University of Pittsburgh
Health Sciences
School of Nursing

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE GRADUATE PROGRAM

Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Comprehensive Examination

Date Effective	April 2019
Date Reviewed / Revised	September 2024
Program Level	Graduate

POLICY:

The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) comprehensive examination is designed to assess the student's mastery of the general field of doctoral study, attainment of AACN Advanced-Level Nursing competencies, the depth and breadth of knowledge in their area of concentration (ARCO), and the ability to critically synthesize and apply the best available evidence to improve clinical outcomes.

The DNP comprehensive examination consists of two components:

Component One (DNP Scholarly Project): Students will complete the DNP culminating scholarly project (hereafter "DNP Project"). The DNP Project will include planning, implementation, evaluation, and dissemination and will demonstrate scholarship, mastery of the subject matter, and a high level of communication skills. See School of Nursing Policy 282 for the policy and DNP Project Guidelines for the procedure for the DNP Project.

Component Two (Clinical Comprehensive Exam): Students will complete an exam to assess mastery of the substantial and complex body of knowledge in their program major/ARCO.

In order to complete their course of study and graduate from the DNP Program:

- BSN to DNP students must successfully complete both components of the DNP comprehensive examination.
- MSN to DNP students pursuing a DNP in the same ARCO as their master's degree must successfully complete Component One.
- MSN to DNP students pursuing the DNP in a different major/ARCO from their MSN, and

master's to DNP students who entered the DNP program with a masters in a related field or who do not hold required national certification in the major/ARCO must successfully complete both components of the DNP Comprehensive Examination.

PROCEDURE:

Component One

Detailed procedures for Component One can be found in the DNP Guidelines.

Component Two

A cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher and permission of the student's academic advisor is required to be eligible to sit for Component Two of the comprehensive examination. Students must also have competed all required specialty course work or be in their last term of study.

The deadline for students to apply to take the Component Two of the examination is set by the Admission, Progression, and Graduation (APG) Committee. Major/ARCO Coordinators are responsible for notifying their students of the date for Component Two of the comprehensive examination at least two months prior to the examination date. DNP APG committee will assist with scheduling if needed.

Major/ARCO directors/coordinators will inform the DNP APG Committee which students will be taking Component Two of the examination. The information submitted to the Committee will include the names and contact information for the students.

Any student request for specific accommodations related to taking the comprehensive examination must be supported by documentation from Disability Resources and Services (DRS). The student should present the DRS documentation supporting the request to their advisor and major/ARCO Director/Coordinator. The major/ARCO Director/Coordinator will communicate the accommodation(s) when registering the student for the exam.

Component Two of the comprehensive examination and the criteria used to review it will be developed by the major/ARCO faculty and approved by the DNP APG Committee. Any significant revisions to the format of the examination (e.g., simulation-based exam) must be preapproved prior to implementation.

A minimum grade of 80% is required on Component Two of the examination. The major/ARCO coordinator will send notification of pass/fail of Component Two to the student and the student's advisor. Each major/ARCO director/coordinator will report the results of Component Two to the DNP APG Committee no later than the last day of the term in which the examination was completed. The results will include a list of the students and, for each student, whether they passed or failed on their first, second or third attempt. The DNP APG Committee will inform

necessary stakeholders of the results of the examination.

Failure to Successfully Complete Any Component of the DNP Comprehensive Examination

Students must successfully complete each component of the DNP Comprehensive Examination to be eligible to graduate from the DNP Program. The student's DNP Project Committee will determine when Component One is successfully passed.A minimum grade of 80% is required on Component Two of the examination. If a student fails to achieve at 80% on the first attempt, the advisor will develop a remediation plan that the student must complete prior to repeating the examination. The advisor's permission is required before the examination can be administered a second time. If a student fails to pass Component Two on the second attempt, the major/ARCO coordinator/director, in consultation with the student's advisor, will develop a comprehensive remediation plan that includes a substantial plan of study and/or additional coursework to address the student's deficits on previous attempts to pass the examination. It is expected that remediation prior to taking the examination a third time will usually extend the student's program of study by at least one term. A copy of the remediation plan should be submitted to the DNP APG Committee within 5 business days of meeting with the student. Failure to pass Component Two of the examination after the third attempt will result in the inability to complete the DNP degree.

Administration of the DNP Comprehensive Examination to Online and Distance Education students

Online and Distance Education students who have major/ARCO director/coordinator permission to take the examination remotely will coordinate examination details with their major/ARCO director/coordinator.

APPROVAL & REVISION HISTORY

Reviewed: 4/23, 09/24
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