

DNP Project Information

Project Overview

Note: Most forms in the appendices can also be found in the DNP student handbook (<http://www.mcg.edu/son/currentstudents.htm>)

Each Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) student will develop, implement and evaluate a Systems Level Practice Change Project. The goal of the project is twofold. The project allows the student to utilize and apply the concepts and skills learned throughout the program. The larger goal is to improve health care outcomes through the systematic application of existing research evidence to nursing practice.

The student will identify a problem or need within their practice specialty area, and develop an in-depth understanding of the issue through extensive review of the research literature and examination of the ethical, political, economic and cultural aspects inherent in the problem. Successful, sustainable projects are not developed in isolation, but in partnership with the targeted system or community. Therefore, students must also take into consideration and involve the system and stakeholders that will be impacted by the change in every phase of the project process.

After a problem or need has been identified and confirmed, the student will design a detailed plan for addressing the issue. The design will evolve based on rigorous evaluation and synthesis of existing research. Then the student will translate the evidence into a specific plan after conducting a thorough assessment of the community, target population and setting for implementation as well as economic, political, ethical and time considerations. Evaluation of the process and outcomes of implementation and dissemination of findings are also key components of the DNP project.

Students will complete four project courses which provide content, structure and resources to help facilitate all aspects of the project. Content in other courses contribute to helping students understand the larger context and concepts they will apply to the project.

Students will also be working closely with a project committee. The student collaborates closely with the Committee Chair during all phases of the project process. The committee is responsible for guiding and evaluating the student throughout the progression of the project. Refer to section below for more detailed information on forming and working with Project Committees.

Project Committee

Committee Chair

After identifying his or her project topic, each student forms a Project Committee. Each committee must have at least two members, both of whom must be faculty of the MCG School of Nursing and hold doctoral degrees in their area. Each student will identify a faculty member from the MCG School of Nursing to serve as the Chair of the Project Committee. It is preferred that the Committee Chair also assume the role of academic advisor for the remainder of the student's tenure.

The Committee Chair is selected according to their expertise related to the content of the student's project. The Committee Chair must be a faculty member in the School of Nursing and have a graduate faculty appointment. The Chair serves as the leader of the student's Project Committee, mentors the

student, assists the student to focus the area of interest, and guides the student in the project's development, implementation, and evaluation. Students need to identify their Committee Chair and members no later than six weeks from the start of the semester in which they are enrolled in the first project course: NURS 7225: Project Identification. The student's academic advisor and project course faculty can help students identify appropriate candidates from the School of Nursing Faculty. Once committee members agree to serve on a student's committee, the student must obtain their signatures on the Project Committee Form (Appendix I) and submit the original form to the DNP program coordinator as well as a copy to the course coordinator of NURS 7225: Project Identification. The DNP program coordinator's office will be responsible for obtaining signatures from the Dean or Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and the Dean of the Graduate School

If the Project Chair leaves the institution during the student's tenure, the student will work with the DNP Program Director to determine an appropriate course of action. If a member of the project committee is unable to complete his/her tenure, the student Project Chair and DNP Program Director will collaborate to select a new member.

Committee Members

The Project Committee is formed to assist in guiding the student's project development, implementation and evaluation. The committee is selected by the student in collaboration with the Committee Chair.

Students can select one member from outside the School of Nursing or Medical College of Georgia. One member should be an expert in the student's area of interest and could include faculty at another university. Although the Project Committee will consist of a minimum of two members, the student in consultation with the Chair may elect to have more than two members. The student will obtain the signatures of all committee members on the Project Committee form which becomes part of the student's permanent record. Any changes in the Project Committee must be submitted in writing to the DNP Program Coordinator and a new Project Committee form completed and signed. The Project Committee is responsible for the following activities:

- Guiding the student in the planning and development of the student's project
- Critical review of the project proposal, implementation and evaluation
- Administering and evaluating the student's performance on both the Proposal And Final Project Evaluations

Committee Meetings

In order to have a record of student progress throughout the project process, each student MUST hold at least one meeting with all members of the committee present each semester. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that this requirement is met and the appropriate documentation is submitted to the Course Coordinator for the following project courses: NURS 7235, NURS 7245, and NURS 7255. Minutes from that meeting should be recorded in the format found on the Report of Project Committee Meetings Form (Appendix II).

Signatures from the Committee Chair and members do not need to be obtained until the final project semester. During that semester, the student is responsible for submitting a copy of the form, with all

committee member signatures, to the NURS 7255 coordinator. The NURS 7255 coordinator will be responsible for submitting the form to the School of Graduate Studies. Failure to submit a copy to the course coordinator by the date indicated may result in the student receiving an incomplete for the Project Course and/or delay graduation.

Communication with Committee members, especially with the Committee Chair is crucial for success. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that each student develop a written contract with the Committee Chair. This contract should cover all aspects of the project and should be reevaluated and revised as necessary at the beginning of each semester. This contract should specify the expectations for the student and the Committee Chair and/or members. These expectations can include timetables for submission of drafts and revisions for the proposal and final paper, turnaround time from committee members once they receive the drafts, the frequency of written or verbal updates. An example of a contract can be found in Appendix III. (Note: the contract in the Appendix is an example only. The specific terms and conditions of the contract will be determined by the individual student in collaboration with the student's Committee Chair and Committee members).

Project Courses

- NURS 7225 – Application of Clinical Practice: Project Identification
- NURS 7235 – Applications in Clinical Practice: Project Development
- NURS 7245 – Application of Clinical Practice: Project Implementation
- NURS 7255 – DNP Project: Project Evaluation /Synthesis

The courses listed above provide content, resources and venues for discussion of all aspects of project development. Each course is offered over a one semester period and in sequence. In order to successfully progress through the project within the four semester time frame, students are expected to complete the following during each semester.

- NURS 7225 - Application of Clinical Practice: Project Identification
 - Submission of Project Committee Agreement Form
- NURS 7235 – Applications in Clinical Practice: Project Development
 - Submission of committee minutes
 - Documentation of progress meeting DNP Essentials in electronic portfolio
 - Successful completion of written proposal
 - Successful defense of the Project Proposal Evaluation.
 - Submit Proposal Evaluation Form signed by Committee Chair and members to the DNP program coordinator. The DNP program coordinator will be responsible for obtaining signatures from the Dean or Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and the Dean of the Graduate School.

- Submission Human Assurance Committee (HAC) documents

NURS 7245 – Application of Clinical Practice: Project Implementation

- Submission of committee minutes
- Documentation of progress meeting DNP Essentials in electronic portfolio
- Implementation of project and evaluation of implementation process

NURS 7255 – DNP Project: Project Evaluation /Synthesis

- Schedule Final Project Evaluation (See Section on Scheduling Final Evaluations)
- Submission of SIGNED committee minutes
- Documentation of progress meeting DNP Essentials in electronic portfolio
- Successful completion of final paper
- Successful defense of Final Project Evaluation
- Submit signed Final Project Evaluation Form (Appendix IV) to the DNP program coordinator
The DNP program coordinator will be responsible for obtaining signatures from the Dean or Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and the Dean of the Graduate School.

Submission of approved final paper to the DNP office must be done within 14 days of expected graduation. A complete description of the procedure for submission can be found on page 19 of the MCG DNP student handbook (<http://www.mcg.edu/son/currentstudents.htm>).

Project Progression

Students are expected to meet the requirements for completing the project in a timely manner. In the case when unforeseen circumstances interfere with a student's ability to meet all the expectations for completion of the project during the final semester, the student will receive an incomplete for NURS 7255. A student that receives an incomplete will need to enroll the following semester in an independent study.

If a student fails to meet the expectation for completion during the independent study, the student will receive an "unsatisfactory" for the independent study. This will not affect the student's grade point average, but it does require remediation. Students receiving an unsatisfactory will need to repeat the independent study and receive a grade of 'satisfactory' in order to graduate.

Once the student has met all the requirements for completion of the project, the incomplete will be overturned and the student will be eligible for graduation. .

Human Assurance Committee (HAC)

All projects require approval from the Medical College of Georgia's (MCG) Human Assurance Committee (HAC) BEFORE the student can proceed. Even when a project does not involve human subjects, HAC approval is necessary if the student is interested in publishing or presenting their findings.

Completion of training that addresses the ethical issues involved with research must be completed as a prerequisite for submitting an application for HAC approval. The Collaborative IRB Training Initiative (CITI) consists of a series of power point presentations and quizzes on the information. Once a student has completed this training, the certification lasts three years. All students must complete MCG's CITI training.

The CITI training can be completed at any time. The HAC application is usually submitted after the Chair and Committee have formally approved the students' project proposal and reviewed and approved the application as well.

After MCG HAC approval has been obtained, students must submit a copy of the letter validating approval to the Committee Chair.

The HAC website address is <http://www.mcg.edu/research/ohrp/>

The CITI website address is: <http://www.mcg.edu/research/ohrp/training/citi.html>

Important note: Additional HAC/ IRB approvals and CITI training may be required from the agency or institution for implementation. Any student who is also employed as a faculty member at another institution generally needs to receive HAC /IRB approval from their home institution. It is the student's responsibility to determine this and fulfill these requirements.

Formal Evaluations

Proposal and Final Defenses

To qualify for graduation from the DNP program, each student must successfully defend the project proposal as well as the Final Project during the semester they are enrolled in NURS 7255. An Evaluation Guide which delineates expectations for the components of these evaluations is available in Appendix V). This can be used to guide evaluation but completion or submission is not required.

Project Proposal

Students will complete a written proposal according to the guidelines described in the following section. Once the proposal is finalized, each student must deliver an oral presentation to their committee that covers all aspects of their project proposal. Students must work closely with their Committee Chair on the development of the written proposal, and should contract with their committee regarding the detailed expectations regarding this process. It is strongly recommended that students meet these expectations by the end of their second semester of enrollment in the project course sequence (NURS 7235)

Format for Written Project Proposal

The proposal should be written in APA format (latest edition). It should be formatted in a readable type face no smaller than 12 font. Page numbers are placed at the upper right corner, three quarters of an inch (3/4") from the top and one inch (1") from the right edge. Most proposals are at least 25 – 35 pages in length. Include a title page that indicates the name of the project, student name and academic credentials, Medical College of Georgia, College of Nursing and the words "in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Nursing Degree". The paper copy of the report must be produced on good quality bond, 8.5 x 11 inches. An electronic copy of the proposal must also be submitted to the committee.

Although the order and organizational format in which this content is presented is determined by the Committee Chair and committee, the following elements should all be addressed in the Project Proposal

Recommended Proposal Element

- Introduction
- Problem statement (with rationale)
- Background of the problem
- Literature synthesis and evaluation of the evidence (evidence tables)
- Conceptual Framework
- Project Plan and Methodology
 - o Purpose of project (how does it impact identified problem)
 - o Needs assessment
 - o Targeted population or sample
 - o Setting (site description and rationale for choice of setting)
 - o Evaluation of resources (financial and human) with budget proposal
 - o Measurable goals and objectives/aims with clear rationale
- Plan for implementation
 - o Data collection tools or methods
 - o Plan for data analysis
- Plan for formative and summative evaluation of the project
- Plan for dissemination of information
- Conclusion

- References
- Appendices

Format for the Project Proposal Defense

The student will prepare an oral presentation that covers all aspects of the project proposal. Only the committee needs to be present at the Project Proposal Evaluation. The evaluation can take place in person or with the use of distance technology based on the preference of the committee. The presentation should last approximately thirty minutes and include audio-visual support such as PowerPoint. After the presentation, students must be prepared to answer questions from the committee.

The committee members will determine the outcome of the Proposal Defense and provide a written evaluation and recommendation to the student at the end of the defense. All members of the committee will sign Proposal Defense Evaluation Form (Appendix VI). A copy must be submitted to the DNP Program Coordinator who will forward it to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the School of Nursing and the Dean of School of Graduate Studies. If a student fails to pass the Proposal Defense, a plan for remediation will be developed by the Committee and the student. Recommended Timetable for Written and Oral Proposal Evaluation

- The student is expected to submit a first draft of the proposal to the Committee Chair four weeks before the scheduled Proposal Defense.
- The student should submit a revised draft of the paper and slide presentation to Project Committee Members following Committee Chair's approval 2 weeks before scheduled Proposal Defense. The final copy of the proposal paper and slide presentation should be submitted to the Committee Chair and all members one week before scheduled Proposal Defense.

Adherence to this time table is dependent on timely review of drafts by the Committee Chair and committee members as well as timely resubmission of the revised document from the student. Expectations for these tasks should be specifically delineated in the contract the student develops with his/her committee.

Final Project Evaluation

During the final semester, students will evaluate the process and outcomes of their project and write a scholarly paper that reflects the culmination of all aspects of their project. Each student must also deliver an oral presentation in defense of their project. As with the proposal, this process requires close collaboration and frequent communication with committee members.

Format for Written Project Scholarly Paper

The final paper should be written in APA format and in accordance with the format described under the guidelines for the written proposal. Most final papers (including appendices) All final papers should be of sufficient length to fully reflect the essential components of the project. (*Most papers are a minimum of 40 pages in length*) The final paper should include all the following elements:

- Abstract
- Introduction
- Problem statement
- Needs assessment
- Background of the problem
- Literature review and evaluation of the evidence (evidence tables)
- Conceptual Framework
- Purpose of project
- Measurable goals and objectives with clear rationale
- Methodology
 - Project design
 - Sample
 - Setting (site description and rationale for choice of setting)
- Statistical methods
 - Tools/measures
 - Resources (financial and human) with budget proposal
- Results
 - Data analysis
 - Formative evaluation
 - Summative evaluation
- Discussion of Findings/Outcomes
 - Limitations
- Implications for Practice
- Conclusion
- References
- Appendices

Note: The order in which this content is presented and the details of what information should be included in each section is determined by the Committee Chair and committee.

Final Project Defense

Every student must successfully complete the Final Project Defense to be eligible for graduation. The student will prepare a formal power-point presentation that provides a description of the project. The presentation will take place on the Augusta campus and will be open to the public. Arrangements for satellite site participation can be arranged. All committee members are expected to be in attendance (preferably the Augusta campus).

Final Defense Procedures

All presentations must be scheduled ahead of time (see section on scheduling Final Defense Presentation). Once the date and time are confirmed, the presentation will be posted on the School of Nursing calendar and flyers will be mailed to all MCG faculty. The details for these procedures will be covered in NURS 7255: Project Evaluation course content. Each Defense will be facilitated by a member of the Graduate School Faculty or a member of the DNP faculty. It is the responsibility of the DNP Program Director to arrange for facilitators for all presentations. The facilitator will introduce the candidate, and provide an overview of the expected course of events. The candidate will then make a thirty minute presentation of their project, usually without interruption. Following the presentation, the facilitator will open the floor to questions from the Committee Chair and members. After the candidate has addressed the questions from the committee, the facilitator will open the floor to questions from the general audience. After the time limit has expired or at which time all questions have been addressed, the facilitator will announce that the candidate will now meet privately with his/her committee. During this private meeting, the committee may ask the candidate additional questions, after which time the facilitator will ask the candidate to leave the room for committee deliberation. The facilitator will be responsible for observing the deliberations, and monitoring the time allotted for this process.

During this time, the committee members will determine the outcome of the Final Defense and provide a written evaluation and recommendation to the student at the end of the defense. All members of the committee will sign Final Defense Evaluation Form. A copy must be submitted to the DNP Program Coordinator who will forward it to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the School of Nursing and the Dean of School of Graduate Studies. If a student fails to pass the Final Defense, a plan for remediation will be developed by the Committee, the DNP Program Director and the student. This plan will be submitted to Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, School of Nursing, for approval within two weeks of the date of the meeting. The repeat Final Defense must be successfully completed at least 2 weeks prior to semester end for the student to be able to qualify to apply for graduation.

Once the Committee has agreed that the student has met all the requirements for graduation, the student will submit an electronic version of the final written paper to the DNP office as outlined in the MCG DNP student handbook (<http://www.mcg.edu/son/currentstudents.htm>)

Expected Timetable for Written and Final Oral Evaluation

- The student must submit date and time requests to DNP Program Coordinator for Final Presentation (See Protocol for Scheduling Final Evaluation) no later than 4 weeks after the first day of the final semester. All committee members must agree and be available on the evaluation date.
- The student is expected to submit a first draft of the full manuscript to the Committee Chair at least four weeks before the scheduled Final Defense.
- The student should submit a revised draft of the paper and slide presentation to Project Committee Members following Committee Chair's approval at least 2 weeks before scheduled Final Defense.
- The student should schedule and hold at least one mock presentation with the Committee Chair and/or full committee 1 – 2 weeks before the scheduled Defense.
- The final copy of the proposal paper and slide presentation should be submitted to the Committee Chair and all members 1 week before scheduled Final Defense.

As with the Proposal Defense, adherence to this time table is dependent on timely review of drafts by the Committee Chair and committee members as well as timely resubmission of the revised document from the student. Expectations for these tasks should be specifically delineated in the contract the student develops with his/her committee.

Scheduling Final Presentation

Each student should meet with his/her Committee Chair and Committee members within the first month of the beginning of the student's final semester. At this meeting, the group should determine a timetable for the semester and a projected date when the student can be expected to be ready to present their findings. In order to qualify for graduation, the student must successfully meet the requirements for the written and oral Project Evaluation no later than three weeks before expected date of graduation. Graduation dates can be found at <http://www.mcg.edu/students/Registrar/acadcal.htm>. During summer and fall semesters, students must schedule their presentations three weeks before the day after the last day of the semester.

Because all members of the committee must be present for the student's Final Defense, it is the student's responsibility to coordinate with the committee to determine possible dates and times for scheduling the oral presentation. Because of limited availability of classroom space, each student should identify three different time periods with their first, second and third choice indicated. The student must send a list of these dates to the Committee members and receive e-mail confirmation of availability from each member. The student will then forward the requested dates and times WITH the e-mail confirmations attached to the DNP Program Coordinator's office. Due to issues with intercampus coordination and competition for classroom space, this request must be in the Coordinator's Office no later than four weeks into the semester in which the student plans to present.

The final presentation/defense dates are scheduled on a first-come, first serve basis. More details regarding deadlines, availability and requesting IP site inclusion will be covered in the course content in NURS 7255: Project Evaluation. Once the request and e-mail verification are submitted to the DNP Program Coordinator, a date and time will be selected based on availability, and a request will be submitted to classroom services for room reservation. If none of the three time slots chosen are available,

the student will be notified and will need to identify alternatives. Students will be notified when the request has been submitted as well as when the reservation has been verified.

Portfolio Description

The electronic portfolio provides evidence of a student's development during the course of the program. It is designed as a way to demonstrate student progress towards mastery of the DNP Essentials as delineated by the American Association of Colleges of Nurses. Students' work from the core courses, reports of the student's practice, and project descriptions are examples of work that can be included in the portfolio. The arrangement should reflect the student's evolution in the program and show evidence of progressive mastery of the content. The student will continue to develop the portfolio throughout their tenure in the program. For the final evaluation the portfolio should reflect ample evidence of successful attainment of all goals, objectives and competencies.

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

MEDICAL COLLEGE OF GEORGIA

Appendix II

Report of DNP Project Committee Meeting Form

Student: _____ Project Chair: _____

Project Committee Members Attending:

Minutes of Meeting:

AGENDA ITEM	DECISION	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
OLD BUSINESS			
NEW BUSINESS			

I have reviewed these minutes and they accurately reflect the content of the committee meeting.

Committee Chair Signature Date

Committee Member Signature Date

Committee Member Signature Date

Committee Member Signature Date

**School of Nursing / School of Graduate Studies
Medical College of Georgia**

Appendix III

Sample Student/ Committee Chair Project Contract

1. Project Development: Timeline and Expectations
 - a. Completion of CITI training –4 weeks after start of classes
 - b. Arrange and hold one full committee meeting
 - c. Submission of first draft of the following proposal components to Project Chair- 6weeks after start of classes
*Introduction, Problem statement (with rationale), Background of the problem
Literature review and evaluation of the evidence (evidence tables), Conceptual Framework*
 - d. Submission of first draft of the following proposal components to Project Chair- midterm
*Project Plan and Methodology, Purpose of project, Needs assessment
Targeted population or sample, Setting, Evaluation of resources and budget proposal
Measurable goals and objectives/aims with clear rationale
Plan for implementation
Data collection tools or methods, Plan for data analysis
Plan for formative and summative evaluation of the project and plan for dissemination of information*
 - e. Submission of first draft of completed written Project Proposal to Project Chair- Fours weeks before scheduled presentation
 - f. Submission of revised copy to Project Committee – Two weeks before scheduled presentation
 - g. Schedule Proposal Evaluation Presentation with Project Committee and DNP Program Coordinator – per Committee Chair
 - h. Submission of final copy of the Project Proposal and access to updated e-folio to Project Chair and Committee – 1 weeks before Proposal Presentation is scheduled.
 - i. Submission of application for HAC approval of Project - last day of classes
2. Project Implementation:
 - a. Submission of copy of HAC approval of project from MCG HAC to Committee Chair- as soon as student receives approval
 - b. Submission of updates during implementation and data collection to Committee Chair on a _____ via _____. This update should include the following information a table that contains a list of planned activities with start date, end date and status along with supporting documentation in paragraph format.
3. Project Evaluation:
 - a. Arrange and hold one full committee meeting to discuss projected date of completion and identify possible dates for Final Defense – 4 weeks after start of classes
 - b. Submission of first draft of the following final paper components (revised from the Proposal) to Committee Chair- six weeks after start of class
Introduction, Problem statement (with rationale), Background of the problem

Literature review and evaluation of the evidence (evidence tables), Conceptual Framework, Project Plan and Methodology, Purpose of project, Needs assessment

Targeted population or sample, Setting, Evaluation of resources and budget proposal

Measurable goals and objectives/aims with clear rationale

- c. Submission of first draft of the following proposal components to Project Chair- midterm *Results of Data analysis, Formative evaluation, Summative evaluation, n Discussion of Findings/Outcomes, Implications for Practice, Conclusion and References*
- d. Submission of first draft of completed written Final paper and power point presentation to Committee Chair- Fours weeks before scheduled Defense
- e. Submission of revised copy of paper and power point presentation to Project Committee – Two weeks before scheduled presentation
- f. Hold mock presentation with Committee Chair and/or full committee – 1-2 weeks before scheduled Defense.

The student agrees to:

Arrange; prepare agenda and record minutes for Committee Meetings for at least one meeting every semester.

Provide updates on a _____ basis to document progress to Committee Chair via e-mail

Meet the deadlines delineated above during the semester – Failure to meet these deadlines may jeopardize progress in the program.

Quickly communicate with Committee Chair if problems or circumstances arise that interfere with student’s ability to meet schedule.

The Committee Chair agrees to:

Respond within _____ to student questions/or requests for communication

Return corrected drafts to students within _____ date of student submission

Assist student with preparation of IRB application.

Review and help student revise power point slide presentation for Proposal and Final Defense

Sign all forms in a timely manner

Attend Proposal Defense, Final Defense - provide feedback and determine outcome

Student _____ date _____

Committee Chair _____ date _____

MEDICAL COLLEGE OF GEORGIA

SCHOOL OF NURSING

AppendixVII

Project Evaluation Criteria /Doctor of Nursing Practice

Project Title _____

Student _____

Project Chair _____

Project Committee Members _____

*S = Satisfactory

*U = Unsatisfactory

COMPONENT	S	U	COMMENTS
Problem			
Problem/change clearly identified within a practice context			
Background information/literature supports the problem			
Scope of change realistic and appropriate			
Literature Review			
Comprehensive in scope			
Reflects in depth, accurate analysis and synthesis of evidence			
Evidence supports project plan			
Project Plan			

Short and long term objectives outlined			
Objectives stated in feasible and measurable terms			
Conceptual Framework			
Appropriate for topic and plan			
Is reflected in all aspects of project plan			
Methodology			
Appropriate for objectives			
Setting and sample accurately described			
Tools/measures valid for evaluation design			
Resources/supports and risks/threats noted			
Data analysis methods described and appropriate for data analysis			
Results /Summative			
Data analysis accurate and appropriate			
Results presented in a clear and accurate way			
Implications and recommendations for practice change discussed			
Formative Evaluation			
Identification of obstacles/ areas of improvement			

during all phases of project reflects insight and accuracy			
Discussion			
Findings discussed within context of other scholarly works			
Contribution of findings to building evidence based nursing practice discussed			
Dissemination of Information			
Specific venue for dissemination identified and appropriate			