

# DNP Program FAQs

## What is the Doctorate of Nursing Practice (DNP)?

The Doctorate of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree was introduced by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) after an intensive study of the health care system, incorporating findings and recommendations of many national groups, and years spent in discussion and debate. Based upon the growing complexity of health care compounded by an escalating demand for services, burgeoning growth in scientific knowledge, and the increasing sophistication in technology, the nursing profession's current practice of preparing advanced practice nurses in master's degree programs is no longer adequate (AACN, 2005 *DNP Roadmap Task Force Report*). The DNP program fulfills a strong local, regional, and national need for advanced practice nurses who are doctorally prepared as nurse specialists at the highest level of advanced practice (vs. the PhD degree which prepares nurse researchers and scientists).

The DNP degree prepares nurses to act confidently as reflective: health care leaders, advocates, evidence-based practitioners, decision-makers informed of diverse populations and communities, and clinical faculty. DNPs will be on the forefront of designing, evaluating, and continually improving the context within which health care is delivered.

For more information on the Doctorate of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree please read the following documents:

AACN's Position Statement on the Practice Doctorate in Nursing  
<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/DNP/DNPPositionStatement.htm>

DNP Roadmap Task Force Report  
<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/DNP/pdf/DNProadmapreport.pdf>

The Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice  
<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/DNP/pdf/Essentials.pdf>

## How will a DNP program differ from a PhD program?

A DNP program focuses on preparing clinical nurse leaders for evidence-based practice while the research-based degrees (PhD, DNSc/DNS) focus on preparing nurse researchers and scientists. According to the AACN's DNP Roadmap Task Force Report (<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/DNP/pdf/DNProadmapreport.pdf>), DNP programs should educate nurses, "in translating research in practice, evaluating evidence, applying research in decision-making, and implementing viable clinical innovations to change practice" and "prepare nurse specialists at the highest level of advanced practice."

Please view the *AACN Contrast Grid of the Key Differences between DNP and*

*PhD/DNSc/DNS Programs* on page 53 of the DNP Roadmap Task Force Report (<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/DNP/pdf/DNProadmapreport.pdf> )

## Is the Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences' DNP program completely online?

### Will I need to come to campus for on- site learning or orientations?

The DNP program at the Beth-El College of Nursing & Health Sciences at UCCS is 100% online. No on-site learning or orientations are required.

**Since the program is 100% online does that mean there are no clinical hours?**

No, clinical hours are required to fulfill the learning goals of the Doctorate of Nursing Practice degree. Students are permitted to choose where their clinical hours (residency and Capstone Project) are completed as long as the location is pre-approved by the program.

**What are the skills required to do an online program? What kind of equipment will I need?**

Please view the Online Education section of our web site for specific details

([http://www.uccs.edu/~bethel/online\\_education.htm#CompRequire](http://www.uccs.edu/~bethel/online_education.htm#CompRequire) ).

**Will I have any interaction with other students?**

Yes, students interact with each other on a daily basis participating in online discussion forums, providing feedback, completing group projects and supporting each other.

**What is the Self-Defined clinical specialty option?**

All students must choose a clinical specialty as a part of the DNP program. The current specialty options are: Holistic Nursing, Geriatric Nursing, and Self-Defined.

The Self-Defined clinical specialty allows students to design their own specialty based on their clinical interests and current practice. During their first semester of the DNP program students who choose the Self-Defined option must decide on a clinical specialty and find 3 graduate-level courses that fulfill the learning objectives for the chosen specialty. These courses must be pre-approved by the department, taken at an accredited institution and be transfer credits with a grade of “B” or better. It is the responsibility of the student to find and complete the 3 courses if they choose the Self-Defined specialty option.

**How many clinical hours are required? Can I complete those at my current practice?**

Students complete a minimum of 800 clinical hours in their Clinical Residencies and Capstone Projects. These hours can be completed at the student’s place of employment with pre-approval.

**What is the DNP Capstone Project?**

All students in the Beth-El College of Nursing & Health Sciences’ Doctorate of Nursing Practice (DNP) program must complete a Capstone Project. The Capstone Project reflects the synthesis of knowledge, Reflective Practice and skills developed during the DNP program while demonstrating competency in the AACN *Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice*. The primary focus of this innovative, creative Capstone Project is to focus the student on the development, implementation, and evaluation of a pilot research or program development project. This project will be implemented within their practice setting with the goal to inform the methods the student uses to deliver care and educate individuals within a set population/community.

**How long will the program take? Can I go part-time?**

The program takes 2 years (6 **consecutive** semesters) to complete. We currently do not offer a part-time option.

### **How many hours per week should I expect to spend on DNP program coursework and clinical hours?**

Current students in the DNP program at Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences report spending an average of 30-40 hours a week on their doctorate studies.

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

This question is addressed by the AACN on page 49 of the *DNP Roadmap Task Force Report* at <http://www.aacn.nche.edu/DNP/pdf/DNProadmapreport.pdf>.

They state:

Though a doctorate is the appropriate degree for a faculty role, the DNP program is not designed to prepare educators per se, any more than a PhD does. Graduates from all doctoral programs (PhD or DNP) who wish to be educators should have additional preparation that adds pedagogical skills to their base of clinical practice.

For students wishing to teach in an academic setting, Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences offers a Nursing Education Certificate for DNP students to enhance teaching skills. Students interested in these courses should discuss this option with their advisor.

<b>Nursing Education Certificate</b>
NURS 619 Educational Measurement and Evaluation
NURS 620 Curriculum Development in Nursing
NURS 621 Transformational Teaching Strategies
NURS 771: Clinical Practicum in Nursing Education
Or
NURS 772: Classroom Practicum in Nursing Education

### **Is a master's degree in nursing required for admission to the DNP program?**

Yes. The DNP program at Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences builds upon the base of a Master's Degree in Nursing Preparation in Nurse Practitioner (NP) and Clinical Nurse Specialty (CNS) programs. We will offer a BSN to DNP program in the future.

### **Do I need to take the GRE to apply to the DNP program?**

NO, the GRE is not required for admission to the program. View a complete list of admission requirements (<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/DNP/pdf/DNProadmapreport.pdf>) for the Doctorate of Nursing Practice Program at Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences at UCCS.

### **How much will the program cost me?**

Please view tuition costs here:

- **Colorado Resident** (<http://www.uccs.edu/~bursar/pages/tuition.shtml>)
- **Non-Resident/Extended Studies** ([http://www.uccs.edu/~bethel/extended\\_studies.htm](http://www.uccs.edu/~bethel/extended_studies.htm))
  - Non-Residents may want to contact Deidre Green at 719.262.4486 or [dgreen@uccs.edu](mailto:dgreen@uccs.edu) for registration options

### **How do I apply?**

Obtain a DNP program application by:

- contacting Bethany Miller at (719)262-4354 or [bmiller2@uccs.edu](mailto:bmiller2@uccs.edu) to request that an application be mailed to you
- download an application from our web site  
<http://www.uccs.edu/~bethel/dnp.htm#Application>

### **18. How do I request more information?**

For more information please contact Bethany Miller at 719-262-4354 or [bmiller2@uccs.edu](mailto:bmiller2@uccs.edu)

## DNP Program Features

- **Doctorate of Nursing Practice (DNP) Program is entirely online**  
Students complete all didactic coursework online while negotiating a location of their choice to complete clinical hours.
- **Cohorts of 15-20 students**
- **Program completion in 2 years**  
Students begin the DNP program during the summer semester and progress through 6 semesters of full-time study (6-7 credits per semester)
- **Coursework that addresses the need to prepare professionals for leadership in the care of diverse, rural, underserved, and/or vulnerable populations**  
The Bureau of Health Professions (BHPr) (<http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/>), a division of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) (<http://www.hrsa.gov/>), seeks to increase access to high quality, culturally competent health care for diverse, rural, underserved, and medically vulnerable populations. In July 2007 HRSA awarded the Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs a 3 year *Advanced Education Nursing* grant to implement the Doctorate of Nursing Practice (DNP) program with the focus of preparing APNs to:
  - Increase the quality of health care and eliminate health disparities by increasing diversity and cultural competency in the nursing workforce
  - Serve diverse populations and practice in the nation's Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) (<http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/shortage/>), Medically Underserved Areas (MUAs), and Medically Underserved Populations (MUPs)
  - Expand access to high-quality, culturally competent health care services to diverse, rural, underserved, underinsured, or medically vulnerable populations

Please visit HRSA's Cultural Competence Resources for Health Care Providers page at:  
<http://www.hrsa.gov/culturalcompetence/>

- **A Philosophical Framework of Reflective Practice**  
Reflective Practice is the theoretical model that guides the curriculum of Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences' DNP program. Reflective Practice is a holistic practice theory that supports practitioners on using reflection as way of uncovering information and incidents in practice that can inform and transform present and future practice techniques. DNP students will learn and apply Reflective Practice in each course guided by the textbooks of Reflective Practice expert, Professor Christopher Johns. The outcome is often a repatterning and discovery of new ways to implement knowledge and techniques in practice. Visit [http://nursingsociety.org/RNL/3Q\\_2007/features/feature3.html](http://nursingsociety.org/RNL/3Q_2007/features/feature3.html) for more information on Reflective Practice.
- **Experienced and multidisciplinary faculty**

- **Individualized capstone experience**

The Capstone Project enables students to apply the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) *Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice* (<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/DNP/pdf/Essentials.pdf>) while engaging in their new role as a self-determining practitioner and innovative leader in their area of expertise/interest. This project will be implemented within their practice setting with the goal to inform the methods the student uses to deliver care and educate individuals within a set population/community.

The Doctorate of Nursing Practice (DNP) represents the highest level of preparation in evidence-based nursing practice and leadership.

The Beth-El College at UCCS DNP program is based upon the *Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice* as approved by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing in October 2006, and the accrediting body for DNP programs, the Commission of Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE).\*

The vision of the Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences at UCCS to offer a DNP program was realized in 2007 with the support of a grant from the Division of Nursing (DN), Bureau of Health Professions (BHP), Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

This practice-focused terminal degree builds upon and expands the competencies of the master's prepared Nurse Practitioner (NP) and Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS). Nurses are prepared for the highest level of evidence-based practice and leadership with a curriculum incorporating:

- Developing models of leadership and practice guided by Reflective Practice and evidence-based knowledge
- Organizational systems management
- Health care policy, ethics, and law
- Business and entrepreneurial practices in APN
- Evidence-based research and practice
- Population-based healthcare and epidemiological knowledge
- Transformation of care within diverse, rural, underserved, and/or vulnerable populations
- Use of technology and information systems for the improvement and transformation of patient-centered health care and communications

In order to meet the diverse needs of the modern student, the Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences' DNP program is offered **completely online**. Students are not required to visit the Beth-El campus during the entirety of the program.

\* CCNE recently completed a list of DNP program requirements and will begin reviewing DNP programs for accreditation during the 2008-2009 academic year. The Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences DNP program plans to undergo the accreditation process in 2010.

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