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## Frequently Asked Questions about the Doctor of Nursing Practice

### Why a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)?

- A Doctor of Nursing Practice prepares nurses for advanced clinical practice, leadership, management of health care delivery systems, and to influence health policy.
- DNP education provides nurses with the knowledge and skills to meet the challenges of an increasingly complex health care system.
- DNP educated nurses can help meet the need for more primary care providers, nurse faculty, and nurse leaders.

### How is the DNP different from a PhD?

- A PhD prepares a nurse to be a nurse scientist and researcher who generates new knowledge.
- A DNP prepares a nurse for advanced practice and the application of research into practice.

### What type of DNP programs do schools of nursing offer?

Programs educate advanced practice registered nurses practitioners (APRNs) including nurse practitioners, nurse anesthetists, nurse-midwives and clinical nurse specialists.

Programs educate nurses for enhanced clinical roles, leadership roles, management and teaching, health policy, and areas of specialization such as integrative health and healing.

### How long does it take to earn a DNP?

- A post-master's DNP can typically be earned in one or two years full time.
- A post-BSN DNP degree can be earned in three or four years full time.
- Many DNP programs have part-time options that allow flexibility for nurses who continue to work.

### Will master's programs for APRNs continue to exist?

- Some schools of nursing may only offer a master's degree program by choice or because they are unable to grant doctoral degrees.
- Some schools of nursing will offer both master's and doctoral education.
- Some schools of nursing will offer the DNP as the only option to become an APRN.

### Will the DNP be required for licensure as an APRN?

- None of the state boards of nursing has changed rules to require a DNP for new applicants for licensure as an APRN.
- When state boards of nursing have changed rules to require a master's or graduate degree for licensure as an APRN, the requirement has not applied to already licensed APRNs.

Does the APRN Consensus Model require APRNs to have a DNP?

- The model does not require APRNs to have a DNP.
- The model does require that APRN programs be accredited and that graduates are eligible for national certification.

Does the DNP create a barrier to addressing the nursing shortage?

- Effectively addressing the nursing shortage requires a greater supply of well-educated registered nurses. There are some DNP programs that admit students who become registered nurses as part of the program.
- A DNP prepares highly skilled APRNs, faculty and other advanced practice nurses who can address the shortage of primary care providers, faculty and nurse leaders.
- Many students continue to work while enrolled in DNP programs.
- The additional time required for a student to complete a BSN-DNP program can be offset by increasing the number of DNP programs.

How many DNP programs are there?

- There are over 150 DNP programs with over 100 more programs in the planning stages.
- Based on a survey in 2010, there were just over 7,000 students enrolled in DNP programs and almost 1300 graduates that year.

### **Contact for Questions**

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