INTRODUCTION

Welcome to your Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) project and practicum experience. In the four DNP project and practicum courses, learning requires collaboration between you, your assigned project and practicum course faculty member, and your practicum preceptor. It is critical that you identify and formalize arrangements in advance of your practicum experience. The information in this handbook will help you plan for optimal practicum learning experiences. Read all information carefully and follow the guidelines provided.

In the project and practicum courses, learning activities will contribute to your professional portfolio, which provides evidence of your progress and development in achieving program outcomes. Review each project and practicum course syllabus carefully and discuss milestones with your practicum preceptor and course faculty member to avoid missing deadlines and valuable learning opportunities. The practicum faculty will email a copy of this handbook to your preceptor to ensure you both understand course requirements.

You will have faculty members that will guide the decisions and activities you engage in throughout your practicum and as you work towards completing your DNP project. Enjoy your practicum experience and take advantage of every opportunity to apply your new knowledge and skills.

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Project & Practicum Guidelines & Procedures

I. General Guidelines

The project and practicum courses offer doctoral students an opportunity to apply newly developed skills and relate theoretical content to nursing practice. This professional experiential learning helps further prepare students for the highest level of practice. On a larger scale, the practicum experience allows students to enhance skills in communication, teamwork, critical thinking and professionalism.

DNP project and practicum hours are to be devoted to achievement of course outcomes and assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation of a systems change project in a practice setting. The practice change project can be at any level of a system, including micro, meso and macro. Hands-on patient-care hours are not required, but the impact on practice outcomes should be clear in the design of the project. The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN, 2004), in its AACN Position Statement on the Practice Doctorate in Nursing, defined advanced nursing practice as: “any form of nursing intervention that influences healthcare outcomes for individuals or populations, including the direct care of individual patients, management of care for individuals and populations, administration of nursing and healthcare organizations, and the development and implementation of health policy” (p. 2). Your DNP project must be evidence based, focused on practice improvement, implement a change process and include evaluation of the change process with generation and analysis of data. The project must be conducted in a practice setting; academic settings are not appropriate as a project setting.

You are responsible for identifying an appropriate practicum site and preceptor for your practicum experiences. You must submit an online Practicum Application to your practicum coordinator a minimum of 120 days prior to the beginning of the first practicum course. It is best if you can select a practicum site that will be available for support and learning in all four practicum courses. Planning ahead enhances your ability to identify a practice issue and complete the steps of assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation for an evidence-based practice-change project.

You must identify a preceptor for the four project and practicum courses before starting the first project and practicum course. Preceptor qualifications are listed on page 4 of this handbook.

At the beginning of each project and practicum course, you will collaborate with your course faculty to review the course outcomes. During the project and practicum course, you will inform your preceptor(s) about course requirements and course outcomes. You are also responsible for developing a log of the practicum experiences, including accurate reflections on activities and attainment of course outcomes. Project and practicum faculty are responsible for evaluating your performance and all associated assignments completed during the project and practicum courses. You are responsible for making any travel arrangements and paying for all related practicum expenses.

You are responsible for completing a designated number of hours of project and practicum experience in the approved settings. Your hours will be arranged in conjunction with the practicum site and the preceptor. Chamberlain allows flexibility in scheduling these hours. The requirement may be met with full days, partial days or consecutive days as agreed upon with the preceptor. The DNP clinical log must be submitted to the faculty and included in your portfolio. Documentation must demonstrate activities related to course outcomes.

You may be able to complete your project and practicum course requirements at your place of employment if your place of employment is a practice setting. Hours completed at your place of employment that count toward project and practicum course hours must contribute to achievement of the essentials outlined in the American Association of Colleges of Nursing document, The Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice (2006) and related program and course outcomes. Achievement of the essentials may occur in the context of direct care, but may also occur in other settings (e.g. work on a policy issue at the institutional, regional or state level; leadership roles in professional organizations, etc.).

Student activities in each practicum course may consist of:

- Planning and preparation for the DNP project
- Participation in research studies approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) that support practicum course outcomes as requested by preceptor or agency
- Preparation for and attendance at professional meetings that support the achievement of project and practicum course outcomes
- Meeting with preceptor and/or site orientation
- Activities related to the DNP Essentials and course outcomes

All hours must be documented in the clinical logging system. Practicum hours do not include travel. Travel time to and from the practicum site cannot be claimed as practicum hours.
II. Student & Preceptor Eligibility For Practicum

1. Prerequisite Requirements for Students
   • For the Healthcare Systems Leadership specialty track:
     Completion of NR-700*, NR-701, NR-703, NR-704, NR-706, NR-708, NR-711 and NR-714
   * Eligibility to enroll in doctoral level courses is based on placement results of a writing assessment or successful completion of a 3-credit-hour writing course, NR-699. If a student needs to take NR-699, it will be added in the individual’s plan of study and will need to be passed before entering NR-700.

2. Practicum Site Selection
   Be prepared to take a proactive role in finding a practicum site that will ensure your success. You will want to select a site that provides the best opportunity to promote learning. Your goals should be integrated and lead to the achievement of course outcomes and the development of competencies noted in *The Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice* (DNP Essentials) as published by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing.

A. Location for Practicum Experience
   • You may use your networks and working relationships in the field to determine a location for completing the practicum
   • You may be able to conduct your practicum hours at your work setting during normal work hours as long as your work setting is a practice setting and those hours relate to course outcomes or project planning implementation and evaluation
   • If you identify a learning goal that is outside of your network, you may need assistance in finding a practicum site. The practicum coordinator will help you explore opportunities in your area. The practicum coordinator can be reached at dnppracticum@chamberlain.edu.
   • It is important to remember that the practicum may give personnel in facilities the opportunity to observe you as a potential employee; you may consider employment goals in selecting a site as well
B. Criteria for Site Selection

- The site must be an organization consistent with the focus of your project and practicum (e.g., a hospital, outpatient clinic, long-term care facility, home care services, public health agency, parish or a student health clinic at a college or university)
- The site may be in the organization where you are currently employed
- You must have an active, unrestricted registered nursing license in the state where you will conduct your practicum

Please direct all questions about site selection to the practicum coordinator. Contact information for the practicum coordinator is located in the DNP Project and Practicum Orientation located within your course.

C. Clinical Compliance Requirements

There are a number of documents that must be submitted at least 30 days prior to your practicum start date. Some are required by Chamberlain, others may be required by your practicum site. Your clinical compliance team will send you a comprehensive list of all required documentation. It is your responsibility to ensure all requirements are understood and completed 30 days prior to beginning the practicum experience at each site. This may include, but is not limited to: liability insurance, background check, drug screening, immunizations, proof of health insurance, evidence of HIPAA training, current CPR certification. A listing of Chamberlain requirements can be found in the DNP Post-Licensure Clinical Compliance Packet.

Because a student must be fully compliant with all site requirements before beginning the practicum course, automatic registration for any of the practicum courses is not allowed.

D. Site Requirements

A Clinical Affiliation Agreement is required for all practicum sites. Your practicum coordination team will work with your site to secure the necessary contracts. The clinical affiliation agreement must be signed by a duly authorized officer from the facility being used for the practicum experience and returned to Chamberlain. In the event Chamberlain is unable to reach the contact indicated on your practicum application, your practicum coordination team may seek your assistance in communicating with the site. In most states, Chamberlain will still secure the contracts on your behalf, but it is your responsibility to help ensure that meaningful communication is established between Chamberlain and your chosen site.

The process of completing site contracts can take several weeks to months. The practicum application must be submitted at least two sessions (112 days) prior to the start of the first practicum course and two sessions (112 days) prior to the start of any subsequent practicum course in which the practicum site is changed. Your practicum coordinator is available to assist with contractual agreements.

3. Preceptor Qualifications

The DNP preceptor is an important member of the Doctoral Project Committee who provides guidance throughout the project and practicum experience. You should carefully select a preceptor who has knowledge and expertise in your area of interest.

DNP preceptors must be doctoral prepared nurses or other doctoral prepared healthcare professionals with expertise in the student’s area of interest. Individuals with doctorates and relevant expertise in health policy, ethics, leadership, informatics or other appropriate foci will be considered.

Your preceptor does not necessarily need to be employed by your practicum site. However, if the preceptor is not employed at your practicum site, you will need to have a contact on-site who supports your project and can provide assistance regarding knowledge of the organization and key stakeholders.

Depending on student learning needs, more than one preceptor may be used for a practicum site. The use of multiple preceptors must be communicated to the practicum coordinator. You must provide a Curriculum Vitae (CV) for each preceptor. Ensure you provide the CV for your preceptor(s) to the instructor within each of your project and practicum courses.

4. Completed Practicum Application

If you need help submitting the Practicum Application, please review the DNP Practicum Application Guide.

Once the site has been selected and preceptor(s) identified:

- Complete the online Practicum Application at least two sessions prior to the beginning of the first project and practicum course and anytime there is a change of your practicum site throughout the program
- Submit the preceptor’s qualifying information (if more than one preceptor will be used, the following must be submitted for each):
  - Current resume or Curriculum Vitae (CV)
  - Evidence of licensure
  - Evidence of advanced practice certification (if applicable)

You must submit the Practicum Application for your preferred site to your practicum coordinator for approval at least two sessions prior the start of the first practicum course. You will submit the completed application, the PICOT form and the preceptor’s information. The practicum coordinator will send the completed forms to the project and practicum Review Board. The project and practicum review board will review your practicum application documents for completeness and appropriateness. In the meantime, your practicum coordinator will initiate a clinical affiliation agreement with the practicum site. A link to the application form can be found at the end of this handbook and on the Chamberlain Student Portal at my.chamberlain.edu.
5. Ethical Behavior
You are expected to exhibit professional demeanor, behavior, appearance and communication at all times. You must comply with the policies in the Chamberlain University Student Handbook which can be found in the Chamberlain student portal. As indicated in the handbook, you are bound by the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics. You must also agree to abide by all requirements, policies and procedures of the practicum site.

III. Roles & Responsibilities

A successful project and practicum experience requires collaboration among course faculty, students, preceptors, practicum coordinators and the University. Students, faculty and preceptors must assure that practicum hours are not misappropriated or falsely represented during the project and practicum experience. Project and practicum hours are intended to facilitate learning and must be focused on helping you achieve learning goals.

1. Faculty Role
During each project and practicum course, the course faculty will be available via email, online conferencing or telephone to provide support to you and your preceptor. The role of the course faculty is a combination of facilitator, organizer, professional relations coordinator, role model, coach and advisor. The course faculty member’s responsibility is to maintain ongoing and effective communication throughout each project and practicum experience. Regular contact will occur between the course faculty member, you and your preceptor. The course faculty member is responsible for the final evaluation of your learning during each project and practicum course.

2. Responsibilities of Chamberlain University
• Define competencies as a foundation for student learning goals in each practicum course
• Review and approve practicum site and preceptor for appropriateness for meeting student learning goals and course outcomes
• Suggest activities to enhance the educational experience
• Provide a faculty member to serve as instructor and facilitator
• Instruct students to abide by practicum site policies, procedures and requirements
• Investigate and respond to complaints from the practicum site, preceptor or student
• Maintain communication with student and preceptor during the practicum course
• Refrain from unlawful discrimination on the basis of gender, age, race, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, political affiliation or belief, or disability
• Evaluate academic performance of students in the course

3. Responsibilities of the Practicum Coordinator
• Send an introductory email containing instructions on general practicum procedures to the student during NR-708 (Healthcare Systems Leadership Specialty Track)
• Contact the practicum site, identify required compliance documentation and initiate contract development for practicum site
• The practicum coordinator will facilitate the completion of the required contractual agreement between your proposed practicum site and Chamberlain.
• Follow up with preceptors, students and faculty regarding the overall practicum experience

4. Responsibilities of the Practicum Preceptor
• Collaborate with Chamberlain faculty to promote student success in the project and practicum courses including achievement of course objectives and the steps of assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation for an evidence-based, practice-change project
• Orient the student to the practicum site environment, policies and procedures
• Identify suitable experiential opportunities that align with the course outcomes
• Serve as a mentor for students in professional development
• Provide supervision of the student’s nursing practice and constructive feedback about his or her performance in the practicum
• Protect from disclosure all personal student-identifying information or records of student’s participation except as set forth by an agreement or required by law
• Refrain from unlawful discrimination on the basis of gender, age, race, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, political affiliation or belief, or disability
• Provide feedback to Chamberlain and attend meetings with faculty as requested
5. Responsibilities of the Student

- Submit a Practicum Application at least two sessions prior to the start of the first practicum course or prior to a change in the practicum site
- Obtain and submit required documents for preceptor(s)
- Assist with completion of required agreements with the practicum site
- Be familiar with all policies and procedures related to practicum experiences
- Meet deadline dates for all assignments and learning activities
- Demonstrate competence in practicum assignments
- Abide by practicum site rules and regulations including identification if an IRB is required at the practicum site in order to implement your DNP project
- Conduct oneself in a professional manner during the practicum assignment
- Accept instruction from facility personnel as a learning opportunity
- Maintain communication with the project and practicum course faculty
- Comply with all practicum site requirements, which may include but are not limited to: proof of liability insurance, HIPAA training, proof of licensure, proof of CPR certification or other requirements, background screening, physical examination, drug screening, proof of health insurance and current immunizations prior to starting the first practicum and per site requirements
- Conduct formative evaluation of the practicum experience and actively seek early resolution if learning goals are not being met
- Integrate learning goals that lead to the development of competencies noted in the DNP Essentials as published by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing
- Perform a self-evaluation on the practicum experience
- Provide for and fund all travel arrangements and any associated expenses

6. Orientation to the Practicum

General information and an orientation about the project and practicum experience is available in your course under Course Resources. Course Resources also includes the description of the practicum and forms.

7. Preceptor Receipt of Handbook

Preceptors will receive an electronic copy of this handbook from the practicum course faculty. Students may direct all questions about the practicum to their practicum coordinator at dnppracticum@chamberlain.edu.

IV. The Project

With each project and practicum course (NR-702, NR-705, NR-707 and NR-709), you will have the opportunity to apply what you have learned to the practicum setting. You will also be working to implement your DNP project at a designated system level. This handbook explains the necessary elements you need to make your DNP project successful.

Course Structure

The DNP scope and sequence of project and practicum courses are developed so that you can apply all that you are learning from your DNP didactic courses to demonstrate your successful mastery of the DNP Essentials as articulated by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing. To this end, be sure to review the DNP program outcomes and the course outcomes for each practicum course. If you have questions, contact your course faculty.

DNP Program Outcomes

At the completion of the Chamberlain University DNP program, the graduate will be able to:

1. Apply biophysical, psychosocial, sociopolitical and cultural principles to integrative healthcare economics, nursing science and ethics in evidence-based advanced nursing practice to improve the nation's health using cultural humility and population-focused healthcare that is holistic and person-centered (DNP/E:VII,VIII; DNP/C:I-IV).

2. Formulate a professional identity leadership role as an extraordinary DNP prepared nurse in application, formation and reformation of health policy and advocacy in healthcare at micro, meso and macro levels (DNP/E:V; DNP/C:III-IV).

3. Synthesize scientific methods and underpinnings to develop best practices with a spirit of inquiry to shape advanced nursing judgment and systems of care for person/family and populations to improve care-focused outcomes (DNP/E:V; DNP/C:III-IV).

4. Build advanced nursing practice on relationship-based care and care focused delivery models that embrace political, ethical, professional, economic, socially just and culturally-appropriate services across healthcare systems (DNP/E:VII; DNP/C:II-IV).

6. Distinguish organizational and transformational leadership that fosters and promotes patient safety, human flourishing, integration of healthcare technology and informatics to improve patient safety and care-focused outcomes for quality improvement and systems thinking that improves and transforms healthcare (DNP/E: II, IV; DNP/C: I-III).

7. Assimilate concepts of healthcare technology and informatics to make data-driven decisions that inform advanced nursing practice and person-centered care systems that are nurse-sensitive and person/family- and population-focused (DNP/E: IV; DNP/C: I-III).

8. Exercise intra and inter-professional collaboration as an extraordinary DNP-prepared nursing role model for collegiality and professionalism across healthcare systems to facilitate optimal care and patient care-focused outcomes that improve person/family and population health or practice outcomes (DNP/E: VI; DNP/C: I-III).

9. Synthesize conceptual and analytical skills in evaluating links among practice, organization, population, fiscal and policy issues as a basis for transformational change across healthcare systems (DNP/E: V; DNP/C: III-IV).

**Practicum Hours/Logs**

The hours for each practicum course are specific for each student. The required number of practicum hours for students in the Healthcare Systems Leadership specialty track will range from 128 to 256 contact hours in each course. These hours are based on the number of practicum hours transferred from the student’s MSN program.

DNP students will log practicum hours using the web-based clinical logging system, MyEvaluations. Many of the assigned activities students complete in the didactic courses will contribute to the planning of the DNP project. Students may earn up to 20 practicum hours per didactic course for completion of assignments that contribute to the DNP project.

**DNP Project Presentation**

The DNP project presentation provides the DNP student the opportunity to demonstrate his or her expertise in the area of study. The process serves as excellent preparation for future professional presentations, since podium and poster presentations are valued aspects of professional associations/organizations and lifelong learning.

The DNP project presentation is a concluding discussion in the NR-709 experience within the doctoral curriculum. The DNP project presentation is scheduled after the DNP project final paper has been accepted. If the student does not complete these requirements as a part of the NR-709 course requirements, the DNP student will be given an incomplete status and provided the opportunity of additional time to complete the course.

**The following criteria apply:**

1. The DNP student is responsible for coordination of all participation and expenses required for the DNP project presentation. Active participation by the DNP practicum preceptor and/or DNP project mentor is highly encouraged. Students are expected to participate in all of the DNP project presentation sessions for the course(s) in which they are enrolled.

2. The DNP student should respond to all questions from colleagues regarding his or her DNP project.

3. If the student is not successful and fails the DNP project presentation, the student will be given the opportunity to present again with revisions and recommendations from the practicum course instructor at a future date.

**Professional Portfolio**

DNP students are encouraged to save their graded assignments from each course. Across the DNP program, you will collect these assignments and compile them as artifacts within a professional portfolio to demonstrate your professional growth and expertise. Your final portfolio, which will be submitted in NR-709, will be assessed against the program outcomes. Chamberlain will provide detailed information regarding how and when to submit your professional portfolio in NR-709.
V. Course Overview

Course Outcomes – NR-702:
DNP Project & Practicum I

During this course, the DNP student develops the written proposal for the DNP project as a part of course requirements. The practicum course faculty, preceptor and mentor (if applicable) should be regularly consulted and provide feedback to the student about the DNP project prior to submission of the DNP project proposal for completion of course requirements. Acceptance of the DNP project proposal is a requirement for progression.

Course Outcomes – NR-705:
DNP Project & Practicum II

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) application is submitted as a part of the second DNP Project & Practicum course (NR-705). Most DNP projects will meet IRB prescreening criteria for determining that the project does not constitute human subjects research. Therefore, most students will not need to submit the full IRB application package to the Chamberlain IRB.

The time frame for approval from the Chamberlain University IRB is dependent on the level of review required (exempt, expedited or full review), scheduled meeting dates of the IRB and number of revisions required to obtain approval.

Each iteration of the IRB application must be reviewed and approved by your DNP project and practicum course faculty. You may not begin subject recruitment or data collection until written IRB approval has been received and your DNP project and practicum course faculty has been notified. During this time, you should initiate regular communication with your project and practicum course faculty (weekly updates at a minimum are expected).

Course Outcomes – NR-707:
DNP Project & Practicum III

During this course, the implementation of the DNP project will be completed. The DNP project needs to begin by week 1 of this course. All IRB paperwork requirements needs to be completed before beginning the implementation of the DNP project.

Course Outcomes – NR-709:
DNP Project & Practicum IV

During this course, you are required to submit the DNP project final paper to the project and practicum faculty. DNP students are not able to graduate from Chamberlain University and earn the DNP degree until the DNP project final paper has been fully vetted and all required coursework has been successfully completed.

After the DNP project final paper has been approved by the project and practicum course faculty, the student will present his/her final DNP project to DNP faculty/administration, invited guests, including the preceptor and mentor.

Upon successful completion of the NR-709 course, the student must make any revisions to the DNP project final paper that may have emerged from the DNP project presentation. An electronic copy of the DNP project final paper must be approved in writing by the Chamberlain University DNP project and practicum course faculty and preceptor prior to final submission prior to graduation. The following criteria apply:

- The Final Project Approval form must be signed in black ink or an electronic copy. It is best to collect the DNP practicum preceptor and/or DNP project mentor signature(s) on original copies prior to the final submission so that the electronic copy can then be submitted to Chamberlain University with all necessary signatures.
- Degrees are not conferred until the finalized and approved electronic DNP project paper has been received. Students may participate in the commencement exercises and receive their doctoral hood once they have successfully completed all DNP coursework.
DNP PRACTICUM LOG GUIDELINES

Purpose
The purpose of the practicum log is to provide an opportunity to document selected DNP competencies acquired by the student prior to and through the four practicum courses.

Due Date
During the project and practicum courses, you will need to keep your practicum log up to date since the course faculty will be checking the logs throughout each term and providing feedback if the degree of specificity of the Notes section is not adequate.

Requirements
1. Practicum hours will be documented using MyEvaluations. You will have access to MyEvaluations during NR-702. For additional help, refer to the MyEvaluations Quicks Start Guide located in each course.
2. Students may log practicum activities that are consistent with the activities listed in MyEvaluations. Any additional hours must be approved by course faculty. The practicum log will be graded on quality of self-assessment, number of hours completed and the use of appropriate and professional grammar as summarized in the directions and grading criteria/rubric. Follow the directions and grading criteria closely. Any questions about your log may be posted under the Q & A discussion.
3. Students will complete the Note section with what was learned from the activity, how the activity related to the DNP project, as well as, how the activity related to the practicum outcomes while in a project and practicum course.
4. Students will identify the date and hours for each entry in the practicum logging tool.
5. The practicum log is a graded assignment and must be completed by the end of week 8 for each practicum course.
THE CHAMBERLAIN UNIVERSITY DNP PROJECT AND PRACTICUM TOOLKIT

Forms & Worksheets

- NR-701 PICOT Form
- Practicum Application
- Practicum Activities
- DNP Project Roadmap

For more information, email DNPPracticum@chamberlain.edu