Doctor of Nursing Practice D.N.P. (Online)

Degree Requirements: 43 Credit Hours

Program Description

The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) is a terminal degree committed to educating advanced practice nurses who possess the knowledge, skills and values necessary to contribute to and lead in the efforts to improve the health care delivery system of the nation. The DNP is a professional terminal degree with an applied nursing focus. Students are trained for advanced-science-based practice and practice-oriented research in private-and/or public sector careers to include clinical practice, health education, research application, leadership, and analysis of health care outcomes. The DNP is a versatile degree which prepares advanced practice nurses (nurse practitioners (NP), certified nurse midwives (CNM), certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNA), and clinical nurse specialists (CNS)) to provide leadership in public and private organizations; assess health care needs, develop and implement new health care practices, care and evaluate health care outcomes; recommend health care policy; and interact with other health care providers and agencies at diverse levels. The program serves both the full-time student preparing for an advanced career in advanced practice nursing, as well as currently employed nursing professionals seeking advanced education to augment their existing skills to assume leadership positions. The DNP program builds on a high quality nursing master’s curriculum.

Model

The Post-Masters DNP requires a minimum of 43 credit hours and is offered on a full-time basis over 3 years. Guided by the AACN Essentials for Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice, sequencing of courses allows the development of content expertise prior to the initiation of the clinical project and experience core. A capstone practicum allows for role immersion and competency integration.

Admission Requirements

The DNP is designed to build upon the foundation of the Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) role. The DNP program is directed toward advanced practice registered nurses and closely associated specialty areas (i.e. NP, CNS, CRNA, CNM preparation), and other specialty areas reviewed on an individualized basis. All applicants prior course work will be reviewed and individual DNP programs of study will be developed.

Admission Criteria

Regular Option

1. Education
   a. Post-MSN Master’s degree in the proposed field of study (MSN) or its equivalent from a college accredited by the appropriate accrediting association.

2. Minimum undergraduate or graduate GPA of 3.0 (on 4.0 scale)

3. International students:
   a. All international applicants, including resident and non-resident aliens, whose native language is not English and who do not have an undergraduate degree from a regionally accredited U.S. college or university, are required to submit official TOEFL scores taken within the year immediately preceding the requested semester of admission. A minimum total score of 83, and minimum scores of 20 for each of the skills evaluated by the TOEFL: Listening, Reading, Speaking, Writing. An original copy of the test score, sent by the testing agency to the Office of Graduate Admissions is required before any action is taken on an application. The copy of the score provided to the student and subsequently forwarded is not acceptable.

Accelerated Option

1. Post-MSN: Master’s degree in the proposed field of study (MSN) or its equivalent from a college accredited by the appropriate accrediting association.

2. Minimum undergraduate or graduate GPA of 3.3 (on 4.0 scale)

3. International students:
   a. All international applicants, including resident and non-resident aliens, whose native language is not English and who do not have an undergraduate degree from a regionally accredited U.S. college or university, are required to submit official TOEFL scores taken within the year immediately preceding the requested semester of admission. A minimum total score of 83, and minimum scores of 20 for each of the skills evaluated by the TOEFL: Listening, Reading, Speaking, Writing. An original copy of the test score, sent by the testing agency to the Office of Graduate Admissions is required before any action is taken on an application. The copy of the score provided to the student and subsequently forwarded is not acceptable.

4. DNP portfolio to include evidence of:
   a. Vitae to include
      • Personal rationale for seeking DNP
      • Future goals
      • Education
      • Research experience
      • Publications (identify refereed)
      • Professional presentations (identify refereed)
      • Community service projects
   b. Certification in a specialty area for all NPs. For all others, appropriate certification in specialty area, if available.
   c. A minimum of 500 documented academic clinical hours in MSN APN preparation. Evidence of post-graduation clinical experience in the advanced practice role unless continuing immediately into DNP course work as post-MSN DNP student.
   d. Current registered nursing (RN) licensure
      • For Post-MSN DNP, licensure in state of residence where clinical hours will be completed
   e. Current malpractice liability insurance
   f. American Heart Association Level C (2 person-BLS) CPR certification
   g. Three letters of recommendation from professional colleagues who can attest to academic and clinical acumen
   h. Listing of current technological support for Internet-based courses with summary of experience with online courses

5. Complete submission of documentation:
   a. College of Graduate Studies application and fee

Grades

Students in DNP coursework must maintain a 3.0 average (“B” or better) in course work to proceed in the doctoral program and to be eligible to graduate. Grades in all courses applied toward the doctorate must be “B” or better. Students will become academically ineligible when any of the following occur in course work of an approved program of study:

1. a grade of “D”, “F”, or “WF” in any course;
2. a grade of “C” in any three courses; or
3. the minimum 3.0 average is not achieved within the minimum number of credit hours required for the degree.

**Progression**

All students admitted to, enroll in, the DNP program are required to attend a MANDATORY on campus annual Intensive PRIOR to each fall cycle of course work. The dates of this Intensive are scheduled by the School of Nursing. Students assume responsibility for all scheduling and costs in order to attend this Intensive time period.

**Enrollment**

The DNP requires a minimum of one academic year of continual enrollment.

**Foreign Language Requirement**

There is no foreign language requirement.

**Transfer Credit**

A maximum of 6 credits of doctoral level nursing credits and 9 credits of graduate level electives may be applied toward the DNP upon approval by the Graduate Nursing Program. Transfer credit must also satisfy the same requirements as course taught for doctoral education within the School of Nursing Graduate Program (e.g., minimum grade of "B"), be consistent with the student’s approved program of study, and have been received from a regionally accredited college or university. Thesis and dissertation credit cannot be transferred. The student must provide documentation in support of equivalence, such as a course syllabus, transcript, term paper, and/or instructor testimony. Equivalence is determined by the Faculty Advisor or Program Director. Credit reductions do not influence the residency or enrollment requirements or comprehensive examination procedures.

Students who complete Biomedical Ethics in Practice and Leadership (NURS 9126), Biometrics for Advanced Practice Nursing (NURS 9131), Clinical Scholarship I: Theory, Scientific Underpinnings, and Evidence Based Practice I (NURS 9137), Clinical Scholarship II: Theory, Scientific Underpinnings, and Evidence-Based Practice II (NURS 9138), and Advanced Nursing Practice and DNP Role Transition (NURS 9231) while in the BSN to DNP program who “Opt Out” and obtain their MSN degree from Georgia Southern University have four (4) years from the dates of their MSN final transcript to re-apply to the DNP program to obtain their doctoral degree without penalty. These five (5) courses would meet the requirements of the DNP program and would not need to be repeated. After successfully completing the additional five (5) semesters of course work, students would obtain the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree.

**Course Time Limits**

All requirements for the DNP must be completed within seven academic years from the date of the first enrollment for study following admission to the doctoral coursework. For transfer students, the seven year time limit commences with the semester during which the credit being transferred was earned at another institution.

**Essentials Examination**

The purpose of the Essentials Examination is to assess the student’s knowledge, integration and application of knowledge to problems of advanced nursing practice at the doctoral level of study.

The Essentials Examination can be taken at the completion of 20 credits but must be taken within one semester of completing all course work. The examination will be completed using Internet capability. The School of Nursing DNP Program Committee will determine the questions to comprise the examination. The reading committee members will hold Graduate Faculty status. The examination responses will be awarded a pass, a conditional pass, or a failure. With a pass of all examination components the student may be approved for graduation upon successful completion of all degree requirements.

A conditional pass on any component will require a repeat of that exam component in a format suggested by the DNP Program Committee. Failure of the Essentials Examination may result in additional coursework prior to a second examination. A second failure constitutes dismissal from the program and denial of continued course work to earn the DNP.

**Clinical Immersion Project**

Doctoral students are required to complete a clinical project at an advanced level. A dissertation is not required. The clinical project may take diverse forms (e.g., identification of a health care problem, development of an intervention and analysis of outcomes; an investigation of a health issue with development of health policy strategies to address the health problem; or the development of a complex programmatic strategy within a health care system to address a significant issue). Upon completion of the clinical project the student must present the project to faculty and peers in an appropriate venue determined by the faculty. Submission of the project to a refereed professional organization for presentation or peer reviewed journal for publication is required. It is expected that a minimum of one peer reviewed presentation or peer reviewed publication will be achieved on DNP related content prior to completion of course work.

**DNP Capstone Practicum**

This capstone clinical experience course provides an opportunity to integrate the role of the DNP in a comprehensive real-world context that includes utilization of leadership, consultation, advocacy, and collaboration competencies. Individual experiences will be developed under the guidance of a faculty advisor with completion of 180 hours in an approved setting. Students will be jointly supervised by a graduate faculty member and the clinical site preceptor.

**Faculty Advisor**

Each student will be assigned a faculty advisor upon admission. The role of the faculty advisor is to mentor the student, provide advice and academic support as needed, monitor progress, and to be available for student assistance as appropriate. The faculty advisor will advise the student in regards to chosen electives and modifications to the program of study which must be approved by the Graduate Program Director in order that desired course offerings are available in the sequence desired to assure timely completion of all course work. The faculty advisor may act as the chair or member of the Clinical Project or Essentials Examination committee.

**Accreditation**

The School of Nursing Graduate Program is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). The current MSN Program and the proposed DNP Program were developed in accordance with the AACN Essentials for both Graduate and DNP Education. The MSN meets the NONPF National Standards for NP Programs, the Consensus Model, and the DNP Program Standards for NP preparation.

**Program of Study**

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<tr>
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<th>Credit Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DNP Core</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>NURS 9126</td>
<td>Biomedical Ethics in Practice and Leadership 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>NURS 9131</td>
<td>Biometrics for Advanced Practice Nursing 3</td>
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<td>Course Code</td>
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<tr>
<td>NURS 9134</td>
<td>Health Care Organization, Financing and Policy Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>NURS 9137</td>
<td>Clinical Scholarship I: Theory, Scientific Underpinnings, and Evidence-Based Practice</td>
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<td>NURS 9138</td>
<td>Clinical Scholarship II: Theory, Scientific Underpinnings, and Evidence-Based Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>NURS 9231</td>
<td>Advanced Nursing Practice and DNP Role Transition</td>
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<td><strong>Doctoral Emphasis</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>NURS 9132</td>
<td>Leadership and Management in Practice Transition</td>
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<td>NURS 9135</td>
<td>Outcomes Management Strategies for Improved Health Care</td>
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<td>NURS 9136</td>
<td>Population Focused Collaborative Initiative (90)</td>
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<td>NURS 9921</td>
<td>DNP Clinical Immersion Project 1: Development (180)</td>
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<td>NURS 9922</td>
<td>DNP Clinical Immersion Project 2: Implementation (180)</td>
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<td>NURS 9923</td>
<td>DNP Clinical Immersion Project 3: Outcomes Analysis and Dissemination (180)</td>
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<td>NURS 9720</td>
<td>DNP Capstone Immersion (90)</td>
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<td>NURS XXXX</td>
<td>Concentrated Cognate Electives (Must be approved by program director)</td>
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<td><strong>Total Credit Hours</strong></td>
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1 Applied Clinical Hours