

# DNP PROJECTS

## Overview

The DNP project is an exciting opportunity for the DNP student to demonstrate leadership skills in the development and application of evidence-based practice to transform a system and improve healthcare outcomes of a patient population. Under the guidance of a three-member faculty project committee in consultation with a preceptor, the student will analyze a system, identify and form relationships with key stakeholders, perform a needs assessment, gather evidence, collaboratively develop outcome measures, implement a systems change, evaluate gathered data, and disseminate the results. The following information is provided to help the student understand the processes involved in the DNP project.

The student will present a DNP project idea during the application process. The project idea will include the proposed site, the proposed change to be implemented, evidence in the literature supporting the change, and the name of a possible preceptor at the site. A group of sample projects is listed in the table below. Students are strongly encouraged to develop and implement projects within a system in which they are already engaged, or have well-developed connections to facilitate completion of the project.

<b>Examples of previous DNP projects</b>	<b>Examples of unacceptable projects</b>
Integrating autism screening into well child visits in a primary care clinic.	An educational program to educate nursing students.
Implementation of an evidence-based health teaching intervention aimed at aiding in the recovery from acute myocardial infarction.	A health policy change as the main focus.
Implementation of a pressure ulcer prevention protocol within a nursing home facility.	The development of a new assessment or treatment algorithm. However, it can be part of a project but not the sole purpose.
Implementation of an injury prevention program in an elementary school.	A review of literature of a selected topic with production of an article. Note: all projects will include a review of literature and production of an article but more is involved in a DNP project.
Implementation of evidence-based interventions to decrease the rate of post-surgical infection within a hospital unit.	Development of a website as the sole purpose of the project.
Implementation of interventions to decrease post-op nausea and vomiting for surgical patients.	Projects that cannot be measured or evaluated.
Development and implementation of a smoking cessation program for women on a college campus.	

## Characteristics of a DNP project:

1. Is evidence-based and data-driven.
2. Transforms a macro or micro-system to improve healthcare outcomes.
3. Addresses most of the six Health and Medicine Division (HMD), formally called the Institute of Medicine (IOM), Aims for quality improvement: safe, effective, patient-centered, timely, efficient, and equitable (Crossing the Quality Chasm Report, 2001; Institute of Medicine).

4. Incorporates technology as appropriate.
5. Includes an evaluation plan to measure outcomes.
6. Is approved by the MSU Institutional Review Board (IRB).
7. Addresses health or healthcare disparities (though they may not be the main focus of the project).
8. Addresses sustainable change.
9. Includes dissemination of results.
10. Can be completed within four semesters.
11. Will culminate in a publishable journal article, a formal oral presentation, and a portfolio of student work.

## **DNP Project Committee**

The individual student's DNP project committee will be composed of three faculty members with graduate faculty status within the University, one serving as chair and the other two as committee members. The committee chair is required to be a nursing faculty member who holds a doctoral degree and who has research graduate faculty status. Students may request a specific faculty member to chair. However, if the faculty's expertise does not match the project, a different chair or a different project must be selected. Students may also request specific faculty members to serve as members of the project committee. After considering the student's requests, the DNP faculty will make the final decision about the chair and committee members. Graduate MSU faculty members outside the School of Nursing and with a doctorate can serve on project committees. However, expertise in the topic area is required.

At MSU, the project chairperson serves as the main advisor and reviewer during all phases of the project. When IRB approval is required, the chairperson serves as the primary investigator. Therefore, the chairperson should be listed as co-presenter or co-author, on all submissions.

## **DNP Project Preceptor**

The student will select a preceptor affiliated with the system in which the project will be implemented. The preceptor will work with the student to understand system dynamics and facilitate contact with key leaders and stakeholders within the system so the student can gain necessary support for successful implementation of the project.

The preceptor must sign a university preceptor agreement, and the agency/organization must have a contract in place with MSU to allow students to have educational experiences within their facilities. The student will arrange conference calls between the preceptor and the DNP faculty to discuss the student's progress at various times throughout the program.

## **DNP Project Sequencing**

The DNP clinical sections prepare the student for the phases of the DNP project, which include an in-depth literature review, development of a project plan, and implementation and dissemination of the DNP project. The courses and major contributions to the project are as follows. See the DNP Course Descriptions for more information. The clinical course are integrated into the leadership courses.

- NUR 800: DNP Leadership I: Concepts for EBP
- NUR 830: DNP Leadership II: Impacting Disparities in Health and Healthcare

- NUR 860: DNP Leadership III: Transforming Systems
- NUR 993: Transforming Practice

## **Clinical Tracking**

Students will use an online software program called, Typhon, to track clinical time on activities related to the project. Course assignments related to the project will be uploaded to a student portfolio through Typhon.

## **Publishing and Presenting the DNP Project**

It is expected that the DNP project (or an aspect of the findings) will be disseminated through professional conference presentations and submitted for publication in a scholarly journal. For each presentation or manuscript, deciding who will be listed as primary presenter or author should be negotiated before submission to a venue. Several factors need to be considered when deciding primary authorship, including those who initially had the idea to pursue the venue, and who will do the majority of the work to get the article or presentation ready for submission. DNP Committee members may be solicited as additional co-authors, if they have or are willingly to contribute significantly to the form of the work that is being submitted.

## **DNP Project Defense**

Students are required to defend their DNP project with their chair and committee present. The preceptor is also welcome to attend. During this meeting, the student will present a PowerPoint presentation of their DNP project.