

Dear Prospective DNP Student:

We are pleased that you are interested in applying for admission into the Doctor of Nursing Program (DNP) at Wilmington University. Applications for the DNP Program are accepted from individuals who have a master's degree and are advanced practice nurses as NP, CNS, CRNA or CNM from an accredited institution. The program is available in a modified hybrid format (Fall admission) at the Wilson Graduate Center site in New Castle County or 100% online (Spring admission).

Ongoing applications are accepted throughout the year and completed applications are reviewed for appropriate documentation. Candidates who are selected to continue the admission process will be notified to schedule an interview. Candidates are invited for interviews based on the quality of their admissions documentation, previous experience/employment, and their potential for academic success as indicated by their graduate grade point average.

This packet contains several important items:

- Application Instructions
- Wilmington University Application For Graduate Admission
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Statement of Goals (thought questions)

You are encouraged to review these materials carefully as you determine your interest in pursuing admission to the program.

If you decide to apply for the DNP Program, you should follow the Application Instructions found in the packet. These directions supersede any conflicting directions in the other Wilmington University Graduate application materials.

If you need clarification of any information contained in this packet, please call Graduate Admissions at (302) 295-1184 or the Graduate Administrative Assistants for the College of Health Professions at (302)356-2480. Best wishes as you take the next step in your education.

Sincerely,

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**WILMINGTON UNIVERSITY
Doctor of Nursing Practice**

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

1. The completed application and any subsequent correspondence must be mailed to:

**Wilmington University
Office of Graduate Admissions
Wilson Graduate Center
31 Read's Way
New Castle, DE 19720**

2. A non-refundable **Application Fee of \$35** must accompany the completed application form along with the Statement of Goals. Your check or money order should be made payable to Wilmington University.
3. Have all **Official Transcripts (Undergraduate & Graduate)** sent directly to the Graduate Admissions Office. Transcripts must reflect undergraduate and graduate nursing degree.
4. Graduate GPA 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale
5. Include a copy of a current **Resume** and proof of current RN license, proof of APN license (*if applicable*).
6. Two recommendation letters must be submitted from (1) an immediate supervisor and (1) professional colleague or academic professor. Personal recommendations are discouraged. The recommendation letters must be submitted directly to the Graduate Office of Admissions.
7. Thoughtfully complete your **Statement of Goals** by answering the (2) **Thought Questions**. Your answers must be typed and double spaced. Both the content of your answers and your ability to write are being evaluated, so proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling are important.

8. **Documentation of Clinical Experience**

The DNP is a clinical doctorate requiring 1000 post-baccalaureate clinical hours as delineated in The Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice (AACN, 2006). The 1000 post-baccalaureate clinical hours must be completed in a healthcare setting prior to doctoral degree conferral.

Five hundred of the 1000 post-baccalaureate clinical hours in the advanced practice *clinical* role must be completed prior to enrollment in the Wilmington University postmaster's DNP program. The remaining 500 supervised hours will be completed while enrolled in the DNP program.

Therefore, each applicant is required to provide accurate and sufficient evidence describing how the 500 post-baccalaureate clinical hours were earned. These clinical hours must be completed prior to entering into the Wilmington University DNP program.

Applicants can select and prepare one of the following in support of validating 500 post-baccalaureate clinical hours:

a. Validation by Advanced Practice Certification

Applicants who have earned an advanced practice certification (e.g. Nurse Practitioner [NP], Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists [CRNA], Certified Nurse Specialist [CNS], and Certified Nurse Midwife [CNM]) must provide a copy of their current national certification as evidence of having completed 500 supervised clinical hours since completing a baccalaureate nursing education program.

b. Validation by Official Graduate Transcript

Applicants who have not yet earned an advanced practice certification, but have completed the graduate degree, must provide a thorough description of the supervised clinical/practicum hours completed while enrolled in an NP, CRNA, CNS, or CNM program as validated by an official transcript.

Acceptable descriptions include any of the following:

- 1) Course syllabi that demonstrate the number of clinical hours required in each course
- 2) Official clinical logs which record the clinical hours in each course,
- 3) An official letter from the Master's program director, and
- 4) An official letter from the mentor who supervised the required clinical hours.

c. Validation by Professional Portfolio

Although we welcome all other strong applicants, those applicants who do not have a certification or did not earn 500 clinical practicum hours in their Master's Program, must provide evidence of 500 hours in the form of a professional portfolio describing relevant, clinical projects.

Examples of project documents are welcome, as well as any other supporting documentation that helps the admission committee understand why the applicant's portfolio should be considered as appropriate evidence for the required 500 supervised hours.

9. Applicants are reviewed for admission to the DNP Program based on the potential to be successful academically as a doctoral student and professionally as a nursing leader. Candidate interviews for the DNP program are based on completed admissions documentation and the quality of the responses to the documentation. The admissions process is accomplished in two stages.

Stage 1: Review of Application Materials

- a. Graduate academic record from the transcript (3.0 GPA or higher is desired)
- b. Quality of recommendations
- c. Relevant professional experience documented on the resume
- d. Statement of goals as expressed on the thought questions
- e. Applicant meets previous clinical requirements

Interviews occur with applicants who successfully meet the review criteria in Stage 1.

Stage 2: Individual Interviews

To be considered for an admissions interview the applicant must submit all materials. Scheduling of interviews will occur after the admissions committee has reviewed student materials. The individual interviews offer the opportunity to evaluate the applicant's interpersonal skills and personal potential to become an effective advanced nursing leader.

10. All information is confidential. Information requested on race and sex is gathered to enable Wilmington University to comply with its Equal Opportunity obligations and will not be used to discriminate against individuals.
11. The DNP Program Admissions Committee reviews all application materials and interview information to determine a candidate's fit for the DNP Program based on academic readiness, personal maturity, career goals, and previous clinical experiences. Decisions of the committee are final.
12. Applications are accepted ongoing for review and completion of the admissions process. However, admissions occur *only* in the Fall (September) and Spring (January) of each academic year.

Doctor of Nursing Practice

STATEMENT OF GOALS

Please respond to both of the following questions. The response requires **minimum of two full double spaced pages (8 ½ x 11) typed.**

- I. State thoughtfully your areas of interest and a potential clinical problem you plan to address in the DNP program of study.**

- II. Discuss how your advanced nursing experiences lead to your desire to the area of interest and why it is relevant and warrants change in practice. Identify what impact you can make on the quality of healthcare in the role of a doctor of nursing practice.**

Since we do not require standardized test scores as a criteria for admissions, your responses to these questions will weigh significantly in the initial screening process. **Responses must meet the minimum of 2 pages to be considered.** Please give careful attention to the quality of the content, writing mechanics, and organization of thought.

The Graduate Nursing Faculty wishes you the best in your quest for the DNP degree

QUESTIONS MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED BY DNP APPLICANTS

1. **What is the value of earning a DNP?**

Development of needed advanced competencies for increasingly complex practice, faculty and leadership roles;

Enhanced knowledge to improve nursing practice and patient outcomes;

Enhanced leadership skills to strengthen practice and health care delivery;

Better match of program requirements and credits and time with the credential/degree earned;

Potential increased supply of faculty for practice instruction.

2. **What is the difference between a PhD program and a DNP program?**

The Ph.D. is the preferred research intensive doctoral degree in nursing. Research-focused programs are designed to prepare nurse scientists and scholars, and focus heavily on scientific content and research methodology. Research-based programs typically require an original research project and the completion and defense of a dissertation.

In contrast, a practice-focused doctoral program is designed to *prepare experts in specialized advanced nursing practice*. The focus is heavily on clinical practice, one that is "innovative and evidenced-based, reflecting the application of credible research findings" (AACN, 2006, p. 3). Practice-focused doctoral programs require a practice application-oriented "final D.N.P. project" instead of a knowledge-generating research effort (AACN, 2006, p. 3). The two types of doctoral programs differ in their goals and the competencies of their graduates, and hence, their coursework. However, they represent complementary approaches to the highest level of preparation in nursing. Both are considered terminal degrees in nursing, one in clinical practice, one in research, according to the AACN.

3. **Will the DNP change the scope of practice for NP, CRNA, CNS or CNM?**

No, the scope of practice for advanced practice nurses in these roles will be the same.

Scope of practice is determined by State Nurse Practice Acts, which differs from state to state.

4. **Will doctorally prepared advance practice nurses (NP, CRNA, CNS or CNM) confuse the public?**

No. The title of Doctor is common to many disciplines and is not the domain of any one group of health professionals. Many who practice as NP, CRNA, CNS or CNM currently hold doctoral degrees and frequently addressed as "doctors". Other health care providers are addressed as "doctor", including clinical psychologists, dentists, and podiatrists. APNs should retain their specialist titles after completing a doctoral program.

5. **Will DNP graduates be able to assume the nurse educator role in schools of nursing?**

Yes, but the D.N.P. degree does not prepare educators per se any more than a Ph.D.

program does. Graduates from all doctoral programs (D.N.P. and Ph.D.) who want to teach in schools of nursing should have additional preparation that adds coursework in education to their base of clinical practice. It is important to remember that an expectation of faculty in terms of scholarship, i.e. - research and publications, and how scholarship is defined, varies widely across institutions.

6. **What areas will I be able to work after graduation?**

Students will primarily continue to work in the same healthcare areas already employed.

However, within the DNP program students will be exposed to a variety of other settings, which can open new avenues of employment.

7. Is the DNP Program a competitive program in terms of admission standards?

Admission to the program is competitive based on the balance of a number of factors including undergraduate academic performance (GPA of 3.0 or higher is preferred), prior work/volunteer experience, personal maturity, personal/professional goals, and responses to the statement of goals. We have a selection process that is utilized to evaluate a person's readiness for graduate study and their suitability

8. Does my graduate degree have to be in nursing?

Students will be accepted from the four roles – NP, CNS, CRNA, or CNM. Those with NP and CNS roles generally graduated from nursing programs. However, the CRNA or CNM may have a degree from a program that does not reside in nursing. These applicants would be accepted provided they have a master's degree and meet the other validation criteria.

9. How long will it take me to complete the 33 credit hour program with 500 clinical hours? This seems like a great deal of time and coursework.

The DNP Program has been designed for completion in 2 1/2 - 3 years. Core DNP courses will be completed prior to starting the DNP Project. The majority of 'clinical time' is involved in development of the DNP Project at the end of the program.

10. What is the Course of Study and how often can I expect to be on campus?

The sequence for study is the same for the **September OR January** admission. The amount of time spent on campus depends on the entry point into the program. The expectation is that courses follow a designated sequence.

September Admission – This entry point is for those wishing to engage in a more traditional type of study. This cohort comes to campus in a variation of the traditional hybrid format. Students are expected to be on campus in week one and week seven of the block courses [**DNP 7000 series**]. Class time encompasses Friday evening and Saturday in week one, then Saturday week seven. The DNP Project courses [**DNP 8000 series**] are 14-week semesters. For these courses, students will come on campus in week one and for the last DNP Project course between weeks 12-14 for presentations of their final product.

January Admission – This entry point is for those wishing and capable of engaging in an **online program**. Students are not required to come to campus until the end to present their DNP Project.

11. Is there financial aid available?

Yes, a significant number of our students utilize the Guaranteed Student Loan, which is based on need. You can get an application from a local bank which processes the loan for the federal government. The University's Financial Aid Office

<http://www.wilmu.edu/financialaid/index.aspx> can provide you with information about their loan program. Many students have benefited from this low interest program.

12. Is the DNP Program fully accredited?

All nursing programs in the College of Health Professions are fully accredited by the Council for Certification of Nursing Education (CCNE) until 2021. As per CCNE regulations, they have been notified about the beginning of a **new** DNP program. Further documents will be filed with CCNE regarding the impact on all nursing programs. Full accreditation of the program cannot take place until students have been enrolled for a full year. Appropriate arrangements will be made at that time to move forward with accreditation.

13. If I am accepted into the DNP Program, when can I start?

In order to be able to complete the program in 3 calendar years, students are admitted to begin classes in the Fall OR Spring Term.

14. Does the DNP Program accept transfer credits?

A maximum of three credits may be transferred into the program in graduate courses that are deemed equivalent to the courses in the DNP program.

15. If for any reason, I need to withdraw from the program (financial, illness, etc.), would it be possible to re-enter the program without re-applying?

Students have a five-year time limit to complete the program. From time to time some students need to take a leave from the program and go on inactive status for a short time period. Students must contact their faculty academic advisor if there is a deviation from their program of study including becoming inactive. If the student's status is inactive for more than one year a new application only is required by the WU policy. Students must then contact the Chair of the DNP program to discuss their status. Students who leave the program for an extended length of time may lose their spot; however, this is decided on a case-by-case basis. All students needing more than 5 years to complete their program of study must reapply for admission to the DNP Program. Exceptions to the 5-year policy may be made in extenuating circumstances.