This Handbook for the DNP Program in Nursing is focused on policies and procedures intended to assist faculty and graduate students on matters specific to the progression of DNP students. This Handbook should be used in conjunction with: the College of Nursing Student Handbook; application materials; the UC Denver Coursebook; and other official documents prepared and distributed by the UC Denver College of Nursing Office of Student Services and Diversity or Graduate Programs Office.

Policies and procedures undergo revision periodically; all notices of changes in policy and procedure will be distributed electronically through the official UC Denver student email system or in letters sent electronically or through the US Postal Service. As a general rule, the policies in effect at the time of admission govern a student’s progression.

The DNP curriculum, course schedules, and offerings are subject to change. Courses are offered pending required minimum enrollment numbers. If curriculum changes are made, courses in the current curriculum will be offered for a specified period of time; students who decelerate or otherwise change their program plans may be asked to substitute another course for required courses being discontinued or with insufficient enrollment. All program plan changes will be discussed and approved by the student’s advisor.

Please direct questions or recommendations for changes in the Handbook to:

Victoria Erickson, PhD, PNP-BC, FAANP
Director of MS and DNP programs
University of Colorado Denver
College of Nursing Box C288-14
13120 E. 19th Ave.
Educ. 2 North, room 3238
Aurora, CO 80045
Email: Vicki.erickson@ucdenver.edu phone: 303.724.8504

Judy Campbell, PhD
Graduate Programs Advisor
Judy.Campbell@ucdenver.edu phone: 303.724.8503
This Handbook does not constitute a contract with the University Of Colorado College Of Nursing, either expressed or implied. The College of Nursing reserves the right at any time to change, delete, or add to any of the provisions at its sole discretion. Furthermore, the provisions of this document are designed by the College of Nursing to serve as firm guidelines rather than absolute rules, and exceptions may be made on the basis of extenuating circumstances.
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Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)

The DNP degree at the University Of Colorado College Of Nursing is designed for nurses with an MS in nursing who are interested in a practice-focused doctorate. DNP graduates will be prepared as clinical leaders, who will design models of health care delivery, evaluate clinical outcomes, identify and manage health care needs of populations and use technology and information to transform health care systems. The DNP degree is one way to increase the number of doctoral prepared nursing faculty.

The Doctor of Nursing Practice and curriculum development work are grounded in the Philosophy of the College of Nursing, College of Nursing Curriculum Model and Framework.

Students are asked to keep current with College of Nursing and DNP program policies by visiting the College of Nursing Web pages frequently.

- College of Nursing: http://www.nursing.ucdenver.edu
- CON Student Central – provides up to date information for students, academic calendars, Student Handbook and policies, student life, etc. with a special section on the DNP program: http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/nursing/students/Pages/academic-resources.aspx

DNP Program Outcome Competencies

1. Implement ethical, competent nursing practice with individuals, families and communities based on understanding the human experiences of health, illness, healing, and dying.

2. Use technology and information systems to promote health, facilitate appropriate and ethical decision-making, support collaboration, and foster communication.

3. Promote health and safe environments of local to global populations and communities through the development, implementation, and evaluation of models, programs, and policies.

4. Manage care ethically with individuals, families, and populations to achieve quality, cost effective outcomes.

5. Advocate for social justice initiatives that enhance access, quality, and socio-cultural acceptability of health care for all.

6. Provide leadership in the delivery and management of health care for diverse populations and environments across the continuum of care.

7. Practice relationship-centered caring based on the human experience of health, illness, healing, and dying.

8. Practice nursing reflectively, guided by theory, based on best evidence.

9. Participate in generating and testing knowledge regarding nursing science, nursing practice, and health care delivery.

10. Engage in professional stewardship to improve interdisciplinary collaboration and nursing practice, education, research, and health care delivery

Revisions Approved by General Faculty on 2/27/06

Re-ratified by General Faculty on 6/23/08 and DNP Steering Committee 11/18/13
SECTION I

DNP IN NURSING PROGRAM

Academic Advisor

At the time of admission to the DNP program, the student is assigned to the Graduate Programs Office Coordinator of Graduate Programs and the Director of the MS/DNP program. The academic advisor will assist the student in selecting and sequencing courses and planning other activities to progress through the program. The academic advisor assists students with all academic and process issues such as forms, graduation, registration, etc.

Provisional Status

Students who do not meet the minimum requirements for admission may be admitted to the College of Nursing on a Provisional Status. Requirements to be removed from provisional status are stated on the provisional form, a copy of which the student receives with their admissions information from the College of Nursing. The conditions of provisional status must be met to progress to regular status. Failure to meet these conditions can lead to dismissal.

Leave of Absence

A leave of absence may be granted for up to one year by written request to the Director of the MS/DNP program. A Leave of Absence can be only granted once during the program. It is the responsibility of the student to contact the CON Graduate Programs Office one month prior to the end of the LOA to discuss re-entry into the program.

Degree Requirements

Award of the DNP program degree will be based on completion of the required 41 credit hours of DNP coursework. The requirements for the DNP can be expected to take approximately two and one half years fulltime study to seven years of part-time study. All requirements for the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree must be completed within seven years of matriculation. Approval of up to 18 hours of transfer credit will be based upon the relevancy and equivalency of the applicant's prior work.

Successful completion of the following are required for graduation:
• Completion of all coursework
• Successful completion and presentation of the capstone project

Course Work

The course work required for the degree is a total of 41 credits including a capstone evaluation project. The curriculum includes foundational core courses such as Epidemiology, Healthcare Informatics and Applied Evidenced Based Practice. Students may take a graduate level elective at other higher education institutions and can be outside the field of Nursing, such as Education or Business.

Clinical Hours

DNP students are required to complete a minimum of 1000 clinical contact hours. This is a combination of clinical hours taken during the students master’s program and the DNP program. Students will provide in their first semester of the program the number of clinical contact hours for their master’s degree to the Graduate Program Office. Students who need additional clinical hours to reach 1000 hours will be advised to take additional clinical hours versus an elective in the program. During the course of the DNP Program each of the four capstone courses has a required 135 clinical hours for a total of 540 clinical hours documented during the
program. Students who are new graduates of APRN masters programs will take NUDO 8009 for 3 credits. This clinical is in direct patient care in the role and population of the MS or post- MS APRN focus. Students who are required to take this additional clinical do not need to take an elective in the program. All clinical hours during the DNP program are documented in an electronic student system Typhon NPST™ - Advanced Practice Student Tracking System. This web based software system must be purchased before the DNP capstone classes.

SECTION II – OTHER COURSE-RELATED POLICIES

Transfer Credit

Students request transfer of up to 18 hours of graduate credit into the program. Courses transferred into the program must be equivalent to the courses offered in the program and must be less than 5 years old at the time of graduation from the DNP program.

Transfer credit is defined as any credit earned at another accredited institution, credits earned at another campus of the CU system, or credits earned as a non-degree student within the CU system not applied to a previous degree.

Courses may not be transferred into the program in the last semester from outside the University of Colorado. Transfer requests must be completed prior to the last semester in the program.

All credits transferred must carry a grade of B- or higher. Pass/Fail credits are not eligible for transfer.

Equivalency of Transfer Credits

Transfer courses must be evaluated for equivalency to courses offered in the program. Faculty will evaluate the course for equivalency. Students are required to submit a syllabus for the course they want to have evaluated. Courses must be less than 5 years old at the time of graduation from the DNP program. If the course is equivalent it can be transferred into the program.

Validation of Knowledge

Courses must be less than 5 years old at the time of graduation from the DNP program. If the course is or will be over 5 years old at the time of graduation the student will be required to validate their knowledge of the course content. Validation can take many forms such as testing or written documentation of knowledge. The current course instructor evaluates whether the student’s knowledge meets current requirements.

Pass/Fail Policy

Courses taken for graduate degrees may not be transferred or taken for pass/fail. All courses taken to satisfy the minimum requirements for a degree and listed on the Application for Degree form shall be taken on the A to F grading system. B- Is the lowest possible passing grade for the College of Nursing graduate programs.

College Of Nursing Policy on Incomplete Grades

CON Policy states that “An incomplete grade is given only when students, for reasons beyond their control, have been unable to complete the course requirements. It is understood that a substantial amount of work must have been satisfactorily completed before such a grade is given.” If students have not completed a substantial amount of work, they should be advised to drop the course within the first two weeks of the term. IW grades are given at the discretion of faculty by written request of the student, with an agreement made as to the time frame and work required to complete the course satisfactorily.

The issue is especially important with web-based courses. These courses are removed from the server within 2 to 3 weeks after the completion of a term to provide server space for the next term’s offering. Students with an IW for a web-based course must definitely have a substantial amount of work completed in the course since it will be
impossible for them to access these courses on an indefinite basis. An IW grade is not to be used for students who are failing a course and want extra time to improve their grade. In this case the grade of IF is awarded. Please be sure to follow our policy when considering an incomplete for a course and evaluate whether an incomplete or dropping the course is the appropriate action.

Grade Changes

Incomplete grades (I on the transcript) are changed to final letter grades when the required work has been completed by the student and accepted by the original instructor. A grade of Incomplete will change to an F after one year if no grade changes are initiated. In addition, letter grades may be changed due to clerical or administrative error.

Grade Below (3.0)

1. A graduate student who receives an unsatisfactory grade in a course may repeat that course once, upon recommendation by the Program Director. The two grades received will be included when calculating the grade point average and all grades will appear on the student's transcript. The course may be counted only once toward satisfying the unit requirement for the degree. NOTE: a grade of B- is acceptable for passing a DNP or graduate level course, but the GPA must remain at 3.0 for progression.
2. Courses in which grades below "B minus" (2.7) are received are not accepted for the DNP program.
3. Grades received in courses transferred from another institution and/or grades earned while a student was classified as a Special Student are not included in calculation of the grade point average.
4. The Program Director will recommend academic dismissal to the Student Academic Affairs Committee (SAAC) for any student who receives a grade of less than a B- two times in one course or receives less than a B- in any two courses, at any time in the program, will be referred to the SAAC with a recommendation from the program director. The student may complete a Petition for Academic Progression at the time of the SAAC review. A recommendation for Progression, Suspension or Withdrawal will be made by the SAAC. A recommendation for Suspension or Withdrawal will be forwarded by the SAAC to the Director of the MS/DNP program for action.

SECTION III – STUDENT ETHICAL CONDUCT

Students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of personal integrity and professional ethics. Students must adhere to the UC Denver CON Honor and Conduct Code, as printed in the CON Student Handbook in Student Central: http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/nursing/students/Pages/academic-resources.aspx. Students who do not meet these standards and/or who violate the codes may be dismissed immediately or placed on disciplinary probation by the Dean of the CON or the Dean of the AMC Graduate School upon recommendation of the CON Student Academic Affairs Committee and/or the AMC Graduate School Student Conduct and Academic Appeals Committee.

Probation and Suspension

Students who do not maintain a 3.0 GPA are automatically put on academic probation. The student will have 6 credits to bring their GPA back up above a 3.0. If the student is unable within 6 credits to bring their grade above a 3.0 they will be referred to SAAC for a progression review. The student may complete a Petition for Academic Progression at the time of the SAAC review. A recommendation for Progression, Suspension or Withdrawal will be made by SAAC. A recommendation for Suspension or Withdrawal will be forwarded by the SAAC to the Director of the MS/DNP program for action.

English Proficiency

A student who is noticeably deficient in the spelling and use of the English language shall not obtain an advanced degree from the University of Colorado. Each program will judge the qualifications of its students in the use of English. The DNP Program Director is responsible for deciding whether or not a student is proficient in the use of English. The CON Office of Learner Support may refer a student for supportive assistance for English as a second
language issues. A TOEFL test is required for admission with minimum scores listed in the CON DNP admission policy.

**Americans with Disabilities Act**

UC Denver supports the spirit and the letter of the Americans with Disabilities Act. This law is designed to help persons with disabilities access the physical facilities, academic programs and employment opportunities of the institution. A disabilities handbook, Disability Service Resource Guide, has been developed to acquaint students, faculty and staff with various aspects of the law. Questions regarding the ADA should be directed to Lisa McGill, UC Denver Disability Resources Officer  [Lisa.McGill@ucdenver.edu](mailto:Lisa.McGill@ucdenver.edu)

Lisa E. McGill, Director  
Disability Resources & Services (DRS)  
University of Colorado Denver  
[lisa.mcgill@ucdenver.edu](mailto:lisa.mcgill@ucdenver.edu)

Or

Sherry Holden, AMC Disability Resources Coordinator  
Disability Resources and Services  
Building 500, Room W1103  
Phone: 303.724.5640  
Fax: 303.724.5641  
[sherry.holden@ucdenver.edu](mailto:sherry.holden@ucdenver.edu)

Part-time: Monday-Thursday

Please see the UC Denver CON Technical Standards required for graduation from a CON degree program in the Student Handbook: [http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/nursing/students/Pages/academic-resources.aspx](http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/nursing/students/Pages/academic-resources.aspx)

### SECTION IV - POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR CAPSTONE PROJECT

The Capstone Evaluation Project is the culmination of the courses into a quality improvement project. Students will be required to complete the four course sequence in order to successfully finish the DNP program. The four courses: NUDO 6052, NUDO 7018, NUDO 8010 and NUDO 8018 are offered in a way to facilitate the logical sequence of events of creating a quality improvement project, implementing that project and evaluating the results of the intervention. Students must take the courses in order and cannot miss a semester as courses are only offered one time a year. Missing a course will require waiting a year for the sequence to start again. Students who miss a course may be asked to start the sequence over again to insure completing of the entire project. Students who fail a course in the sequence will have to retake the course and achieve a passing grade. Students who fail a course will be required to restart the sequence over again.

The Capstone Evaluation Project is usually done in the students’ clinical practice. If the student does not have a current clinical practice the University will assist in finding a site but can’t guarantee a site for the student.

Each capstone course has a mandatory all day intensive at the beginning of the semester. Students unable to attend the intensive will need to withdrawal from the course and begin the sequence the following year.

**NUDO 6052 Context of Patient population and Practice Management**  **6.0 credits**

Course explores innovative and integrative population/disease management care models within today’s healthcare delivery system. Focus is on the individual’s and the agency’s accountability, interdisciplinary collaboration, timeliness, continuity of care, and cost effectiveness. Clinical experience in disease or population management included.
Students must purchase Typhon-NPST™ to document all clinical hours during the four capstone classes. CON faculty who teach each of the capstone courses, and a faculty member who is a content expert in the area direct the capstone project. The faculty content expert is identified during the first capstone class, NUDO 6052. 135 hours of clinical are required.

At the end of the semester the student will be required to present their capstone project proposal to the “Bridge Committee.” The Bridge Committee is made up of faculty who teach in the capstone sequence, the Associate Dean for Research, the Director of the MS/DNP program and the content specialist. The student will present their capstone project proposal for review. In part, the proposal review is to assess quality improvement component of the project and to ensure that the proposed project is not research. During this course the student will be paired with a faculty content expert who will assist in the development of the capstone project.

Projects can be approved, approved with changes or denied. Students whose projects have been denied will be required to retake NUDO 6052.

**NUDO 7018 DNP Capstone Proposal** 2.0 credits
The second course in the sequence NUDO 7018 continues the process begun in NUDO 6052. Students expand their background literature search, continue PDSA cycles to attain their AIM, add data points to their control charts and complete the COMIRB training. NUDO 7018 also has a required one day mandatory intensive. 135 hours of clinical are required.

**NUDO 8010 DNP Role Residency 4.0 credits**
In the third course, NUDO 8010, the student continues to implement and test small changes to achieve his/her project AIM and continues to collect outcome and process data measures. 135 hours of clinical are required.

**NUDO 8018 DNP Capstone Project** 4.0 credits
In the final course, students will analyze their data and present their findings. As a part of the course students are encouraged to submit their findings for publication. At the end of the semester, students will present their findings to a committee of their content advisor and two faculty who teach in the capstone sequence. The first half-hour of the presentation is open to the public and the candidate may be asked questions about their project. Following the public portion of the presentation, the committee will continue questions and ask the student to leave during the committee’s deliberation and vote. The committee makes the final determination of the candidate’s qualification for the degree of Doctor of Nursing Practice. In the event of one or more negative votes the candidate fails the capstone project presentation. The Committee must make recommendations regarding the next steps. The Committee may recommend significant revisions of the capstone project or additional study/coursework in the area of knowledge deficits. The candidate may be given a second opportunity to successfully complete the oral presentation. In the event of two failures, the candidate will be academically dismissed from the program. 135 hours of clinical are required.

**Academic Credential Documentation**
The policy of the College of Nursing is that students in any graduate program may not use candidacy as a description in signature or other academic or professional communication- for example, PhD (c) or DNP (c).
SECTION V - APPLICATION FOR THE CONFERRAL OF THE DEGREE

Diploma Application
The candidate must complete a Diploma Application according to announced deadlines specified by the Registrar’s Office of the Anschutz Medical Campus. There are deadlines for each of the three semesters. Students who miss the deadline for the application for degree will have to graduate the next semester. The Diploma Application is found in the student registration system in UCDAccess. Awarding of diplomas and the hooding ceremony occur at the College of Nursing graduation ceremony in May of each year.

Application for Degree
The candidate must complete the Application for Degree. The two page form is the mechanism to audit the students’ progress in the program. It must be completed by the deadline specified by the Graduate Programs Office for each semester. Please contact the Graduate Program Office for a copy of the Application for Degree.
Sample Course Offering Plan – Fulltime

Student Program Plan Report

**Student:**

**Program**  Doctor of Nursing Practice

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**IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING PROGRAM PLANS**

Attached is your program plan; please check it and if you need to make any changes contact Dr. Judy Campbell at 303 724 8503 or judy.campbell@ucdenver.edu.

Please register for courses according to your program plan. It is recommended that you register as early as possible during the pre-registration period.

Registering for the wrong course or section can jeopardize your placement in the course.
Sample Course Offering Plan – Part-time:

**Student Program Plan Report**

**Student:** Doctor of Nursing Practice  
**Track:**

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<td>□ Intent of project is to improve a practice or process within a particular institution or ensure it confirms with expected norms</td>
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</tr>
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<td><strong>FOR PROJECT</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DESIGN</strong></td>
<td>□ Designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge; may involve randomization of individuals to different treatments, regimens, or processes</td>
<td>□ Not designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge; generally does not involve randomization to different practices or processes</td>
<td>□ Not designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge; does not involve randomization of individuals, but may involve comparison of variations in programs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MANDATE</strong></td>
<td>□ Activities not mandated by institution or program</td>
<td>□ Activity mandated by the institution or clinic as part of its operations</td>
<td>□ Activity mandated by the program, usually its funder, as part of its operations</td>
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<td><strong>EFFECT ON</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PROGRAM</strong></td>
<td>□ Findings of the study are not expected to directly affect institutional or programmatic practice</td>
<td>□ Findings of the study are expected to directly affect institutional practice and identify corrective action(s) needed</td>
<td>□ Findings of the evaluation are expected to directly affect the conduct of the program and identify improvements</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>OR</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PRACTICE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EVALUATED</strong></td>
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<td><strong>POPULATION</strong></td>
<td>□ Usually involves a subset of individuals - universal participation of an entire clinic, program, or department is not expected; generally, statistical justification for sample size used to ensure endpoints can be met</td>
<td>□ Information on all or most receiving a particular treatment or undergoing a particular practice or process expected to be included; exclusion of information from some individuals significantly affects conclusions</td>
<td>□ Information on all or most participants within or affected by receiving a particular treatment or undergoing a particular practice or process expected to be used; exclusion of information from some individuals significantly affects conclusions</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BENEFITS</strong></td>
<td>□ Participants may or may not benefit directly – benefit, if any, to individuals incidental or delayed</td>
<td>□ Participants expected to benefit directly from the activities</td>
<td>□ No benefit to participants expected; evaluation concentrates on program improvements or whether the program should continue</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DISSEMINATI</strong></td>
<td>□ Intent to publish or present</td>
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<td>□ Intent to publish or present</td>
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</table>
### COMPARISON OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF RESEARCH, QUALITY IMPROVEMENT, AND PROGRAM EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

| ON OF RESULTS | generally presumed at the outset of project as part of professional expectations, obligations; dissemination of information usually occurs in research/scientific publications or other research/scientific fora; results expected to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge by filling a gap in scientific knowledge or supporting, refining, or refuting results from other research studies | generally not be presumed at the outset of the project; dissemination of information often does not occur beyond the institution evaluated; dissemination of information may occur in quality improvement publications/fora; when published or presented to a wider audience, the intent is to suggest potentially effective models, strategies, assessment tools or provide benchmarks or base rates rather than to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge | generally presumed at the outset of the project; dissemination of information to program stakeholders and participants; may be publicly posted (e.g., website) to ensure transparency of results; when published or presented to a wider audience, the intent is to suggest potentially effective models, strategies, assessment tools or provide benchmarks or base rates rather than to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge |

### TESTS OF NEW CLINICAL INTERVENTIONS (skip this section if you are testing an existing best practice)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USE OF PLACEBO</th>
<th>Use of placebo may be planned</th>
<th>Comparison of standard treatments, practices, techniques, processes – placebo would NOT be used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEVIAATION FROM STANDARD PRACTICE</td>
<td>May involve significant deviation from standard practice</td>
<td>Unlikely to involve significant deviation from standard practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Project Title:

Investigator:

CON Faculty Advisor:

Date:

Comments:
COMPARISON OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF RESEARCH, QUALITY IMPROVEMENT, AND PROGRAM EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

Plan:

Agree this is a QIP:

___________________________________________________                               ____________________________________

___________________________________________________                               ____________________________________

___________________________________________________                               ____________________________________

___________________________________________________                               ____________________________________