Doctor of Nursing Practice Degree
Application Process & Instructions

Academic Year 2016 – 2017

APPLICATION PROCESS
The School of Nursing welcomes applications to the Doctor of Nursing Practice program. If you have additional questions after reviewing the following instructions please contact the School as detailed at the end of this document.

The School of Nursing admits students for the fall semester each year. Admission consideration is extended to those applicants who complete and submit the online application and all required documents (outlined below) to the appropriate UNC office by the posted deadline. The DNP Admissions Committee will only evaluate complete applications containing all required materials. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure the entire application is received by the posted deadline by checking the online application portal.

Fall Semester Deadlines

| Priority Application: December 15, 2015 | This is the deadline to be considered for University Scholarship consideration. University Merit Awards recognize the most promising incoming students. A GPA of 3.75 or higher is required for merit nomination. |
| Final Application: January 12, 2016 | The complete application must be submitted by this date. A GPA of 2.75 or higher is required for admission. |

The GRE Requirement has been waived for the School of Nursing Graduate Admission! School of Nursing Applicants are not required to enter their test scores on the Test Scores Page.

BSN to DNP Pathway - FULL-TIME enrollment is required.

There are two options for BSN prepared nurses to obtain their DNP:

The Healthcare Systems option prepares nurses for roles that support clinical practice such as administration, informatics and organizational leadership in these areas:

- Health Care Systems – Administration
- Health Care Systems – Outcomes Management
- Health Care Systems – Informatics

The direct care pathway prepares graduates to be nurse practitioners in the following Advanced Practice Areas

- Adult/Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner
- Adult/Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner - Oncology
- Family Nurse Practitioner
- Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner
- Pediatric Nurse Practitioner – Primary Care

MSN to DNP Pathway

This option provides enhanced education to nurses prepared as Nurse Practitioners, Clinical Nurse Specialists, Registered Nurse Anesthetists, Nurse Midwives, Nurse Administrators or other Health Care Systems Leaders. Enrollment may be on a full-time or part-time basis. Full-time study requires enrolling in at least nine credit hours per semester. Part-time study requires enrolment in three to six credit hours per semester. Students may work while enrolled in the program to the extent that the student’s academic progression is not compromised. However, in accordance with School of Nursing policy, full-time graduate students employed by the University may work no more than 50 percent (20 hours/week) while actively engaged in coursework.

PROGRAM PREREQUISITES

BSN to DNP Pathway

- Hold a BSN from a CCNE or NLNAC accredited program at the date of application.
- Registered Nurse Licensure: all applicants must hold a current unencumbered license as a registered nurse in the state in which the student will do clinical course work.
• Possess a minimum of one year of recent (within the past 3 years) clinical work experience, as a Registered Nurse by the date of matriculation. The following specialties have additional requirements:
  
  o **Adult/Gerontology (AGPCNP):** applicants must have direct care experience in community, hospital or ambulatory settings that serve adult or geriatric patients.
  
  o **Family (FNP):** applicants should have experience as a Registered Nurse in a public health/community, hospital or ambulatory setting that serves patients across the life span.
  
  o **Health Care Systems (HCS) specialty applicants should have leadership experience within a health care setting (e.g., committee member, leading a service/QI project).**
  
  o **Pediatric (PNP-PC):** Within the past 3 years, applicants must have the equivalent of 6 months of full-time clinical work experience as a Registered Nurse in a neonatal or pediatric setting, or community setting that serves children and families.
  
  o **Psychiatric/Mental Health (PMHNP):** Within the past 3 years, applicants should have the equivalent of 6 months of full-time clinical work experience as a Registered Nurse in an acute or community setting that serves psychiatric illness/substance abuse.
  
  *Note: Effective July 1, 2016 the work experience requirement must be met by the date of application.*

• Provide evidence of successfully completing an undergraduate statistics course within 5 years of matriculation with a grade of B or better. *(Credit earned December 2010 or later)*

*Note: Effective July 1, 2016 the Statistics requirement must be met by the date of application.*

**MSN to DNP Pathway**

• Hold a master's degree in nursing from an NLNAC or CCNE accredited program by program matriculation.

• Registered Nurse Licensure and, if applicable, verification of current certification or ever having been certified as an advanced practice registered nurse.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICATION**

This document contains instructions for the integrated online application process; the UNC-Chapel Hill Graduate School and School of Nursing Supplemental Application have been combined for user-ease and processing efficiency. Be sure to read the information regarding Graduate School requirements: [http://gradschool.unc.edu/admissions/instructions.html](http://gradschool.unc.edu/admissions/instructions.html). Please carefully read and meticulously follow the School of Nursing application instructions below; each element described is a required facet of the online application.

1. **Transcripts of Undergraduate and Graduate Education:** Applicants must upload into the application an unofficial transcript for all post-secondary schools attended since high school. If the unofficial document does not clearly state the name of the institution, PLEASE write the name at the top of the transcript prior to scanning and uploading. Collectively, documents must reflect all college-level course work you have taken (including pre-requisite courses, any summer school courses or AP courses).

• Failure to upload a transcript for each school attended will render the application incomplete.

• Uploading transcripts is the responsibility of the applicant.

• Transcripts must be uploaded in the correct form and size. This may take some time and effort. Please do not leave document upload to the last minute as it may prevent you from submitting the application on time. Follow the instructions in the application for uploading unofficial transcripts and review the additional information on transcript upload provided at the end of this document.

• NOTE: If you will be completing a course or a degree after you submit the application, please email the final transcript for the course or degree to son_gradapp@unc.edu

• Paper transcripts are not accepted for the admission application (except for Fall 2015 courses as noted above); only unofficial transcripts are accepted for application evaluation.

2. **GPA Requirement:**

• Competitive BSN-DNP applicants will present a grade point average of at least 3.0 cumulative GPA (on a 4.0 scale) in their undergraduate nursing program. Applicants with GPA between 2.75 – 2.99 may apply but must offer a strong justifiable explanation.

• MSN-DNP applicants will present an earned a 3.25 cumulative GPA in graduate coursework.
3. **Remissibility:** All applicants must be admissible to all previously attended colleges/universities. If you have been declared academically ineligible and as such are unable to return to any previous institutions, you must contact that institution and seek documentation that reinstates your eligibility or your application cannot undergo review. Copies of ALL correspondence regarding your reinstatement request must be submitted in the application. Additionally, if your final institutional cumulative GPA is below 2.0 (on a 4.0 scale), please provide documentation of your eligibility to return to that particular institution.

4. **Letters of Recommendation:** Submit three (3) letters of recommendation supporting your potential for success in the DNP program. Recommendations must be received from three individuals familiar with the applicant’s intellectual ability, academic achievement, practice expertise, and professional commitment to nursing. Letters from relatives, family friends, fellow staff members, clients/patients or religious/spiritual leaders will not be accepted. Note: The Letters of Recommendation are traditionally the most challenging for applicants. To ensure that your application is reviewed, please follow these guidelines explicitly.

**BSN to DNP**
- **Employer Reference:** One letter must be from your immediate supervisor
- **Academic References:** BSN to DNP applicants attending school between fall 2011 and present must submit two (2) letters of recommendation are needed from **faculty members** with an earned graduate degree (master’s or doctorate) whose class you have taken and who can speak to your academic qualifications and strengths as a student. *One faculty reference must be from the educational program most recently attended. Specifically, the letters should address your potential for success in graduate education, leadership ability, and personal characteristics that will help or hinder development as an advanced practice nurse. *Faculty recommendations from online programs are required!*
- **Additional References:** BSN to DNP applicants out of school over five years (no completed courses since Summer 2011) have the option to submit faculty recommendations as outlined above, or two letters of recommendation from professional colleagues with an earned graduate degree (master’s or doctorate) who possess the ability to speak to your potential for success in graduate school. *Letters from relatives, family friends, fellow staff members, clients/patients or religious/spiritual leaders will not be accepted.*

**MSN to DNP**
- **Employer Reference:** One letter must be from your immediate supervisor
- **Academic References:** MSN to DNP applicants should submit at least one (1) letter of recommendation from a **faculty member** with an earned graduate degree (master’s or doctorate) whose class you have taken and who can speak to your academic qualifications and strengths as a student. One faculty reference must be from the educational program most recently attended. Specifically, the letters should address your potential for success in graduate education, leadership ability, and personal characteristics that will help or hinder development as an advanced practice nurse. *Faculty recommendations from online programs are required!*
- **Additional References:** MSN to DNP applicants should submit at least one (1) letter of recommendation from a professional colleague with an earned graduate degree (master’s or doctorate) who possess the ability to speak to your potential for success in graduate school. *Letters from relatives, family friends, fellow staff members, clients/patients or religious/spiritual leaders will not be accepted.*

The online application will prompt you to submit the email addresses for your three required recommenders. The recommender will then receive an email request for recommendation and be able to upload the reference into the application. Recommendations MUST be uploaded into the application by the recommenders. Applicants are responsible for checking the online application portal and following up with recommender to assure all letters are uploaded by the application deadline. **The School of Nursing is unable to reuse recommendations from previous application cycles.**

5. **Professional Statement:** You are asked to write, and upload into the application, a two-part essay combined into one document. It is most important that you address each bulleted item noted and format the document as requested. Create a topic-specific header for each response. Please include references on a separate page of the document. This narrative is a very important part of your portfolio as it offers insight into your professional goals.
and expectations. The quality of the Professional Statement is crucial in admission decisions since it provides the Admissions Committee a first-hand example of your writing skills and your ability to present ideas in a clear, logical and coherent manner. In lieu of an interview, the professional statements avails the Committee of your personal perspective on your professional contributions, strengths as a student, current skills and abilities, and prior experiences. Prepare and proofread your statement carefully as poorly written statements will notably weaken your portfolio!

PART 1: Professional Goals and Background Essay (3 pages maximum, double-spaced, 12 font, APA format):
1. Describe your professional career, including populations served, roles held and settings in which you practiced.
2. State your short and long-term professional goals.
3. Explain why you have chosen a specific advanced practice area/population foci for the DNP.
4. Discuss relevant areas of your background and how each prepared you for doctoral study, such as prior coursework, earned degrees, continuing education, practice history, and professional activities. It is important to include information on:
   ● Scholarship activities (Publications, Presentations)
   ● Research experience (specify)
   ● Service activities (local community, global or professional)
   ● Honors and awards
   ● Language fluency other than English
   ● Leadership activities
   ● Military service
5. Describe how obtaining the DNP degree from this school of Nursing will help you attain your goals.
6. Identify clinical and academic strengths and areas of improvement that may impact your doctoral studies.
7. Address any aspect of the program’s admission criteria for which you do not meet minimum requirements and provide an explanation for your situation (e.g., an explanation is needed if GPA < minimum).

PART 2: Scholarly Interest (4 pages, double-spaced, references must be in APA format):
Identify an important practice-based problem that you would like to examine during your DNP studies. Provide a clear and comprehensive evidence-based review of the literature supporting why this problem requires further exploration. Include details about prior work on the topic (if any), the importance of the problem in healthcare delivery, and how you would study this problem during the DNP program. You must provide sufficient references from scholarly sources to support your argument.

MSN-DNP applicants are to identify a member of the School of Nursing faculty who would be a good match for their scholarly interests. A listing of Doctoral Faculty is available on the School’s web site [http://nursing.unc.edu/doctoral-program/faculty-advisors-research/](http://nursing.unc.edu/doctoral-program/faculty-advisors-research/)

6. Current Curriculum Vitae or Resume: Using the SON required template, detail your career path, explaining any gap in employment greater than one year. Full disclosure of your complete education background is required. [http://nursing.unc.edu/admissions/applications/](http://nursing.unc.edu/admissions/applications/)

7. Professional Nursing Licensure: Documentation substantiating you hold a current unrestricted/unencumbered license as a registered nurse must be uploaded into the application. An "unencumbered license" means neither the license, the licensee's practice, nor the licensee is associated with any type of restriction, encumbrance, or probationary limitations imposed by the applicable Board of Nursing or any judicial entity. NC License or compact state equivalent is needed by matriculation. The Information provided by the Board of Nursing website of your state is sufficient. print and scan or save a screenshot to upload into the application.

8. APA Certification: MSN to DNP applicants must, if applicable, provide verification of current certification or having ever been certified as an advanced practice registered nurse.

9. Application fee: $85.00 (may be paid by check, money order or online by credit card to The Graduate School; instructions are available on the final screen of the application)
INTERVIEWS
If at any time additional information is needed to clarify or supplement your application portfolio, you will be contacted for an interview. Note: International applicants for whom English is the second language will be interviewed.

Critical Information for International Applicants:
Admissions Requirements: This DNP Program is available to international students. It is essential that international students be fluent in English. Presently, the University (including the School of Nursing) does not offer ESL programs or an English language institute. For this reason, candidates interested in attending the University must be able to understand rapid, idiomatic English as spoken in lectures, group discussions, and clinical settings by individuals of widely varying accents. Students from non-English-speaking countries must be able to communicate quickly and clearly in spoken and written English.

Transcripts: International students must provide a full credit evaluation of all courses completed at a foreign institution. The National Association of Credential Evaluation Services provides a list of organizations that offer this service at the link below. Applicants may also choose to have credit evaluated by faculty members in the various departments on campus. Please submit the credit evaluation report and an official copy of your transcript with your application for admission. These documents may be scanned into the transcript section of the application. Submission of this credit evaluation with degree validation will allow us to view your transcripts in a US transcript format on a 4.0 GPA scale. Related URL: http://www.naces.org/

A note on foreign degrees: As part of the transcript submission, degree credentials are also reviewed by the Graduate School. Assessment of a foreign degree, including those conferred from institutions participating in the Bologna Accord, is based upon the characteristics of a national system of education, the type of institution attended, its accreditation and the level of studies completed. The following guidelines indicate the level of study expected of international applicants prior to graduate enrollment:

- British patterned education bachelor's degree with honours
- French patterned education degree of diplme requiring four years of post baccalauréat study
- Germany university Diplom preferred. Applicants with very strong academic records may be considered if they have completed the Staatsexamen, a bachelor’s degree after a 13-year Abitur, or at least one year of full-time study beyond Vorprüfung, Zwischenprüfung, Vordiplom, or any other bachelor’s degree
- Other European countries: university degree requiring a minimum of four years of study
- Canada three year bachelor’s degree from Québec; four-year bachelor’s degree from all other provinces
- Latin America university degree requiring a minimum of four years of study
- India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal bachelor’s degree in engineering or medicine; master’s degree in all other fields
- Philippines five year bachelor’s degree or four year bachelor’s degree plus one year of graduate course work
- Other Asian countries: university degree requiring a minimum of four years study

TOEFL or IELTS: The School of Nursing DNP program requires a higher level of English proficiency than The Graduate School due to the clinical requirements. The UNC Graduate School Institution Code is 5816 (no department code). International applicants must achieve a minimum total score of 575 (with a minimum of 50 in each section) on the written version of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or minimum of 89 on the internet-based test with the following minimum section requirements: Reading, 21; Listening, 22; Speaking, 24; Writing, 22. This is not a requirement of applicants who are residents of a country where English is the sole official language of instruction or if applicants hold a degree from an accredited United States institution of higher education.

Meeting the minimum total score on TOEFL does not guarantee admission to the School of Nursing. Admission decisions are made on the basis of multiple factors including: scholastic performance; English proficiency; essays; letters of recommendation; the appropriateness of the requested advanced practice area to the applicant’s goals and clinical experiences; and verification of financial support to insure proper visa status.

A score of 8 is required on IELTS which is higher than The Graduate School requirement.

Letters of Recommendation: In addition to the three current letters of recommendation meeting the specifications outlined above, applicants for whom English is a second language (non-native language), must submit at least one additional letter of reference that addresses your ability to communicate fluently in the English language.

Interview: An interview is required of all international applicants who are non-native English speakers. The interview (personal, telephone, Skype) will be conducted by faculty who teach in the candidate’s clinical area of interest. The
The interview has two distinct foci: part one will focus on information provided in the application materials (for example, essay and future goals); the second part will evaluate the interviewee’s English proficiency.

**Financial Certificate** with supporting documents will be required upon admission

http://gradschool.unc.edu/admissions/instructions.html#fincert

Information concerning visa, U.S. Immigration, or financial certificate matters can be obtained from the UNC Office of International Student and Scholar Services.  http://oisss.unc.edu/

**ONLINE APPLICATION PORTAL**

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the online application is submitted prior to the posted deadline, all requested documents are uploaded properly into the application, and that your application is complete. You can check the status of your application review by logging on to the application to see if any required items are missing. The Admissions Committee only considers COMPLETE applications. It is your responsibility to check your application in the online application portal, and follow up with your recommenders and schools. The School of Nursing will contact you directly, if we need additional documents or information.

**BASIS FOR DECISIONS**

Admission to the DNP program is necessarily a selective process. Meeting the posted criteria does not ensure admission. The Committee considers a myriad of factors including: the quality of performance in previous undergraduate and graduate study (as applicable), success in previous employment and related experiences, and personal qualifications including suitability for advanced study. The Admissions Committee weighs the applicant’s accomplishments and potential for success in the program. Diversity in student backgrounds and scholarly interests is desired. Using an objective review procedure, the Admissions Committee recommends selected candidates to the Dean of The Graduate School.

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Nursing is committed to equality of educational opportunity and does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, national origin, age, religion, sexual preference, or handicap. Members of racial or ethnic minority groups and males are encouraged to apply.

**NOTIFICATION OF DECISION**

The School of Nursing and Dean of The Graduate School will notify you in writing of the outcome of your application review as soon as decisions are rendered. Therefore, please modify your information in the Update Profile section of your application if you change your address prior to notification.

**FOLLOWING ADMISSION ACCEPTANCE:**

Admitted applicants are required to pay a $250 deposit and submit official transcripts to the Graduate School (not the School of Nursing). Instructions on how to submit official transcripts will be included in the admission offer letter from the Graduate School. Admitted students seeking to establish North Carolina residency for tuition purposes, shall submit an online application located at this site: http://gradschool.unc.edu/student/residency/

**Accessing the Correct Application**

Go to the Graduate School Admissions Page http://gradschool.unc.edu/admissions/  
Select **Apply Now** and Create an Account or Log in with an existing account  
Start Application*  

*NOTE: School of Nursing Applicants are not required to enter their test scores on the Test Scores Page!!!
**Plans for Graduate Study**

Select a major* you must select Nursing Practice

Select a degree* select Doctor of Nursing Practice

Are you applying for a dual degree? select No

If so, please indicate 2nd program here: leave blank

Area of Interest or Specialization* highlight Nursing Practice

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**Term of Entry**

Please select the term of entry* select Fall 2016 Select save & continue to complete the application

BSN to DNP APRN Specialization Selection occurs on the Supplemental Documents Page

**QUESTIONS:**
Questions regarding the instructions, or application requirements should be directed to the Office of Student Affairs in the School of Nursing at (919) 966-4260 or via email to son_gradapp@unc.edu.

**TECHNICAL HELP:**
If you have any technical problems, such as browsers or login issues, contact the UNC Help Desk at (919) 962-HELP (4357).

**Transcript Specifications**
- Applicants should either upload the document directly if it is in an accepted format or scan each unofficial transcript into a file that can be uploaded.
- Make a low-resolution black and white photocopy of your transcript to help reduce file size.
- Transcripts should be scanned using the gray scale option for clarity.
- Scanning software should ask what resolution to scan your document, either before or after the scan. The recommended setting is 72dpi.
- Check file size and do not exceed 1024kb.
- Scan multiple page transcripts from one institution into one file; however, only one back page is required from each school.
- Preview the uploaded transcript(s) to ensure legibility so that the processing of your application is not delayed. If you cannot read the file clearly, please try another scanner or different settings and upload again.
- A transcript from each institution is always required.

**Thank you for your interest in the School of Nursing at UNC-Chapel Hill. Good luck with your application!**