

Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)

Program Overview

Based on a strong scientific foundation, evidence-based practice, leadership, and organizational analysis, the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) (<https://www.apu.edu/nursing/programs/dnp/>) program is designed to prepare nurses at the highest level of practice for the current, complex healthcare environment. An evidence-based clinical approach emphasizes the prevention, assessment, and treatment of complex health issues. The Doctor of Nursing Practice degree is considered the terminal practice degree for nursing and is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (<https://www.aacnursing.org/CCNE/>) and the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) (<https://www.wscuc.org/>).

Program Details

The Doctor of Nursing Practice program offers doctoral-level studies in a clinically-focused learning environment. The DNP prepares advanced practice nurses to bring the highest level of clinical expertise to patients, nursing students, health care systems, health policy formation, and clinical research. Graduates of the DNP program help contribute to the body of nursing knowledge and the practice of nursing to improve health care globally.

Program Goals

DNP graduates are well-prepared to translate new knowledge from research into cost-effective and culturally competent clinical practice. They can contribute to the development of health policy in the promotion of health, reducing the burden of disability and maintaining the quality of life.

Curriculum

The curriculum provides theoretical and empirical knowledge essential for advanced nursing practice, clinical research, health policy formation, and nursing education.

Core courses include: wellness promotion theory, statistical analysis, social ethics, epidemiology and population health, program evaluation, translational research, informatics, spirituality and health, and organizational leadership. The courses prepare students to implement the use of translational research approaches in health care. Coursework in these areas enables students to identify and formulate a translational research project as the culmination of their program.

The program courses address DNP Essentials¹ to:

- Provide students with the theoretical and scientific foundations of the discipline.
- Enable students to use frameworks for understanding sources of knowledge in nursing, modes of inquiry, and models of scholarship.
- Enable students to critique, articulate, test, apply, evaluate, and implement translational research.
- Enable students to articulate the intersections of the profession with the Christian worldview.
- Empower students with the knowledge base to formulate healthcare policies.
- Allow students to critically examine, evaluate, and effectively translate nursing and other scientific knowledge with the goal of bringing positive changes to healthcare practice and general population health. (DNP Essentials I)
- Empower students to, based on scientific findings, utilize organizational and systems leadership competencies to effectively and ethically engage current and future health, safety, and other quality improvement issues to diverse organizational cultures and populations. (DNP Essentials II)
- Enable students to engage in collaborative leadership for the implementation, evaluation, and generation of evidence-based practice to guide improvements in practice and health outcomes. (DNP Essentials III)
- Enable students to demonstrate proficiency in the analysis and utilization of information systems/technology and patient care technology to improve quality in health care delivery. (DNP Essentials IV)
- Empower students to critically analyze health policy proposals/policies and advocate for equitable and ethical policies within health care. (DNP Essentials V)
- Help students effectively lead in the development and implementation of interprofessional collaboration for the improvement of patient and population health outcomes. (DNP Essentials VI)
- Allow students to employ evidence-based prevention through the analysis of epidemiological, bio-statistical, environmental, and other appropriate data related to individual, aggregate, and population health. (DNP Essentials VII)
- Prepare students to practice a specialization within the larger domain of nursing by demonstrating refined assessment skills and base practice on the application of nursing and other sciences as appropriate to their area. (DNP Essentials VIII)

The DNP program aligns with the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) (<http://www.aacnursing.org/>) *Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice*.¹ The APU School of Nursing is in the process of fully integrating the newly revised AACN *Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education*² into the curricula.

¹ American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2006). *The Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice*. AACN.

² American Association of Colleges of Nursing (2021). *The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Education*. AACN.

Requirements

Code	Title	Units
Required Coursework		
DNP Core Courses ¹		
GNRS 716	Translation of Research to Practice	3
GNRS 712	Healthcare Quality Improvement, Program Planning, and Evaluation	3
GNRS 718	Organizational Leadership and Strategic Planning	3
GNRS 780	Doctoral Seminar I: Elements of a Proposal and IRB Application	3
Additional Required Coursework		
GNRS 703	Spirituality and Health	3
GNRS 705	Social Ethics and Health Policy	3
GNRS 713	Advanced Statistical Analysis I	3
GNRS 717	Health Technology and Informatics	3
GNRS 720	Wellness Promotion and Health Maintenance	3
GNRS 729	Population Health and Epidemiology	3
GNRS 732	DNP Clinical Residency ^{2, 3}	0
GNRS 791	Doctor of Nursing Practice Intensive I	1
GNRS 792	Doctor of Nursing Practice Intensive II	1
GNRS 793	Doctor of Nursing Practice Intensive III	1
GNRS 794	Doctor of Nursing Practice Intensive IV	1
GNRS 736	DNP Scholarly Project Seminar: Evaluation and Dissemination	2
Optional Course		
GNRS 798	Continuous Doctoral Study	0
Total Units ⁴		39
Elective Options ⁵		3-4
GNRS 633 & GNRS 634	ONP: Symptom and Side Effect Burden and ONP: Survivorship and the Psychosocial Impact of Cancer ⁶	
GNRS 650	History of Professional Nursing: From Origins to Nursing in Transition	
GNRS 651	History of Professional Nursing: From Colonial Times to Present Day	
GNRS 704	Faith Integration and Nursing Scholarship	
GNRS 715	Psychosocial Issues of Older Adults	
GNRS 721	Health Disparities and Vulnerable Populations	
GNRS 722	Research in Nursing and Health	
GNRS 730	Comparative Health Care Systems	
GNRS 781	Doctoral Seminar II: Developing a Grant Proposal	
GNRS 782	Doctoral Seminar III: Writing for Publication	
GNRS 783	Doctoral Seminar IV: Developing Professional Presentations	
GNRS 795	Special Topics ⁷	
Oncology Fellowship (Post-Master's ONP Certificate) Co-Enrollment Option ⁸		
GNRS 631 & GNRS 632	ONP: Cancer Biology and Assessment and ONP: Cancer Therapeutics ⁹	
GNRS 635 & GNRS 636	ONP: Team-Based Care and the Role of the Oncology Nurse Practitioner and ONP: Clinical Trials in Oncology Nursing ¹⁰	
GNRS 633	ONP: Symptom and Side Effect Burden	
Nurse Faculty Loan Program (NFLP) ¹¹		12
GNRS 660	Theories of Teaching and Instruction ¹¹	
GNRS 661	Leadership and Role Development in Nursing Education ¹¹	
GNRS 662	Assessment, Curriculum, Development, and Outcomes ¹¹	

GNRS 663	Clinical Practicum in Nursing Education ¹¹
GNRS 664	Teaching and Learning Strategies for Nursing Education ¹¹

- ¹ There are four core courses in the DNP course progression. The courses should be taken in the following sequence: GNRS 716 in Semester 1, GNRS 712 and GNRS 718 in Semester 2, and GNRS 780 in Semester 3.
- ² GNRS 732 may be repeated until the student accrues the minimum number of practice hours (1000 total hours) depending on the student study plan.
- ³ Clinical fee required.
- ⁴ Includes 3 units of electives. Does not include GNRS 613, which is a program prerequisite for GNRS 713.
- ⁵ Additional doctoral elective options may be approved by petition. Students choosing to take GNRS 633 and GNRS 634 will need a minimum of 4 units.
- ⁶ Must be taken together in the same semester. These alternatives are primarily intended for students in the Oncology Nurse Practitioner Certificate program and may count as the 3-unit elective in the curriculum.
- ⁷ Students in the DNP program may enroll in 3 units of GNRS 795 to fulfill their Elective requirement.
- ⁸ Students interested in the Oncology Nurse Practitioner Certificate may apply some didactic and clinical units from the DNP program requirements. Ask your admissions representative about this option.
- ⁹ Must be taken together in the same semester. These alternatives are primarily intended for students in the Oncology Nurse Practitioner Certificate program, and count as a substitute for GNRS 729.
- ¹⁰ Must be taken together in the same semester. These alternatives are primarily intended for students in the Oncology Nurse Practitioner Certificate program, and count as a substitute for GNRS 720.
- ¹¹ Content required for students receiving assistance from the Nurse Faculty Loan Program. It is advised that GNRS 662 be taken prior to GNRS 663.

DNP Scholarly Project

The DNP is a practice-focused doctorate that includes integrative practice experiences and an intense practice immersion experience. This is reflected in the clinical residency courses. Each student generates an evidence-based scholarly project as an integral part of their practice experience. There are a number of practice doctorates at the university, so DNP students have opportunities for interprofessional coursework and collaborative projects.

Residency

The DNP program offers clinical and leadership residency. The clinical and leadership residency course is GNRS 732, in which students concentrate on the development of their clinical and leadership roles in advanced nursing practice. The focus of the clinical portion of the residency hours is within an advanced nursing practice specialty area. The focus of the leadership portion of the residency hours is developing students for leadership roles in healthcare organizations. During the leadership residency, students are expected to progress in the conceptualization, implementation, and evaluation of their DNP scholarly project.

Residency Practice Hours

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) requires a minimum of 1,000 hours of clinical residency in a DNP program, and Azusa Pacific University's School of Nursing requires 1,000 hours of clinical and leadership experience. Students who have completed an Advanced Practice RN (APRN) program, such as Nurse Practitioner (NP), Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS), Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA), or Certified Nurse Mid-Wife (CNMW) from an accredited institution may transfer up to 500 clinical hours from the APRN program to the DNP program, and must then complete the other 500 clinical hours. Students who have not completed an APRN program are required to complete a total of 1,000 hours of advanced clinical and leadership experience. Non-APRN students who graduate from an accredited institution may also transfer up to 500 direct clinical hours from their master's program (though generally there are fewer clinical hours in other master's programs) to the DNP program and must then complete the other 500 clinical hours. The DNP program requires that students have ongoing clinical work experience.

Admission

University graduate admission and program-specific requirements must be met before an application is complete (see Admission to the University (<http://catalog.apu.edu/admissions/>)). **Program-specific application requirements are available online (<https://www.apu.edu/graduateprofessional/apply/>).**

International students should contact Graduate and Professional Admissions (<https://www.apu.edu/graduateprofessional/apply/>) for application procedures.