

Doctor of Nursing

Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)



Advance to the highest level of nursing practice.

Become a leader in professional practice or healthcare systems innovation. Changes in healthcare delivery, recent reforms, and an aging population have more Americans accessing healthcare, intensifying the shortage of primary care providers and advocates for healthcare improvements.

The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree offers program tracks to accommodate a range of career goals. The Professional Practice Track is designed for Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) to elevate their clinical nursing careers. Graduates are prepared to lead interdisciplinary healthcare teams and improve systems of care, patient outcomes, quality, and safety.

The Systems Leadership Track prepares nurses for leadership and management roles creating or redesigning systems to meet the demands of the complex healthcare market. This track offers two entry options: one for non-nurse practitioners who hold a Master of Science in Nursing degree, and another for those with a BSN and a master's degree in a health-related field outside of nursing.

Choose Rivier

The DNP program structure allows you to complete your coursework, practicums, and scholarly project in less than three years of full-time study. Most students pursue their doctorates while continuing in their current positions, affording them the opportunity to apply what they learn as they work through the program. Through the supportive, online learning environment, fellow students will enrich your education with their experiences.



Course Format
Online coursework



#1 Ranked
nursing school
in New Hampshire



2.5-6.5 Years
estimated program
length



Top 50 Ranked
private nursing
school in the nation



39-69 Credits
to complete
program



**Multiple
Entry Points**
based on degree entry



Doctor of Nursing Practice

Course of Study

The DNP course of study varies based on your current education and experience. Two tracks address career options.

Professional Practice Track

Entry with Successful Completion of an APRN Certification Exam – Total Credits: 39

Prerequisite: Successful completion of a graduate (500 level or above) statistics course.

The DNP Professional Practice Track is designed for advanced practice nurses (APRN's) who have earned a master's degree in nursing and have passed a certification exam. Typically, these students enter the DNP program with 500 supervised practicum hours earned in their previous master's degree program, and they will complete an additional 500 hours in the DNP program working towards the completion of their DNP Scholarly Project. This track can be completed full-time in 2.5 years (5 semesters), or part-time in 4.5 years (9 semesters).

REQUIRED CORE COURSES

BUSS 559	Healthcare Finance
BUSS 632	Healthcare Information Systems
NURS 601	Quality Healthcare Improvement
NURS 610	Advanced Health Policy
NURS 802	Interpretation of Quantitative Research for Healthcare
NURS 805	Health Research Methods
NURS 810	Epidemiology in Advanced Practice Nursing
NURS 815	Evidence Based Leadership Practices

REQUIRED PRACTICUM COURSES

NURS 895 Doctoral Practicum/Seminar
Students complete 12 credits.

Systems Leadership Track

Entry with an Earned Master of Science in Nursing Degree – Total Credits: 39 - 47

Prerequisite: Successful completion of a graduate (500 level or above) statistics course.

This Post-Master's to DNP track allows students who have already completed a master's degree in nursing to receive credit for previously completed practicum hours as part of their MSN degree, and their program of studies is individualized so the total number of practicum hours earned towards the DNP degree is 1,000 hours. This track can be completed full-time in 2.5 years (5 semesters) if entering with 500 hours of previous supervised practicum hours, and part-time in 4.5 years (9 semesters).

REQUIRED CORE COURSES

BUSS 559	Healthcare Finance
BUSS 632	Healthcare Information Systems
BUSS 659	Crisis Management and Conflict Resolution
NURS 601	Quality Healthcare Improvement
NURS 610	Advanced Health Policy
NURS 802	Interpretation of Quantitative Research for Healthcare
NURS 805	Health Research Methods
NURS 810	Epidemiology in Advanced Practice Nursing
NURS 815	Evidence-Based Leadership Practices

REQUIRED PRACTICUM COURSES

NURS 715 Leadership Capstone Practicum
If entering with less than 500 practicum hours.

**2–4 credits per semester; repeat to a max of 8 credits.*

DNP Scholarly Project

For both DNP tracks, you are required to complete a **Scholarly Project**; projects address complex practice issues that affect groups of patients, healthcare organizations, or healthcare systems utilizing informatics, technology, and in-depth knowledge of the clinical and behavioral sciences. Over the four clinical practicum semesters, a DNP student will form a Scholarly Project Team, minimally including the student, a faculty guide, and an external expert who has expertise in the student's identified topic of interest. The student will develop, implement, evaluate, and disseminate a sustainable, evidence-based project targeted to improve patient safety and quality of care in a complex healthcare system.

Faculty with Real-World Experience



Donna Proulx, Ph.D., RN, CCRN, CSC

Assistant Professor of Nursing, Rivier University

Director of Graduate and Doctoral Nursing Programs

Dr. Donna Proulx, Ph.D., RN, CCRN, CSC is working to advance substance use disorders treatment for vulnerable populations. Her doctoral research was a qualitative inquiry titled “The Lived Experience of Postpartum Women Attending Outpatient Substance-Abuse Treatment for Opioid or Heroin Use.” She holds two certifications in critical care from the American Association of Critical Care Nurses (ACCN)—one in adult critical care (CCRN) and a second in adult cardiac surgery (CSC)—and is a past president of the New Hampshire Chapter of ACCN.

Systems Leadership Bridge Option – BSN to DNP

Entry with a BSN and an Earned Master Degree Outside of Nursing – Total Credits: 61 - 69

The DNP Systems Leadership Bridge Track is designed for registered nurses who have earned a BS in Nursing and a master’s degree in a field outside of nursing (MBA, MPH, etc.), or an MS in Nursing. Students will earn 1,000 clinical hours as part of their degree, as required by national standards. This track can be completed full-time in five years (15 semesters), and part-time in 6.5 years (19 semesters).

REQUIRED CORE COURSES

BUSS 569	Healthcare Administration
BUSS 559	Healthcare Finance
BUSS 632	Healthcare Information Systems
BUSS 654	Compliance and Risk Management in Healthcare Settings
BUSS 659	Crisis Management and Conflict Resolution
NURS 570	Advanced Nursing Leadership Theory
NURS 571P	Advanced Nursing Leadership Practicum
NURS 601	Quality Healthcare Improvement
NURS 602	Evidence-Based Practice in Nursing & Healthcare
NURS 610	Advanced Health Policy
NURS 620	Biostatistics for the Health Sciences
NURS 802	Interpretation of Quantitative Research for Healthcare
NURS 805	Health Research Methods
NURS 810	Epidemiology in Advanced Practice Nursing
NURS 815	Evidence-Based Leadership Practices

REQUIRED PRACTICUM COURSES

NURS 715	Leadership Capstone Practicum
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If entering with less than 500 practicum hours.

**2–4 credits per semester; repeat to a max of 8 credits.*

NURS 895 Doctoral Practicum/Seminar
Students complete 12 credits.

Academic Accreditation

Rivier University is accredited by the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE).



Rivier University’s ASN, BSN, MSN, Post-Master’s Certificates, and DNP programs located in Nashua, New Hampshire, are accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN), 3390 Peachtree Road NE, Suite 1400, Atlanta, GA 30326, (404) 975-5000.



The most recent accreditation decision made by the ACEN Board of Commissioners for the doctoral nursing program is Continuing Accreditation. View the public information disclosed by the ACEN regarding this program at rivier.edu/ACEN.

Application Requirements

To apply to Rivier's Doctor of Nursing Practice program, please submit:

1. A completed DNP online application via rivier.edu/apply.
2. Official transcripts from all undergraduate and graduate institutions where you have received degrees and/or course credit.
3. Current resume or curriculum vitae.
4. Two recommendation letters in sealed envelopes. One letter must be from a direct supervisor or professional who can address your clinical expertise and/or leadership potential. The second letter may also be a professional recommendation or else a recent academic instructor who may address your professional strengths as a student. These letters should be submitted in sealed envelopes, or else mailed directly to the Office of Graduate Admissions via U.S. mail or email with the DNP applicant's name in the subject line. These letters may also be sent electronically directly from the author to admissions@rivier.edu.
5. A copy of your unencumbered, active APRN license in the state where your practicums will be conducted is required for the Professional Practice Track. A copy of your unencumbered, active RN license in the state where your practicums will be conducted is required for the Systems Leadership Track.
6. A Statement of Purpose (1-2 pages) that gives your reasons for pursuing the DNP and shows how your interests align with one of the eight AACN Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice. Keep in mind this exercise may be a springboard to the scholarly project you will develop as part of the DNP.
7. Evidence of a completed graduate-level statistics/biostatistics course in the post-master's entry only.
8. Documentation of the number of supervised clinical hours completed in a previous earned master's degree program (must be a minimum of 500 hours).
9. Completion of nursing practicum form.
10. Graduate grade-point average of 3.2 or better on a 4.0 scale. Candidates with less than a 3.2 grade-point average meeting the above criteria may be considered after interviewing with Graduate Nursing Faculty. A visit to campus is not required.

DNP Program Start Dates

New terms begins each September, January, and May. Applications are reviewed throughout the year, and students are accepted on a rolling admissions basis.

Application Process

1. Complete and submit an application online at apply.rivier.edu.
2. Review all application requirements and request official transcripts be sent to Rivier University.
3. Send supplemental documents to Rivier to complete your application portfolio. (Your resume/CV and statement of purpose can be uploaded with your application or sent separately after application submission.)
4. Ask questions by contacting us at (603) 897-8507 or email admissions@rivier.edu.

Supplemental documents should be sent via email to admissions@rivier.edu or mailed to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies Admissions, Rivier University, 420 South Main Street, Nashua, NH 03060.

Acceptance into the Program

Rivier will provide you with notifications on your application status throughout the process. Once your application portfolio is complete, you may be invited to interview with the Doctoral Program Admissions Committee. Normally, notification of acceptance is provided within 14 days of application portfolio completion.

Quick Links



Ask a Question
admissions@rivier.edu



Talk to an Enrollment Counselor
rivier.edu/team



Schedule a Visit
events.rivier.edu



Tuition & Fees
rivier.edu/tuition