



**COLORADO MESA**  
UNIVERSITY

*Department of Health Sciences*  
*Moss School of Nursing*

*Doctor of Nursing Practice:*  
*Family Nurse Practitioner*  
*(DNP)*



## DNP Program Information Packet

The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree is designed for those nurses who are interested in assuming an advance practice nursing role as a Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP). DNP graduates are prepared as clinical experts in the delivery of primary care, with a focus on critical thinking, leadership, and political policy skills needed to advocate and create changes in healthcare practice at all levels. The program includes 27 credit hours of core knowledge essential for practice as a leader including coursework in nursing theory, research, health information systems, organizational leadership, health policy, quality improvement, statistics, and evidence-based practice; 36 credit hours of advance practice nursing cognate courses that advance the FNP's knowledge and skills so that they are prepared to care for individuals across the lifespan. Content includes key health issues facing our nation related to chronic illness management, health promotion and disease prevention strategies; three credit hours of elective coursework; and six credit hours for a scholarly capstone project. The program includes a minimum of 1000 hours of immersion in clinical practice to build and assimilate knowledge for advanced practice at a high level of complexity. These experiences also provide the context within which the final DNP scholarly project is completed.

The DNP curriculum at Colorado Mesa University is based on the *Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice* (American Association of Colleges of Nursing), the Independent Practice Competencies Primary Care Competencies for the FNP (National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculty). The ten *AACN Essentials* include scientific underpinnings for practice, organizational and systems leadership for quality improvement and safety, clinical scholarship and analytical methods for evidence-based practice, information systems/technology and patient care technology for the improvement and transformation of health care, healthcare policy for advocacy in health care, inter-professional collaboration for improving patient and population health outcomes, clinical prevention and population health for improving health, advance practice nursing, and specialty-focused competencies to prepare graduates for national specialty certification as an advance practice nurse. Graduates are prepared for an advance practice role as a FNP who will demonstrate practice expertise, specialized knowledge, and expanded responsibility and accountability in the care and management of individuals and families.

The DNP program includes three credit hours of elective coursework giving students an opportunity to focus learning in an area of interest depending on their clinical practice setting. Some graduates may choose to focus on building leadership and practice management skills; others may choose elective coursework that prepare them for roles in public health, nursing education or community-based practice settings.

The program is a hybrid format, providing flexibility for students to remain in their current work positions and home communities using online course delivery methods. Opportunities for personal interaction are included with faculty and peers in focused intensive sessions at selected points during each semester. Clinical coursework and immersion experiences will be arranged in primary care settings. Students will likely complete most clinical requirements in their home community, but may need to travel for specialized clinical experiences, including rural health care settings.

The DNP degree is built upon the generalist foundation acquired through a baccalaureate or advanced generalist master's in nursing. The curriculum will be individualized for students based on their prior education and experience. A candidate with a baccalaureate degree would take all courses in the **BSN-to-DNP** program; someone who already possesses a master's degree would complete **post-MSN** courses to achieve competencies not previously attained. Both MSN and DNP students will take similar core content courses in the beginning and diverge onto different educational tracks over time. Some students may choose to complete a MSN on their journey to a DNP; others will focus entirely on the DNP curricula. The DNP is the final step on the nursing career ladder at Colorado Mesa University, which would allow a student to progress through the full range of nursing education options.

**We recommend keeping in touch regarding any possible changes via our website, [www.coloradomesa.edu/healthsciences](http://www.coloradomesa.edu/healthsciences).**

# Doctor of Nursing Practice

## Mission Statement

The graduate nursing programs provide learners with an advanced understanding of the concepts, issues, and practices of a professional practice discipline. This requires the ability to think independently and generate new knowledge with a respect for the diversity among ideas, programs, and people. Graduates develop expertise in a defined body of knowledge and are prepared to provide ethical leadership in the delivery of health services and education. Graduates, as nursing leaders, serve society while promoting and protecting the health of the public through clinical practice, administration, education, and research.

## Program Goals

The goals of the DNP program are for students to:

1. Assume clinical leadership roles in service and academic settings.
2. Influence health policy and systems of health care in local, state, regional, and national forums.
3. Use Information technology and analytic methods to evaluate multiple sources of outcome data.
4. Utilize current practice guidelines and policies, care delivery models, and strategies to impact health outcomes.
5. Develop therapeutic approaches to reduce disparities in the care of families, communities, and populations.
6. Design evidence-based, ethical, safe, and cost-effective strategies that improve health care outcomes for individuals or populations.
7. Incorporate strategies to stay abreast of health care policies and issues.

## Expected Student Outcomes

1. Integrate advanced knowledge of nursing theories, methods of inquiry, humanities, and sciences in the delivery of care to individuals, families, and communities.
2. Lead practice initiatives that influence population health care outcomes with a focus on underserved individuals, families, and communities.
3. Evaluate current and emerging health technologies to improve care delivery and organizational systems.
4. Critique complex primary care clinical situations and health care systems to promote optimal outcomes through evidence-based practice.
5. Advocate for social justice, equity, and ethical policies in health care.
6. Initiate changes in health care systems through the design and implementation of health policies that strengthen the health care delivery system.
7. Facilitate intra- and interprofessional collaboration to address health disparities and to improve health-care quality across diverse populations and cultures.
8. Appraise organizational and system leadership principles in the analysis, delivery, and management of nursing care for safe practice environments.
9. Employ advanced practice nursing to facilitate the delivery of quality, cost-effective, ethical, primary care for families across the lifespan.

## Admission Standards General Requirements

Students wishing to be admitted to the Doctor of Nursing Practice program must:

1. Complete the CMU graduate application and application fees.
2. Possess a baccalaureate degree in nursing from a regionally accredited college or university.
3. Possess a current, unrestricted license to practice as a registered nurse in State of Practice.
4. Have maintained a GPA of 3.0 or better in nursing coursework earned toward a baccalaureate degree in nursing.
5. Have maintained a GPA of 3.0 or better for prior graduate work.
6. Provide two copies of official transcripts from all colleges or universities attended.
7. Provide three letters of professional and academic recommendation.
8. Submit a 2,500 word-count essay demonstrating scholarly writing, critical thinking, depth of analysis and common knowledge of nursing current events.
  - a. This essay is an essential aspect of the admission process and will be carefully evaluated by the faculty in order to make a decision on your direct entry into either the MSN or DNP program. Develop and format your essay according to APA criteria. While specific references are not required it is highly recommended that you support your assertions (as needed) with scholarly peer-reviewed citations.
  - b. The essay should address **two areas**: in the first part, discuss why you are interested in completing a graduate degree in nursing. In the second part, describe the population and problem you are interested in studying for your Capstone project. Consider a problem experienced by this population that you would like to focus your project. Describe one or two evidence-based strategies for improving the practice-based problem. Describe the type of agency and/or specific work until where you would wish to complete your project.
9. Interview, if required, with members of the Graduate Admission Committee.

Candidates meeting all the requirements may be admitted under full status.

Students wishing to take graduate courses not associated with CMU's graduate program must still gain admission to CMU as a non-degree seeking graduate student.

A maximum of nine (9) credit hours may be taken in a "non-degree seeking" status and later applied to program requirements. Only courses with a grade of "B" or better may be applied. A maximum of eighteen (18) graduate credit hours with grades of "B" or better may be transferred from a regionally accredited institution into the program. A student with a prior MSN degree or prior advanced nursing education will have their coursework reviewed on an individual basis.

## Post-Master of Science in Nursing Advanced Placement Admission

Applicants who have a prior MSN degree and/or are prepared as a master's prepared Nurse Practitioner may apply for advanced placement admission to the DNP program. Nurse Practitioners must have national certification and RN licensure as an Advance Nurse Practitioner (ANP). A review of the applicant's portfolio, including prior coursework and/or experience, will be conducted by the Graduate Nursing Faculty and Program Director to determine a course of study to meet all the requirements of the DNP program.

## Graduation Requirements

To graduate from the DNP program, a student must complete the prescribed course of study with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher and complete the capstone DNP scholarly project requirement. Students are expected to complete their program within six (6) years.

## **DNP Capstone Scholarly Project**

Each graduate will complete a capstone DNP scholarly project as part of their course of study. The capstone is a directed project that demonstrates synthesis of the student's doctoral work and lays the groundwork for future scholarship. Emphasis for the project is on use of evidence to improve either practice or patient outcomes. The scholarly project should reflect the student's clinical immersion in a practice setting with a selected population group and will be developed by the student working in conjunction with a faculty member on the topic of study, project design, implementation, and evaluation. Approval from the graduate nursing committee, graduate program director, and academic department head are required.

The project is initiated, developed, conducted, completed, and presented by the student and must relate to as many courses completed in the DNP program as possible. Students must maintain continuous enrollment at CMU while completing their Capstone Project. NURS 750 and 760 are the two three-hour courses designated for the clinical immersion experience and the capstone project. Completion of, or simultaneous enrollment in, all DNP core courses is required prior to the experience. The project will culminate in a formal paper and presentation of the scholarly project in an academic setting.

## **Comprehensive Examinations**

Each DNP student must pass a written and oral comprehensive examination. The purpose of the exams is to demonstrate mastery of student learning outcomes and evaluate the student's ability to analyze, synthesize, evaluate, and communicate knowledge from and interrelationships between the scholarly project and the DNP coursework. The Graduate Nursing Program Director will determine the student's eligibility for taking the examinations as well as scheduling time, date, and place of the examinations. Examinations may not be taken until the student has:

1. completed DNP course requirements;
2. maintained a GPA of at least 3.0;
3. received approval from the Graduate Nursing Program Director.

The student must apply to the Graduate Nursing Program Director for the comprehensive examination and will receive information regarding examination format, procedures, time, date, and place.

1. The DNP written comprehensive exam will normally consist of questions requiring high-level analysis and application of DNP course content.
2. Students will complete a written scholarly paper during NURS 760 as a culmination of the DNP scholarly project and present the paper to the Capstone Committee. Each student's oral comprehensive exam will consist of high-level analysis questions related to their DNP scholarly project and DNP course content.
3. Questions will be developed by graduate nursing faculty. Common institutional questions will also be included to assess mastery of CMU graduate learning outcomes.
4. Comprehensive exam will be scheduled for a two-hour block of time during the last semester of a student's program.
5. Students will not be allowed to access personal computers during the written comprehensive examination.
6. Response to comprehensive exam questions will be graded by graduate nursing faculty. All comprehensive exam questions will be graded as "Pass" or "Fail" on: analytical skills, communication skills, and subject knowledge.
7. Results for each student's comprehensive exam questions will be forwarded to the Graduate Nursing Committee where a final overall comprehensive exam evaluation will be made. Final overall evaluation options are "Pass" or "Fail."
8. Once the examination has been evaluated, the Graduate Nursing Director must return the signed report form to the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs indicating a pass or failure of the examination. This must be done on or before the published deadline to submit the results of the oral comprehensive examination for that semester. In addition, a copy of the final Capstone paper must be sent to Academic Affairs.

# COLORADO MESA UNIVERSITY

Department of Health Sciences

## Common Questions & Answers about the DNP Program (FAQs)

### When are the applications available to apply to the DNP program?

*Applications are available on our website: [www.coloradomesa.edu/healthsciences](http://www.coloradomesa.edu/healthsciences).*

### Is there a deadline to apply to the DNP program?

*Yes, all application materials must be turned into the Department of Health Sciences office no later than November 1<sup>st</sup> for admission to the Spring semester, then every April 1<sup>st</sup> for admission to the Fall semester.*

### How many students are accepted into the DNP program each year?

*We will accept 15 students each semester.*

### Is the GRE required to apply to the DNP program?

*The GRE is required of those applicants whose cumulative undergraduate GPA is less than 3.0.*

### How much is the tuition for classes in the DNP program?

*Each semester credit hour for instate graduate nursing students will be an estimated \$336\*. Thus, a three (3) credit class will cost \$1022 and a four (4) credit class will cost \$1362. \*Note: please contact the Office of the Financial Aid Office for current tuition rates or the CMU website at: <http://www.coloradomesa.edu/businessoffice/expenses.html>.*

### Do I have to be accepted into the University *before* I can be accepted into the nursing program?

*Yes.*

### How long is the DNP program?

*The DNP program is 74 credit hours, which can be taken in your desired structure. Six (6) credit hours per semester are considered full time.*

### How many credit hours are required to complete the DNP program?

*74 credit hours of course work. Core classes will highlight the following: strong foundation in health policy, quality improvement, health information systems; organizational and clinical leadership; health promotion and chronic disease management; nursing theory and research, statistics and evidence-based practice; while you can choose from many areas to fulfill the elective course work. The student completes a capstone project and there is a final oral comprehensive exam.*

**COLORADO MESA UNIVERSITY**  
**Department of Health Sciences**  
**Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Program**  
**Summary Sheet: Checklist for Application**

You may fax items to the Department of Health Sciences, Attention: Renae Phillips at (970) 248-1133.

**This list is to help you meet the DNP Application requirements.**

The following items must be received in the Department of Health Sciences by 12 PM (noon) on the application deadline of April 1<sup>st</sup> for Fall Class Cohort, April 1<sup>st</sup> for Summer Class Cohort or November 1<sup>st</sup> for the Spring Class Cohort.

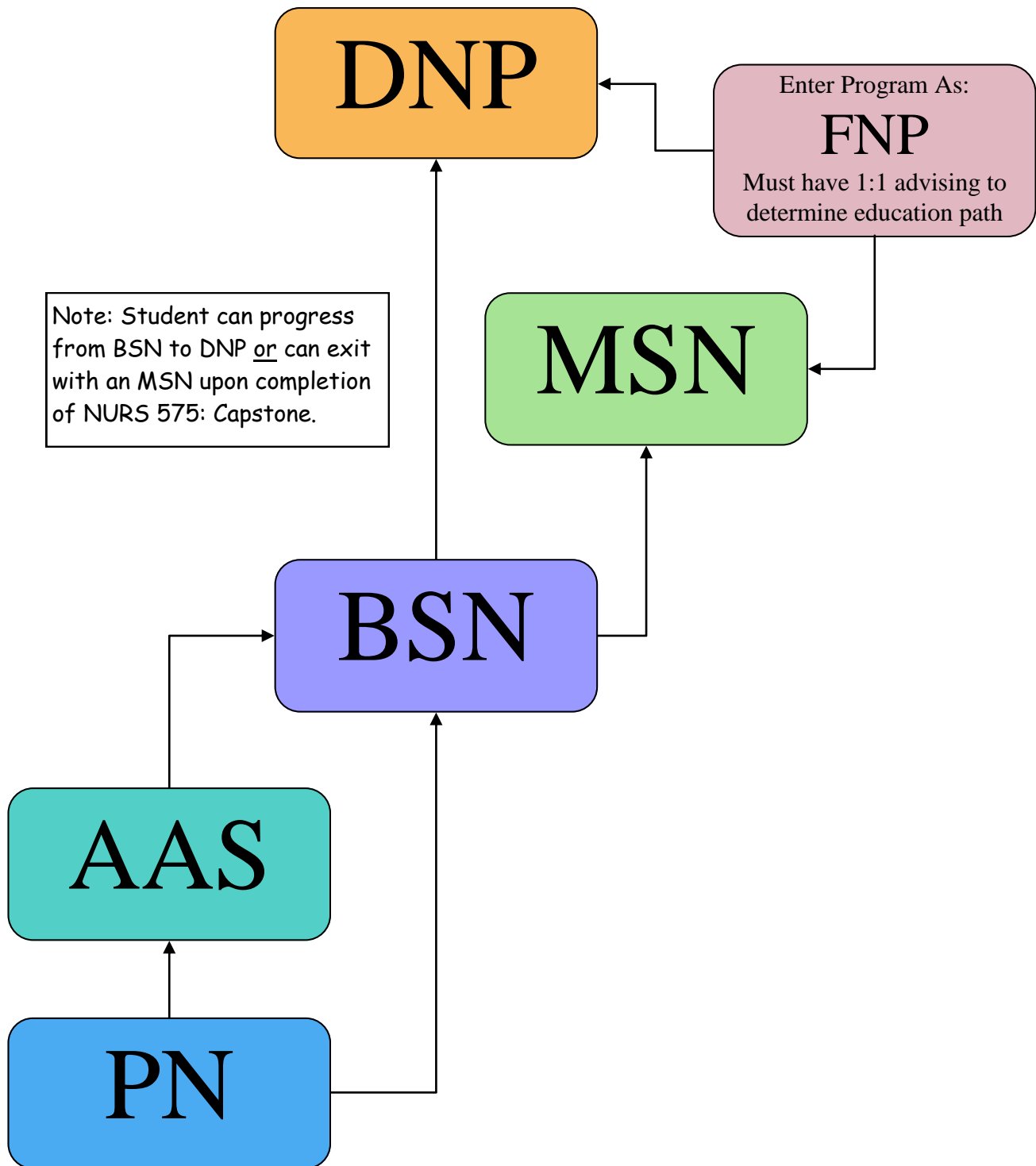
You are encouraged to turn in your application, and then turn in other items as you complete them:

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Complete the Colorado Mesa University graduate application and pay the appropriate application fees (via online admission application process through the Colorado Mesa University Admissions website).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Submit two copies of **OFFICIAL** transcripts from all colleges or universities attended along with the Colorado Mesa University graduate application.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Submit a copy of an unrestricted license to practice as a registered nurse.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Provide three letters of professional and academic recommendation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Submit a 2,500 word-count essay demonstrating scholarly writing, critical thinking, depth of analysis and common knowledge of nursing current events.
  - a. This essay is an essential aspect of the admission process and will be carefully evaluated by the faculty in order to make a decision on your direct entry into either the MSN or DNP program. Develop and format your essay according to APA criteria. While specific references are not required it is highly recommended that you support your assertions (as needed) with scholarly peer-reviewed citations.
  - b. The essay should address **two areas**: in the first part, discuss why you are interested in completing a graduate degree in nursing. In the second part, describe the population and problem you are interested in studying for your Capstone project. Consider a problem experienced by this population that you would like to focus your project. Describe one or two evidence-based strategies for improving the practice-based problem. Describe the type of agency and/or specific work until where you would wish to complete your project.

**It is the student's responsibility to make sure all necessary paperwork is received in the Department of Health Sciences office prior to the deadline.**

*\*\*Applications and application materials are collected until the application deadline. The applications will be processed, reviewed and evaluated after the application deadline. It will take approximately 3-5 weeks for the committee to complete the application review process, then a letter will be sent to all applicants with the committee's decision on admission.\*\**

**Expanding CMU Nursing Career Ladder**





# DNP Curriculum

*Suggested Course Guideline, Core Courses may be taken in any order*

