14.6 The Doctor of Nursing Practice

The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) is a joint program offered by The University of Alabama Capstone College of Nursing (UACCN), the University of Alabama in Huntsville College of Nursing (UAHCON), and the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Nursing (UABSON).

The DNP is a practice-focused degree to prepare graduates to function at the highest level in specialty practice or to assume leadership positions in health care. Graduates of the DNP program focus on providing care with an emphasis on improving quality and access to underserved and diverse populations. Graduates employ abilities and skills in these areas to advocate for reasonable, rational, and data-driven health regulations, standards, and practices; sustain collaborative and strategic relationships, promote innovative, effective health care programs; and form partnerships with diverse groups to address health disparities.

For most students, the post-master’s DNP curriculum is a minimum of 34 credits that includes the development of a practice or leadership focused project. This scholarly project is designed to synthesize scholarship in an advanced practice specialty or an area of healthcare leadership and serves as a capstone program experience. All courses are offered in a distance accessible format, and students will develop the scholarly project under the direction of program faculty and clinical advisors.

Degree Completion Requirements

The Doctor of Nursing Practice will be awarded to the student who has met the following requirements:

- GPA of 3.0 or higher
- good standing at the time of graduation
- successful completion of the scholarly project
- successful completion of the required coursework and scholarly project hours

Clinical Hours for Degree Completion

A minimum of 1000 graduate clinical hours (MSN + DNP) is required for completion of the DNP degree. Five hundred forty of these hours will be earned in the DNP program, and the remaining hours must be documented at the master’s level. Students who do not have sufficient clinical hours will be required to complete additional clinical hours as determined by the ADGP prior to the beginning of DNP courses. In such cases, 60 clinical hours are the equivalent of 1 semester credit hour.