



Dear Prospective DNP Student,

Thank you for your interest in the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program at Wilmington University. Qualified applicants will have earned a master's degree in nursing from a CCNE accredited institution or a master's degree in a related field from an accredited institution and have significant clinical and/or leadership experience with current national board certification as an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse and/or current employment in an advanced nursing practice specialty (i.e. nursing administration, informatics, or population health). The DNP program is available 100% online with optional virtual synchronous sessions per course and is available with a hybrid format at the Brandywine, Delaware campus. Online cohorts begin three times per year in the Spring, Summer, and Fall. Hybrid cohorts begin two times per year in the Spring and Fall. The application deadline for **Spring** admission is **October 1st**, **Summer** admission is **March 1st** and **Fall** admission is **June 15th**.

Applications are reviewed with a particular emphasis on professional and educational experience, *essay*, and potential for academic success as indicated by graduate grade point averages.

This packet contains several important items:

- Application instructions
- Frequently asked questions

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

If you have any questions about the information contained in this packet, please contact Graduate Admissions at (302) 356-2471 or the Graduate Administrative Assistant for the DNP program at (302) 327-4901. Best wishes as you take the next step in your education!

Sincerely,

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Wilmington University
Doctor of Nursing Practice Program
APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

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

1. Complete an application at [WilmU.edu/Apply](https://wilmu.edu/apply) (\$35 application fee). All supplemental documents can be uploaded via the admissions portal. For instructions how to access the portal, please click here: <https://tinyurl.com/WilmUAdmissionsPortalTutorial>
2. Submit official transcripts directly to the graduate admissions office (address above). Transcripts must reflect an undergraduate degree in nursing and graduate degree in nursing or a related field, a graduate GPA of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale, and be from CCNE accredited institutions (for MSN programs). The only exception to this for applicants who completed a RN to MSN program and did not earn a BSN.
3. Current resume or curriculum vitae.
4. Current RN and APRN licensure (if applicable). Students must meet one of the following criteria: (1) current national board certification as an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse, i.e. Nurse Practitioner, Clinical Nurse Specialist, Nurse Midwife or Nurse Anesthetist. Must submit proof of current national board certification. *Note: APRNs will need to complete a total of 500 experiential engagement hours during the program **OR*** (2) current employment in an advanced practice nursing specialty, i.e. nursing administration, executive leadership, health policy, informatics, or population health. National board certification (i.e. NEA-BC or CPHIMS) is preferred, but not required. *Note: non-APRNs will need to complete a total of 1,000 experiential engagement hours during the program.*
5. One letter of recommendation from a doctorally prepared professional. Recommendation letters should be submitted on letterhead and sent directly from the recommender. *Recommender's Instructions:* please write candidly about the applicant's qualifications and potential to pursue a doctorate in nursing practice. Include the applicant's problem-solving ability, capacity for critical thinking, leadership potential, and ability to effect change in the rapidly evolving healthcare landscape. Descriptions of significant accomplishments and personal qualities related to nursing practice and leadership are particularly helpful.
6. Admissions essay.

The DNP program admission committee will review all application materials and recommend an interview with the DNP program chair or DNP faculty member, if indicated. Decisions of the committee and DNP Program Chair are final.

Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis until a cohort is filled. The application deadline for **Spring** admission is **October 1st**, **Summer** admission is **March 1st** and **Fall** admission is **June 1st**.

Wilmington University

Doctor of Nursing Practice Program

Admissions Essay

Please respond to the following questions in a 1,000 word essay, typed and double spaced. A minimum of two peer-reviewed references from within the last five years must be utilized and cited in APA format.

1. How will earning a DNP contribute to your personal/professional goals and why are you interested in earning a DNP rather than another doctoral degree?
2. What professional experiences have prepared you for doctoral study?
3. Describe a particular area of interest that you believe can be improved as a result of an evidence-based doctoral project. Please also include any other research areas of interest.

Since standardized test scores are not utilized as a criteria for admissions, your responses to these questions are important.

The DNP program faculty team wishes you the best in your quest to pursue doctoral education at Wilmington University!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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

A doctor of philosophy (Ph.D.) is a research intensive doctoral degree. Research-focused programs are designed to prepare nurse scientists and scholars, and focus heavily on scientific content and research methodology. PhD 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 evidence-based, reflecting the application of credible research findings" (AACN, 2006, p. 3). Practice-focused doctoral programs require a practice application-oriented D.N.P. project rather than a knowledge-generating research effort (AACN, 2006, p. 3). The two types of doctoral programs differ in their goals and competencies, 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.

2. Will the DNP change the scope of practice for APRNs?

No, the scope of practice for advanced practice registered nurses will not change. Scope of practice is determined by state nurse practice acts that differ from state to state.

3. Will doctorally prepared nurses 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. APRNs and nurse leaders should retain their specialist titles after completing a doctoral program.

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

Yes, but the DNP degree does not prepare educators per se any more than a Ph.D. program does. Graduates from all doctoral programs (DNP 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.

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

Students will primarily continue to work in the same healthcare areas where they are already employed. However, within the DNP program students will be exposed to a variety of other settings that can open new avenues of employment.

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

No, applicants must have a master's degree in nursing or a related field.

7. How long will it take me to complete the 33-45 credit hour program with 500-1,000 experiential engagement hours?

The DNP Program is designed to be completed in 20-28 months. Core DNP courses will be completed prior to starting the DNP Project. The majority of experiential engagement time is devoted to development of the DNP Project at the end of the program. However, nurse leaders will need to complete additional experiential engagement time concurrently with DNP core courses. A total of 1,000 post-baccalaureate hours must be completed to earn the DNP, as required by the AACN.

8. What is the Course of Study and do I need to come to campus?

The sequence for study is the same for **September, May, and January** admission. The DNP program is available 100% online with no on-site requirements. Two to three virtual optional synchronous sessions are available during each course to facilitate interaction with the students and course faculty. Students have the option to present their final project in person or virtually. A weekend-intensive hybrid cohort option is available twice per year in the Spring and Fall semesters. The course of study is available on the WilmU website:

<http://www.wilmu.edu/health/dnp.aspx>

9. Is there financial aid available?

Yes, a significant number of our students utilize the Guaranteed Student Loan, which is based on need. 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.

Alternatively, several grants and scholarships are available through this website: <http://www.doctorsofnursingpractice.org/resources/grants-and-scholarships/>

10. Is the DNP Program accredited?

Yes! Wilmington University's DNP program received the maximal accreditation term for a new program: 5 years. All nursing programs in the College of Health Professions are fully accredited by the Council for Certification of Nursing Education (CCNE).

11. Does the DNP Program accept transfer credits?

A maximum of six credits may be transferred into the program from doctoral-level courses that are deemed equivalent to the courses in the DNP program. All transfer credit must be approved by the DNP Program Chair.

12. 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 seven-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 period of time. 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 WilmU 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 7 years to complete their program of study must reapply for admission to the DNP Program. Exceptions to the 5-year policy can be made in extenuating circumstances. *Note: once beginning the DNP Project phase of the program, continuous enrollment is required.*