

DNP Program Handbook

Academic Year: 2026 - 2027



Title	DNP Program Handbook for Graduate Students
Policy Owner	Elisabeth DeLuca School of Nursing
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Campus Applicability	Storrs
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Welcome Statements

Welcome to the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Program at the University of Connecticut Elisabeth DeLuca School of Nursing! We are delighted that you have chosen to pursue your graduate studies with us. This program offers an exciting opportunity to deepen your knowledge, advance your skills, and engage meaningfully with a vibrant academic community.

This handbook is designed to help you navigate your journey through the program. It outlines key expectations, academic milestones, available supports, and program-specific policies that will guide your success. We encourage you to actively engage with faculty, staff, and peers and to take ownership of your educational and professional development.

We look forward to supporting your growth and celebrating your achievements throughout your time at the Elisabeth DeLuca School of Nursing.

Dr. Annette Jakubisin Konicki
Associate Dean of Graduate Studies

I am incredibly proud of our DNP Program and especially proud of our exceptional DNP students. Welcome aboard and I want you to know how pleased I am to have you as a student with us. The DNP is the pinnacle of practice-focused doctoral study. You are all clinical scholars and will achieve significant success in improving healthcare.

You will find this handbook very helpful as you progress through the DNP Program. Refer to it often as it answers many of your questions. And, of course, our faculty and staff look forward to supporting you through your studies.

My best regards,

Dr. Joy Elwell
Clinical Professor and DNP Program Director

Program Overview

The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Program at the University of Connecticut (UConn) Elisabeth DeLuca School of Nursing (SON) prepares exceptional, skilled, visionary nurse leaders who synthesize best evidence and translate it into practice. Our mission is to cultivate the next generation of nursing clinicians, leaders, scholars and healthcare consumers for the advancement of health among the local, national and global populations.

Key features of the DNP program include:

- DNP Program learner outcomes: Upon completion of course work and all prescribed experiences, our graduates are prepared to:
 - Apply strategies for sustainable leadership and advocacy of the nursing profession and populations through translation of theory and evidence into practice.
 - Develop and evaluate new practice approaches based on evidence-based processes, scientific knowledge, and theory from nursing and other related disciplines to improve health care safety, quality, and person-centered care.
 - Lead effectively in the micro- and macro-systems level to create policies that promote safe, high-quality and cost-effective health care, social justice, and health equity for all.
 - Analyze and evaluate data-driven approaches using health informatics and implementation science to improve individual, population and/or systems-level outcomes.
 - Create and maintain intra-professional and inter-professional teams in response to emerging health care challenges with collaboration from clinical partners and community stakeholders to implement and evaluate system-level innovation that promotes health equity.
- Accreditation:
 - UConn's School of Nursing degree programs are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education.
 - The University of Connecticut is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC).

Our PRAXIS

One of the most important aspects for a student to learn early on is the PRAXIS statement that guides our behaviors and actions within the SON. All members of the SON are expected to abide by these principles, and they are part of the student evaluation criteria in many courses.

The philosophy of the School of Nursing is directed by six guiding principles, known as PRAXIS:

- Professionalism in behavior, presentation, and conduct
- Respectful of the richness and diversity of others and of
- Self-Accountability for actions
- eXcellence in scholarship, practice, teaching, and service
- Integrity, inquisitiveness, and innovation,
- Service to the profession and the community

The SON expectations are consistent with behaviors that will be required of students in the clinical setting. Rude or disrespectful behavior, bullying or unprofessional conduct is not tolerated. As a student at UConn Elisabeth DeLuca School of Nursing, this extends to interactions that students have on and off campus as well as through social media. (*SON Policy 1.28 PRAXIS and Professional Code of Conduct*)

Academic Program Requirements and Details

Program Components

Refer to the University Catalog for official curriculum requirements: [2026-27 Graduate Catalog | University of Connecticut Academic Catalog](#)

Curriculum Structure

Students must fulfill all credit hour, and course distribution requirements outlined in the catalog. Please see: [2026-27 Graduate Catalog | University of Connecticut Academic Catalog](#)

Course Sequencing and Progression

Students may be admitted to either the BS-DNP with an identified specialty track or to the post-Master's DNP. Both DNP tracks complete DNP focused courses. Students are advised to follow the recommended sequence for their semester of admission for timely completion.

DNP Focused Course Requirements

- NURS 5845 Health Service Statistics & Research Methods for the Scholarship of Practice
- NURS 5850 Scientific and Theoretical Underpinnings for the Scholarship of Application

- NURS 5855 Evidence Based Practice for the Scholarship of Application
- NURS 5860 Quality and Organizational/Systems for the Scholarship of Practice
- NURS 5865 Information Systems for the Scholarship of Application
- NURS 5869 DNP Residency I-Project Development
- NURS 5870 Health Policy and Populations-Based Advocacy for the Scholarship of Application.
- NURS 5879 DNP Residency II-Project Implementation
- NURS 5885 Leadership and Management for the Scholarship of Application
- NURS 5889 DNP Residency III-Project Evaluation

Intensive Experience

There are Intensive sessions each semester (spring, summer, and fall) for NURS 5895, NURS 5869, NURS 5879, and NURS 5889. The Intensives are in person on the Storrs campus. Students are expected to attend the in-person Intensive sessions.

Residency Experiences & Requirements

Guided by the AACN Essentials (2021, p. 19), all DNP students are expected to complete a minimum of 1,000 post-baccalaureate supervised practice hours. For post-master's DNP students, previously completed graduate clinical hours are evaluated prior to program entry to determine how many additional hours are needed to reach the required 1,000 supervised practice hours for degree completion. SON DNP students must complete a minimum of 250 hours as part of the DNP Residencies.

Residency Hours Expectations

The DNP Residency courses are variable credit. The required number of credits is calculated using the ratio of 1 academic credit per 50 hours of residency experience to ensure that students meet the minimum requirement of 1,000 postbaccalaureate supervised practice hours.

- NURS 5869 DNP Residency I-Project Development (1 – 6 credits)
- NURS 5879 DNP Residency II-Project Implementation (1 – 6 credits)
- NURS 5889 DNP Residency III-Project Evaluation (1 – 6 credits)

Residency Affiliation Agreement

All DNP students shall be responsible for identifying the institution where they will conduct their DNP Project. An affiliation agreement must be in place prior to the start of NURS 5869-DNP Residency & Seminar I.

Scholarly Integrity and Compliance

Graduate students must uphold the highest standards of academic and scholarly integrity.

- **Academic, Scholarly and Professional Integrity:** [The Graduate School Conduct Policies](#) and [Community Standards](#)
- **Clinical Compliance:** Required compliance with UConn & Residency site health clearance. [Office of Clinical Placement Coordination \(OCPC\)](#)
- **Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR):** Required CITI training modules must be completed as part of the SON Orientation.
- **Research Compliance:** Students conducting human or animal research must secure IRB/IACUC approval prior to data collection.
- **Authorship and Data Use:** Students should follow departmental and disciplinary guidelines for authorship, data management, and intellectual property.

Program-Specific Policies and Expectations

This program maintains the following academic standards, policies and procedures

- **Minimum GPA & Grade Expectations**
 - *A cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or above must be maintained in order to earn the Master of Science degree. Students must earn a B (3.0) or better in all nursing graduate courses in order to earn credit toward graduation. If a student does not earn a B or better on the first try, a collaborative decision between the faculty of record for the course, the advisor, and the student is made to determine if a repeat of the course is appropriate. A graduate nursing student may only repeat one course with a NURS prefix throughout their graduate study. Earning a grade less than B in a second course will result in dismissal from the program. (SON Policy 1.21 Graduate Courses Grade Expectations)*
- **Grading Policy:**
 - The University has established the following grading policy for [graduate students](#). All intermediate calculations of grades throughout a course will be expressed on a 0.00-100.00 scale and will be recorded to two decimal place precision -e.g., 95.00 or 92.67. Final numeric grades for a course will be based on averaging intermediate grades. Typically, the averaging process will give

different weights to different intermediate grades -e.g., exam grades may "count more" than assignment grades. In the conversion of a final numeric grade to a course letter grade, decimal parts below 0.50 will be "rounded down to the closest whole number -e.g., 92.49 becomes 92 and decimal parts at or above 0.50 will be "rounded up" to the closest whole number -e.g., 92.50 becomes 93.

- **Enrollment Expectations**

- Registration is to be completed at least two (2) weeks prior to the start of the semester to assure a seat in a course. (*SON Policy 1.26 Graduate programs registration requirement*)

- **Leaves, Withdrawals, and Continuous Enrollment:**

- DNP program students may change their status or take a leave of absence by completing the appropriate [Graduate School Forms](#)
 - Seeking a leave of absence - [Voluntary Separation Notification](#)
 - Returning from a leave or seeking reinstatement ([Request Reinstatement to Graduate Study or Reinstatement from Academic Leave](#))
 - [Continuous Enrollment Requirement](#)

- **Maintenance of Records**

- Students are to retain the course syllabi and other documents acquired throughout their program as part of their professional portfolio, as these may be needed to pursue other scholarly activities beyond or following program completion. Students in the BS-DNP have access to MyCreds, an e-portfolio as part of CORE Elms. Graduates retain access to their MyCreds, e-portfolio.

- **Students with Disabilities**

- Students who require accommodations should contact the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD), Wilbur Cross Building Room 204, (860) 486-2020 or <http://csd.uconn.edu/>. An assessment must be completed each semester by CSD. Once the student is assessed, appropriate accommodations will be communicated by email to the instructor of record for each course. Only students who complete this process will be granted accommodations.

- **Grievance and Appeals Procedures**

- Academic Appeals: Grade appeals, probation/dismissal appeals, and thesis/dissertation committee disputes follow Graduate School policy: [Appeal and Hearing Procedures](#) & [Graduate School Appeal Form](#) .
- Harassment/Discrimination Complaints: Students may contact [Office for Inclusion and Civil Rights](#) for confidential reporting and resolution.
- [Ombuds Office](#) : The University Ombuds Office provides impartial conflict resolution support.

Suggested Timeline for Program Completion

Post-Master's DNP Full-Time Students:

- Students will complete the required program specific credits in 18 – 24 months.

Post-Master's Part-Time Students:

- Completion time varies based on course load. Typical sequencing of required courses is over three years.
 - Customized plans of study are available upon request.

Requirements and Milestones:

The DNP program curriculum is guided by the 2021 AACN Essentials (AACN, 2021). All DNP Program graduates are expected to achieve the AACN Essential advanced-level competencies.

The DNP program prepares practitioners at the professional doctoral level with courses focused on adding the highest degree of professional expertise. Post-master's to DNP students have the option to either select a concentration or earn their DNP without a specialty.

Community and Professional Engagement Expectations

All students are expected to:

- Follow communication protocols and ethical standards,
- Refer to the Student Code of Conduct: [Responsibilities of Community Life: The Student Code | Community Standards](#),
- Refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, SON Policy 1.28 PRAXIS and Professional Code of Conduct.

Finding Your Way: Orientation, Key People and Places

Orientation

There are two orientations graduate nursing students are required to complete. First, the [Graduate School New Student Welcome](#) which is fully online, asynchronous, and includes Graduate Student Orientation Mandatory Trainings which must be completed before a student is able to register for any courses.

The second is the SON graduate student orientation which takes place the *Wednesday* prior to the start of the fall semester for summer and fall admits and spring semester for the spring admits. The SON Orientation includes remote, synchronous meetings with faculty and staff. Newly matriculated students are expected to complete all elements of the SON orientation within two weeks of the start of the semester.

It introduces students to:

- Academic policies
- Advising and mentoring structures
- Program expectations
- Campus resources and support systems

For more info, contact: Catherine.Coviello@uconn.edu (MS/DNP programs).

DNP Program Director

Joy Elwell DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, FAANP, FAAN

Clinical Professor

joy.elwell@uconn.edu

SON Graduate Program Administration, Faculty and Staff

Role	Responsibilities	Contact
Associate Dean of Graduate Studies	Academic & Administrative Operations of graduate programs. (Policies, Procedures)	annette.jakubisin_konicki@uconn.edu
Enrollment Services	Registration, course permission to enroll.	nursingenrollment@uconn.edu
Faculty Advisors	Academic advising, mentoring. Assigned upon admission	Faculty Directory
Graduate Program (MS/DNP) Support Catherine Coviello	Administrative/process support	Catherine.coviello@uconn.edu
Office of Clinical Placement Coordination (OCPC)	Compliance, health documents, background clearances	ocpc.compliance@uconn.edu

Student Support Services	Connecting students with resources and supports leading to academic success.	SON Director: chelsea.cichocki@uconn.edu Graduate School Director: kimberly.curry@uconn.edu
Verification Specialist	SON verification for certification or licensure required documents.	megan.mcnerney@uconn.edu

Advising

Purpose of Advising

Academic advising is critical to your success and supports:

- Course planning and academic progress
- Navigating policies and procedures
- Preparing for careers or advanced study

DNP Advisory Committee

- Implementing and completing the DNP Project
- Manuscript preparation.
- Completion of all DNP degree requirements.

Advising Structure

Advisor Type	Role
Faculty Major Advisor	Discipline-specific guidance, scholarly mentorship as a subject matter expert; guiding and critiquing the student’s work.
DNP Advisory Committee	Major Advisor – UConn SON faculty, scholarly mentorship Associate Advisor – UConn Faculty, subject matter or methods expertise; shares responsibilities of the MA of assisting with the development of the student’s DNP Project. Mentor – content expert in area of project focus, typically at site where project is completed.
Project Mentor	A content expert in the field/area of the project’s focus.

Graduate Track Director (<i>BS-DNP option</i>)	Track specific coordination of progression, clinical placement and program/role competencies attainment.
Professional Staff	Student services – enrollment, registration.

Students must meet with their major advisor at least once per semester, preferably before registration. Upon entering the project identification phase, it is recommended they meet with the DNP Advisory Committee at least once per month.

General Advising Procedures

Students are admitted based on the match between their area of scholarly interest and that of the faculty. A Major Advisor (MA) is assigned by the DNP Admissions & Progressions Committee based on that match. Changes in MA can be made at the discretion of the student and/or MA and must be approved by the Program Director.

The Elisabeth DeLuca School of Nursing policy states that e-mail communications between students and faculty should be addressed within two business days following receipt of message. This is to foster prompt communication between advisors and advisees.

Additional the Elisabeth DeLuca School of Nursing policy states that faculty are expected to provide feedback on proposal/manuscript/project drafts, IRB applications, etc. to students within two weeks following receipt of submission, or in other time frames as mutually agreed upon by both the student and their DNP Advisory Committee members.

Major Advisors with 9-month appointments should notify students of vacation plans and develop timelines for communication during the summer months.

DNP Advisory Committee – Structure and Function

An advisory committee will collectively mentor doctoral students throughout coursework, project development, implementation, and manuscript preparation. The role of the committee is to guide development and critique the students' work in progress. Committees consist of three members: 1 Major Advisor (MA), 1 Associate Advisor (AA), and 1 mentor, configured by the completion of NURS 5895, Topic Identification Seminar. Committee members are chosen by the student collaboratively with the MA. Once the committee is in place it is advisable that they meet at least once each semester; more often as needed to provide guidance for the student. These meetings can be in person, on the web, synchronous or asynchronous, or by phone.

How the committee meets is not as important as conducting regular meetings. Regular meetings of the student and committee can best help ensure progression in the doctoral program. The Committee needs to be assembled early in the student's progress and meet regularly to guide the student's work.

A combination of UConn faculty and non-UConn faculty members may be assembled to form the DNP Advisory Committee. Of the three members of the advisory committee, the MA and the AA must be members of the UConn faculty with a Graduate School appointment; only the MA needs to be from the Elisabeth DeLuca School of Nursing. While it is preferable for the mentor to hold a terminal degree, it is not required; however, the mentor who does NOT hold a terminal degree MUST be a recognized expert (e.g. has published or presented on the topic); further, the advisors do not necessarily have to be nurses. Roles for various committee members follow below. An up-to-date CV is submitted to the DNP program director for approval. Approval must be in place prior to submission of Program of Study, General Exam, and/or DNP Project.

Role of Major Advisor (MA)

The Admissions Committee of the respective doctoral program selects the MA for the student at the time of admission. This determination is made by matching the area of interest indicated on application materials with a faculty member who has expertise in that area. Once admitted, the student must schedule an advising appointment with the MA prior to registering for coursework. This meeting can be in person or with the use of technology, by Skype, phone or other software.

The MA shall be a faculty member of the Elisabeth DeLuca School of Nursing with a Graduate School appointment.

MA's should meet with their student advisees at least once a month, to support student progression, to review the student's DNP Project, and to advise for course registration. These meetings can take place in person, by phone, video technology, or email.

The MA should file Doctoral Advisement notes in the student Nexus record at least twice yearly. Each year in the spring, the MA works with the student to complete end-of-year outcomes report, which should be completed electronically and submitted to the Program Director.

It is recommended that once the student advisement committee is assembled that the committee meet at least twice each semester and more often as needed to best assure the student's progression in the program. Any member of the advisement committee can ask for a

meeting, however, it is often the role of the student and/or the MA to finalize the schedule and make sure a room is available if the meeting is to be face-to-face.

Role of Associate Advisor (AA)

The AA shares the responsibility with the MA of assisting with the development of the student's Plan of Study and doctoral requirements.

The AA's usually have subject matter or methods expertise that brings a complementary perspective to that of the MA and should be selected on that basis. The student selects AA's in collaboration with the MA and/or the Program Director.

As stated above, the AA must be from the UConn faculty, and hold a doctoral degree but does not have to be from the School of Nursing (e.g. they could be faculty of the School of Medicine).

Role of the Mentor

The mentor must be a content expert in the field with at least a graduate degree. If the mentor does not hold a doctoral degree, they must be a bona fide expert in the scholarly area, i.e. they will hold a position of authority, and/or have published/presented on the area of scholarly interest.

Change of Advisor Procedure

- If a student wishes to make a change of MA, AA, or Mentor, the student must notify the DNP Program Director. After consultation, the student will notify the MA, complete a [Change of Graduate Major Advisor](#), and submit it to the Graduate School.

DNP Plans of Study

All courses in the Post-MS DNP are delivered in an **online format**. There are Intensive sessions each semester (spring, summer, and fall) for NURS 5895, NURS 5869, NURS 5879, and NURS5889. Students are expected to attend the Intensive sessions.

Refer to the appropriate DNP Plan of Study (**Full-Time or Part-Time**) below linked in the Resources section. Students should plan to follow either the full or part-time plan of study prescribed. (On occasions and in collaboration with the Program Director and MA, students may be permitted to deviate from the prescribed plan of study). BS-DNP students will complete the track specific courses (Nurse Practitioner track [e.g. AGACNP, FNP, and NNP] or Nursing Administration & Leadership). Following completion of those courses, they will transition

seamlessly into the Post-Master's DNP courses. Students entering the Post-Master's DNP, will take one of the following Plans of Study (Part-Time or Full-Time).

Plan of Study-Post-MS DNP Part Time: https://dnp.nursing.online.uconn.edu/post-masters-to-dnp/?utm_source=Nursing.Online.UConn.edu&utm_medium=Site%20Referral&utm_campaign=Nursing.Online.UConn.edu.

Plan of Study-Post-MS DNP Full Time: https://dnp.nursing.online.uconn.edu/post-masters-to-dnp/?utm_source=Nursing.Online.UConn.edu&utm_medium=Site%20Referral&utm_campaign=Nursing.Online.UConn.edu.

Clinical Clearance Requirements

All DNP students conducting DNP Projects within a healthcare institution must complete healthcare clearance with American Data Bank prior to registering for NURS 5869-DNP Residency & Seminar I. Specific requirements and processes are outlined in the course's individual HuskyCT web page and on the [Office of Clinical Placement Coordination](#).

Affiliation Agreement with Healthcare institutions

All DNP students shall be responsible for identifying the institution where they will conduct their DNP Project. An affiliation agreement/ contract must be in place prior to the start of NURS 5869-DNP Residency & Seminar I.

AACN Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education (2021).

The AACN Essentials outline ten foundational competencies that are required of all DNP graduates regardless of specialty:

1. Knowledge for Nursing Practice
2. Person-Centered Care
3. Population Health
4. Scholarship for the Nursing Discipline
5. Quality and Safety
6. Interprofessional Partnership
7. Systems-based Practice
8. Informatics and Healthcare Technologies
9. Professionalism
10. Personal, Professional, and Leadership Development

The Scholarly Portfolio

Students will develop a scholarly portfolio, which will include the following:

- At least one manuscript detailing the DNP project, approved by the student's Committee, and submitted to a journal for publication prior to the deadline for degree completion.
- A copy of a poster reflecting the student's DNP Project.
- Participation in a UConn SON research and scholarship conference/meeting.
- Proof of one peer-reviewed poster/podium presentation submitted to a professional conference external to UConn.

The Scholarly Portfolio contents will be approved by the student's advisory committee and contents maintained by the University.

The General Exam

The goal of the General Exam is to evaluate synthesis of core content as noted in the General Exam Criteria. (AACN *Essentials*, 2021).

Topics for the General Exam will be student-specific and consistent with the student's specialty area of practice (e.g., APRNs will select a topic related to their area of specialty will select a topic pertinent to nursing leadership, etc.) The student will demonstrate mastery of the AACN *Essentials*, 2021 in their presentation by addressing the *Essentials* in the presentation.

The General Exam will include a comprehensive presentation by each student per the most current version of the DNP General Exam criteria. It is best to download forms from the School of Nursing website, to ensure you have the most updated form.

There are three options for the student to choose from for the General Exam:

- A topic different from the student's DNP Project
- A topic similar to the student's DNP Project
- The same topic as the student's DNP Project

The MA must approve the topic of the general exam, with input from the student's DNP Advisory Committee. Evidence of topic approval via e-mail or other means should be placed in the student's file and a copy kept by the MA.

The student independently prepares the presentation, but support and direction are provided in NURS5869. Presentation slides are due to the student's DNP Advisory Committee 4 weeks in advance of the General Exam. The Committee may provide constructive criticism.

The General Exam is attended only by the student and the student's DNP Advisory Committee – the MA, AA, and mentor. Physical presence is not required, i.e., members of the Committee may participate by phone, or web-based technology.

The General Exam is intended to be held prior to the implementation of the student's DNP Project.

Due to the timing of NURS 5869, DNP Residency and Seminar I, the General Exam should, whenever possible, take place in the spring semester. However, if circumstances require the General Exam to be delayed beyond the Spring semester, into the Summer semester, the DNP student shall make sure that their DNP Committee members can be present, in person or electronically, for the General Exam.

A copy of the General Exam grading rubric is available in this link:

<https://nursing.media.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/3147/2026/05/DNP-General-Exam-Grading-Criteria-Rubric.pdf>.

The DNP Project

As part of the development of the DNP student's portfolio, the DNP Project is required. The DNP Project is comprised of two major parts required for successful program completion. The first is the actual Project development/implementation/evaluation, which culminates in the production of one manuscript ready for submission to a professional journal. The second part of the DNP Project is a verbal/poster presentation of the completed Project submitted to a professional association conference and to the internal EDSON Research and Scholarship Day and a report to the practice agency, if deemed appropriate by the student's DNP Project Committee.

Overall framework: As described by American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN, 2021):

“Doctoral education, whether practice or research, is distinguished by the completion of a specific project that demonstrates synthesis of the student's work and lays the groundwork for future scholarship. For practice doctorates, requiring a dissertation or other original research is contrary to the intent of the DNP. The DNP primarily involves mastery of an advanced specialty within nursing practice. Therefore, other methods must be used to distinguish the achievement of that mastery. Unlike a dissertation, the work may take a number of forms.”

Following the recommendation of AACN, DNP students will assemble a cumulative practice portfolio that includes the impact or outcomes due to practice changes and documents the final practice synthesis and scholarship. Therefore, the student may select one of the following as their final Project format, among others:

- A program development or evaluation
- A quality improvement project
- An evaluation of a new practice model
- Translating evidence into practice
- A health policy project
- Development of an evidence-based practice guideline
- Testing or refining an existing evidence-based practice guideline
- Or, another project, approved by the DNP Project Team Chair

Collaborative (Team) Projects

Collaborative (Team) DNP Projects [done by 2 students working together] are an option. To be feasible, the students working as a team should utilize the guidelines outlined here :

<https://nursing.media.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/3147/2026/05/Collaborative-team-DNP-Project-Guidelines.pdf>.

IRB Application Process

PLEASE NOTE: IRB applications may not be submitted until the DNP Project Proposal has been approved by the DNP student's 3-person advisory committee and has undergone a Pre-IRB review, conducted collaboratively by the student's DNP Advisory Committee and the student.

Internal/external graduateschool faculty may serve as Principal Investigator (PI) for the project, provided they can verify the oversight of the work of the student on the project. It is the responsibility of the MA to approve the student's IRB application prior to submission.

Specific procedures for approval signatures are described below:

- DNP Project approval, which is part of the DNP Student Progress Checklist, is maintained in the student's electronic student file with signature of each member
- The student and their committee determine whether the project constitutes human subjects research by going to:
 - <https://grants.nih.gov/policy/humansubjects/hs-decision.htm> (Signature line for each committee member and student)
- If the project involves human subjects research, the committee decides that the student will submit to IRB (signature line for each committee member and student). Upon completion of the Pre-IRB Review:
 - The DNP Project Proposal will be routed to the DNP Director for approval.
 - The application must have approval signatures before submission to IRB (signature line for DNP Director).
- External IRB – for DNP Projects conducted at facilities external to UConn:
 - If the IRB is external to UConn, the student will facilitate invoking an affiliation between the UConn IRB and the IRB of record.
 - The student will forward these documents to UConn's IRB representative, who will reply to the student to affirm the findings of the external IRB. All related documentation will be placed in the student's file.
 - NOTE: Each facility has its own unique IRB forms and processes. It is the student's responsibility to know their facility's processes and inform their Advisory Committee.
- UConn IRB – for DNP Projects conducted with UConn:
 - If the DNP Project is conducted within UConn, then the UConn IRB is utilized for submission. Submission of IRB applications is done electronically through "INFOED" at <https://www.infoed.uconn.edu>.
 - Once the student receives notice from the UConn IRB of exemption/approval, they will forward that and a copy of their proposal to the DNP Program Director.
- For DNP Projects that do not require IRB involvement:
 - (e.g., health policy DNP Projects, QI/EBP DNP Projects not involving human subjects), the determination that IRB application is not necessary will be made by the DNP Program Director, in collaboration with an Associate Dean

- and the student's Major Advisor.
 - If this determination is made, documentation of this will be placed in the student's file.
- Prior to implementing the DNP Project, the student will send the following items to the DNP Director:
 - The letter of approval from the IRB of record
 - The IRB approved protocol (signature as approved by the DNP Director or Not applicable).

Manuscript for Publication (Required)

The following elements are required to be included in the manuscript, which is based on the DNP Project.

- Title
- Abstract
- Introduction
- Problem Statement
- Purpose of the DNP Project
- The Clinical Question
- Conceptual and Theoretical Framework
- Literature Review – The review of the literature should be representative, substantive, and reflect the current state of the science. Sources cited should reflect recent publications wherever possible although allowing for inclusion of recognized classic references.
- Methodology – Describes the activities that were conducted to achieve. The desired objectives, may include:
 - Congruent flow from problem (s) and objectives
 - Clear description of and rationale for selected program activities
 - Description of sequence of activities with timeline
 - Description of resources used to complete the project (i.e. staff, equipment, supplies, funding)
 - Description of participants or setting, as appropriate
 - Description of how data was gathered and/or how/which outcomes were measured, including test instruments or questionnaires used
 - How human subjects were protected (if necessary)
 - How data were analyzed
 - Budget used (if needed)
 - Information on evaluation
 - Present a plan for formative evaluation and modifying methods over the course of the project
 - Present a plan for summative evaluation to include accomplishment of objectives
 - Clearly describe evaluation criteria and rationale for selection.
- Results – Describes how the processes were operationalized and the findings that

resulted from the intervention

- Discussion of findings and comparison to other scholarly work
- Conclusions, significance to practice, limitations, recommendations for future study, which may include:
 - Evaluation of conceptual/theoretical framework
 - Illustration of how evaluation will be used for program/protocol/other improvement
 - Description of any reports to be produced disseminated
 - Recommendations for follow-up

A link to the guideline for the manuscript is here: [Approval of DNP Manuscript Form.docx](#)

The grading rubrics for the manuscript sections are here:

[NURS5895 Grading Rubric for Intro and ROL sections manuscript](#)

[NURS5869 Grading Rubric for Methods section manuscript](#)

[NURS5879-5889 Grading Rubric for Results-Conclusion sections manuscript](#)

[Guidelines for DNP Project Proposals and Manuscript.docx](#)

Note: While this is the standard format for the manuscript, if the journal the student uses requires another format (e.g. AMA, NLA, SQUIRE), the required format will be followed. It is the student's responsibility to make their Committee aware of the author guidelines of their chosen journal.

Dissemination of Findings

- At least one manuscript detailing the DNP project, approved by the student's Committee, and submitted for publications four (4) weeks prior to the student's defense presentation;
- A copy of the poster
- Proof of one peer-reviewed poster/podium presentation submitted to a professional conference external to the SON, and to the SON Research and Scholarship Day conference. A copy of a report to the residency agency on the student's DNP Project, if appropriate.

The DNP Project Timeline

Coursework related to the development of the DNP Project courses begins during semester one (1) for all students. The DNP Project topic is identified in NURS 5895-DNP Project Topic Identification Seminar, planned, and developed in NURS 5869-DNP Residency and Seminar I, implemented in NURS 5879-DNP Residency & Seminar II, evaluated in NURS 5889-DNP Residency and Seminar III, and disseminated throughout the program, in conjunction with the DNP Residency/Seminar Courses. During this time, students will work closely with their MA's, mentors, and other committee members toward the development of the manuscript.

At the conclusion of each DNP Residency & Seminar course the student will have:

1. DNP Residency & Seminar I, NURS 5869:

- Developed DNP Project Proposal
 - Completed General exam
 - Submit IRB application
2. DNP Residency & Seminar II, NURS 5879:
 - Implementation of Project as articulated in the DNP Project Proposal
 3. DNP Residency & Seminar III, NURS 5889:
 - At least one manuscript detailing the DNP project, approved by the student's Committee, and submitted for publication to a scholarly journal. All members of the student's DNP Advisory Committee are included as co-authors on the manuscript;
 - A copy of a poster reflecting the student's DNP Project. All members of the student's DNP Advisory Committee are to be included as co-authors on the poster;
 - Participation in the EDSON Research and Scholarship Day
 - Proof of one peer-reviewed poster/podium presentation submitted to a professional conference external to UConn; and,
 - A copy of a report to the residency agency on the student's DNP Project, if appropriate.

At the conclusion of the final semester, each student will have:

- Completed Project Evaluation
- Completed Project Dissemination
- Completed Portfolio Components (DNP Committee-approved manuscript submitted for publication to a scholarly journal, Poster, & Report of findings to faculty & practice agency, if applicable)
- Completed presentation at a SON Research & Scholarship conference/meeting.
- Complete final presentation to faculty
 - Obtained signed "Final Examination Form" and returned to DNP Program Coordinator and filed with the Graduate School.
- Complete all clinical hours.

Final Presentation (also referred to as the "defense")

Upon completion of the DNP Project, the student shall develop a final presentation. The presentation slides will be provided by the student to their committee members four (4) weeks in advance of the presentation date. Constructive critique, input, and feedback are permitted by the Committee members for the student's presentation slides.

This presentation is a public event; faculty, family, and colleagues are invited. The event is streamed on electronic media. The presentation will be 30 minutes long. The presentation will include the following:

- Description of the problem
- Purpose of the DNP Project
- Theoretical framework used in the DNP Project
- Review of the literature
- Description of methods used in the DNP Project
- Results of the Intervention
- Conclusions

- Discussion of significance to practice
- Limitations of the DNP Project
- Recommendations for future projects
- Application of the DNP Project to [AACN's Essentials](#) 10 Domains.
- Application of the DNP Project to the roles of the DNP-prepared nurse.

Following the student's 30-minute presentation, there will be up to 15 minutes allotted for questions and comments from the audience. Following the question and answer period, the student and audience will be excused and the student's DNP Advisory Committee will deliberate and render their decision, which will be immediately provided to the student. [Final Defense Grading Rubric](#)

Reporting Results of the Final Presentation to the Registrar:

The student will initiate the reporting process after the final presentation using the following process:

- Complete the Report on Final Examination form on the UConn Registrar's Office website: <https://uconn.kualibuild.com/app/builder/app/62e7cb71bcf99bfca272d293/run>

Completion of Graduation Requirements

Following successful completion of the Final Presentation to the Faculty, the "Report on the Final Exam" will be submitted to the Office of the Registrar by the Program Coordinator on behalf of the student.

All the following must be completed in order to meet graduation requirements:

- Report of the Final Exam form delivered to the Graduate School,
- At least one manuscript detailing the DNP project, approved by the student's DNP Advisory Committee, and submitted to a journal for publication prior to the deadline for degree completion,
- Poster based on the DNP Project
 - Presented at the SON Research and Scholarship Day,
- Abstract submitted to outside, peer-reviewed professional conference,
- Report on the Project delivered to the Residency agency, if appropriate.

Seeking Support and Resources

Graduate school can be a rewarding journey, but it's normal to face bumps along the way—whether they're personal, financial, or academic. If you ever find yourself struggling to keep up or run into challenges that might delay your progress, remember: you're not alone, and help is always available.

Don't hesitate to reach out early if you need support. Here are some resources just for you:

- Your SON professors and academic advisors—they're here to guide you
- The Graduate School, offering dedicated support

- The University Ombuds Office, for confidential conversations
- Other campus services such as counseling, accessibility services, and financial aid

Asking for help is not only okay—it’s encouraged! Any requests for support will be handled with care and won’t affect your academic standing. By connecting with these resources early on, you’ll make your path to graduation a little smoother and ensure you have the support you need to succeed.

University Level Supports

In addition to our world-class faculty scholars and educators in the SON, UConn provides significant [academic support](#) to promote students’ success.

- The [Dean of Students Office](#) serves as a centralized resource for connecting students with appropriate university and community programs, offices, and individuals, and to resolve issues that affect the quality of students’ academic or community life and personal goals.
- The [Academic Achievement Center](#) is a walk-in service for students to learn effective ways to study, time management strategies, and methods of managing stress.
- Free tutoring is available through the [Writing Center](#) with available expertise to help students refine their writing skills in any course.
- Students with disabilities are provided accommodations through the [Center for Students with Disabilities](#).
- For students whose first language is not English, student support is provided through [International Student and Scholar Services](#). All new international students must complete check-in online through the ISSS website.
- Graduate School [Resources for Current Students](#)

Funding and Financial Support

Students may be eligible for program- or university-based funding through these opportunities:

- [SON Financial Assistance](#)
- **Fellowships/Scholarships:** Information at [Office of Student Financial Aid Services](#) .
- **Financial Expectations:** Funded students are expected to maintain satisfactory academic progress and may face restrictions on outside employment.

Student Organizations, Clubs, and Groups

- [Sigma Theta Tau International- Mu Chapter](#) Nursing Honor Society
- [Graduate School Getting Involved](#)

Graduation and Post-Graduation Support

Graduation Planning

To graduate, students must:

- [Apply for Graduation](#) by the fourth week of their final semester for each degree they are completing.
 - Enrollment Services submit the plan of study to degreeaudit@uconn.edu
- Attend Exit Interviews
- Complete end of program survey.

Commencement details: Graduation Ceremonies are the weekend after the completion of finals week of the spring semester. Information regarding the ceremonies, tickets and regalia rental information is provided early in the spring semester to students' in their uconn.edu email.

Career Preparation and Support

Career planning begins early.

- Letters of recommendation – complete the [Student FERPA Release](#)
- Portfolio Completion– competencies, skills and practicum hours documents.
- [Center for Career Readiness and Life Skills](#)
- [Become Career Ready: Skills Employers Seek](#)

Appendix

1. University Graduate Catalog: [2026-27 Graduate Catalog | University of Connecticut Academic Catalog](#)

2. Student Code of Conduct: [Responsibilities of Community Life: The Student Code | Community Standards](#)

3. Curriculum

<https://nursing.online.uconn.edu/#masters>

4. Net Id and listserv

<https://netid.uconn.edu/>

<https://kb.uconn.edu/space/IKB/10726900313/Listserv>

5. Writing resources

<https://writingcenter.uconn.edu/overview-of-grad-support/>

6. Insurance

<https://studenthealth.uconn.edu/fees-insurance/>

6. Academic calendar

<https://registrar.uconn.edu/academic-calendar/>

7. Forms

<https://registrar.uconn.edu/forms/> &
[Forms | The Graduate School](#)

8. University of Connecticut Policies

<https://policy.uconn.edu>
[Policies and Procedures | The Graduate School](#)

9. Financial Support

Financial resources for graduate students are listed on our webpage at
<https://nursing.uconn.edu/financial-assistance/>