date)

Member:                                                              (Print Name, Sign and Date)

Graduate Faculty Representative:                                    (Print Name, Sign and Date)

Graduate Program Director:                                          (Print Name, Sign and Date)

May 2014
Appendix F: Dual DNP Program Instructional Technology Requirements

UNC Charlotte Distance Education Minimum Technical Specifications - Updated 4/24/12

Before you begin your online course, it is important that you have convenient and extended access to appropriate technology. UNC Charlotte reserves the right to require future upgrades or addition to the technology package.

| Windows System Requirements (minimum) | • Windows XP, Windows Vista or Windows 7  
|                                      | • Internet Explorer 6 SP2, Firefox 3.1, Safari 4, Chrome 14.0 or later.  
|                                      | • Java 5.0 or later.  
|                                      | • 28.8 kbps or faster Internet connection  
|                                      | • P350+ MHz, 128+ MB memory  
|                                      | • 800x600 16-bit color display or better  
| Apple System Requirements (minimum)  | • Mac OS/X 10.5.x, 10.6.x, 10.7.x  
|                                      | • Safari 3.2, Firefox 3.6, Chrome 14.0 or later.  
|                                      | • Java 5.0 or later.  
|                                      | • Local Area Network or Broadband connection  
|                                      | • G4 700 MHz PowerPC, 384 MB memory  
|                                      | • Display color depth: Thousands of colors  
| Linux System Requirements (minimum)  | • SUSE Linux Enterprise Desktop Version 10  
|                                      | • Red Hat Linux Enterprise Desktop Version 5  
|                                      | • Mozilla Firefox 3.5, Chrome 14.0 or later  
|                                      | • Java 5.0 or later.  
|                                      | • P500+MHz, 256+MB Memory  
|                                      | • 1024x768 16-bit color display or better  
| Other Software:                      | • Microsoft Office (students may also need the free Compatibility Pack to open documents from newer versions of Office)  
|                                      | • Trend Micro Antivirus: http://connect2.uncc.edu/studentcomputing  
|                                      | • Adobe Reader: http://get.adobe.com/reader/  
|                                      | • QuickTime: http://www.apple.com/quicktime/  
|                                      | • Adobe Flash Player: http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/  
|                                      | • Instructors may also require students to obtain access to a variety of Instructional materials including textbooks, CDs, DVDs, videotapes, audiotapes, and/or other computer software programs. Information on course-specific, required materials is provided to students at the beginning of each semester.  
| Internet Connection:                 | Broadband Internet access (We recommend a stable broadband connection. Those connecting over wireless connections may experience poor connection quality due to fluctuating or inconsistent signals. Those connecting over dial-up connections should be able to hear audio but may have difficulty displaying media rich content.)  
| Centra Users:                        | Click here for detailed technical requirements, download the Centra client, and run a system check.  
| Purchasing a New Computer:           | If you decide to purchase a computer, we suggest that you follow the standard UNC Charlotte Student Computing recommendations for hardware and software.  

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