Dear Prospective DNP Student:

New Mexico State University, School of Nursing has phased out Master’s degree programs in the advanced practice nursing specialties of Psych/Mental Health Nursing, Adult Health and Public/Community Health. The Masters degree program in Nursing Administration continues to be offered as currently designed (see MSN webpage for information on this degree).

In place of the three Master’s degree specialties, the School of Nursing began to offer the Doctor of Nursing Practice in the fall of 2011. The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) is a doctoral degree for nurses at the highest level of clinical nursing practice. The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) has proposed that the DNP degree will be the level of entry for all advanced practice nurses by 2015. Practice-focused doctoral nursing programs prepare leaders for the highest level of practice and is the terminal practice degree.

The changing demands of today's complex health care environment, outlined in recent reports from the Institute of Medicine, require that nurses serving in specialty positions have the highest level of scientific knowledge and practice expertise possible. Nurses are constantly working with individuals who have a high level of preparation in their respective fields - physicians, pharmacists, and other health providers. The effectiveness of nurses is directly related to the amount and type of education they receive, and recent research has established a clear link between higher levels of nursing education and better patient outcomes. What distinguishes this definition of practice from others is that it includes both direct care provided to patients by individual clinicians as well as direct care policies, programs and protocols that are organized, monitored, and continuously improved upon by expert nurse clinicians.

The DNP should not be confused with the PhD in Nursing, also offered through the SON, which is a research-focused degree and aimed at those wishing to pursue an academic or research career.

There are two avenues to pursue the Doctor of Nursing practice: the BSN to DNP and Post MSN to DNP. The Family Psych/Mental Health focal area is offered on odd numbered years, 2013, 2015... Individuals selecting this option will be prepared to take the national certification exam for Family Psych/Mental Health Nurse Practitioner.

The Clinical focal areas for Public/Community Health and Adult/Gerontological Health Nurse practitioner is offered on even years 2012, 2014, etc. A cohort of 5-8 students minimum each is needed to offer courses in the Public/Community Health and Adult/Gerontological NP tracks.
** If you are already certified as an advanced practice area other than Family Psych/Mental Health or Adult/Gerontological and wish to obtain the coursework for the certification in these areas, please know that courses older than 7 years at the time of admission or at the time of graduation cannot be transferred in or counted towards the degree. Please see the NMSU graduate catalog for further information on this topic.

In order to accommodate students for a timely progression, only FULL-TIME applicants for admission to the BSN to DNP tracks are accepted. Those who need to drop from the program will need to reapply for the next cohort in that major. Students who wish to drop from one focal area and switch to another focal area must “re-apply” for that major.

The Post-MSN to DNP track is for those who wish to obtain the DNP only, and have a Master’s degree in Nursing, and “current” national certification as a Clinical Nurse Specialist or Nurse Practitioner-this option does not offer preparation for clinical certification in an advanced practice specialty. Its focus is DNP completion only. Full-time and Part-time options are available for this track.

All courses for the BSN-DNP and MSN-DNP are web-based. There is a once a year, mandatory 2-5 day, on campus, orientation/seminar required for all students prior to each fall semester. Inability to attend the orientation and seminar will result in dismissal from the program. In addition, the both the Family Psych/Mental Health and Adult/Gerontological programs may require intensive clinical immersions throughout the year. Please contact the program coordinator for these dates and times.

Please be aware that schedules for admission cohorts to each specialty track may change. If it is necessary to make changes to the admission schedules of any cohort all efforts will be made to notify prospective students as quickly as possible. Any changes will be posted to our NMSU SON website first.

**Application Process**

ALL APPLICATIONS ARE DUE February 15, 2014 BY 5 PM, MST. No late applications will be accepted. Please apply directly at [https://prospective.nmsu.edu/graduate/apply/](https://prospective.nmsu.edu/graduate/apply/).

**NOTE:** Two sets of “official” transcripts from all universities/colleges attended must be sent from that institution: One set needs to go directly to the NMSU Graduate school in a sealed envelope and one set to the School of Nursing in a sealed envelope. Student/applicant-delivered transcripts are unacceptable.

Call (575-646-7770) or email the advisor (kpech@nmsu.edu) to have an application packet mailed to you.
Criteria for Admission: BSN-DNP

Note: All prerequisites and required information must be submitted and complete before application packet will be reviewed. This includes completion of upper division inferential statistics course.

1. Bachelor’s degree in Nursing from an accredited program. Minimal undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or better.

2. Current, and unencumbered, RN license from one of the 50 U.S. States or Territories

3. Must have completed an upper division inferential statistic course within 5 years of application date

4. Must agree to sign a commitment to enroll for Full-time study and attend annual seminar or orientation.

5. Personal interview with one of the graduate faculty (will be arranged and can be by phone or web conference).

6. A letter of intent which specifies career goals and a clear statement of how the DNP will advance their clinical practice.

7. Current CV/resume

8. A 2-4 page description of an example of a common occurrence in clinical practice that you would like to see changed.

9. 3 references from those in clinical practice who know you best and can comment on your abilities to succeed in a higher level and advanced role.

10. Official transcripts (see above) Sent from the institution attended to the School of Nursing and to the graduate School

11. Must meet all clinical clearances and proof of liability insurance based on clinical site that will be used for advanced practice (all liabilities and clearances must be obtained by first enrollment date)
Criteria for Admission: Post MSN-DNP

Note: Proof of advanced practice certification is needed for application and on an annual basis.

1. Master’s degree in Nursing. Minimal MSN grade point average of 3.2 or better.

2. Current, and unencumbered, RN license from one of the 50 U.S. States or Territories

3. Current national board certification as a Clinical Nurse Specialist or Nurse Practitioner—must provide proof of advanced practice certification on an annual basis.

4. Must have completed an upper division inferential statistic course within 5 years of application date or have completed the course by the application deadline.

5. Personal interview with one of the graduate faculty (will be arranged and can be by phone or web conference).

6. A letter of intent which specifies career goals and a clear statement of how the DNP will advance their clinical practice.

7. Current CV/resume

8. A 2-4 page description of an example of a common occurrence in clinical practice that you would like to see changed.

9. 3 references from those in clinical practice who know you best and can comment on your abilities to succeed in a higher level and advanced role.

10. Official transcripts (see above)

11. Must meet all clinical clearances and liability based on clinical site that will be used for advanced practice (all liabilities and clearances must be obtained by first enrollment date)

Reminder: We cannot accept transcripts delivered directly from the applicant. If you are having difficulty with any part of the application process, please contact us at 575-646-7770 or email Karen Pech (kpec@nmsu.edu), Graduate Advisor.

Sincerely,

Teresa Keller, PhD, RN
Associate Director for Graduate Programs

Enclosures