



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

State of DNP Graduates and their Impact on Practice DNP Outcomes Study

Background:

In October 2014, AACN released the results of a national study titled, *The DNP by 2015: A Study of the Institutional, Political, and Professional Issues that Facilitate or Impede Establishing a Post-Baccalaureate Doctor of Nursing Practice Program*. The Board commissioned the RAND Corporation to complete this assessment to identify issues facing schools moving to transition to the DNP, including market demand, institutional barriers, state policy and/or regulatory structures, university system constraints, sociological factors, and issues related to resources and financial impact.

The first recommendation from the RAND report was that AACN should conduct and collaborate with others to conduct outcome studies of DNP practice to better understand the impact of DNP graduates on patient and systems outcomes. At that time, it was determined that there were too few graduates with DNP degrees in practice to complete a study of this nature (no critical mass). Now after six years, data generated from an outcomes study could inform academic programs in designing curricula as well as assist employers and healthcare organizations to understand the benefits of recruiting DNP-prepared nurses.

Other findings from the RAND report that support the need for a DNP Outcomes Study are:

- 1) The report authors found near “universal agreement” among nursing’s academic leaders regarding the value of DNP education in preparing nurses to serve in one of the four APRN roles, specifically Nurse Practitioners, Clinical Nurse Specialists, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists, and Certified Nurse-Midwives.
- 2) The schools interviewed perceived that many employers are unclear about the differences between master’s-prepared and DNP-prepared APRNs and could benefit from information on outcomes connected to DNP practice as well as exemplars from practice settings that capitalize on the capabilities of DNPs.
- 3) The requirement of the DNP for certification and accreditation is an important factor in a school’s decision to transition fully to the BSN-DNP.

At its January 2020 meeting, the AACN Board of Directors discussed next steps from the RAND report. The Board voted to commission a study to understand the state of the DNP graduates and their contributions to advanced nursing practice.

Deliverables: This study should uncover the current state of DNP graduates. Elements to include (but are not limited to):

- Demographics:
 - Age, race, ethnicity, geographical region, gender, educational path (BSN to DNP, post-MSN, etc.)
- DNPs in practice and education:

- Employment options - Identify current positions by title assumed by DNP graduates working in practice settings and academia (i.e. Chief Nursing Officer; Nurse Practitioner; professor); verify if graduates maintained their current position, assumed new responsibilities, or obtained a new position following degree attainment
- What motivates employers to hire DNP graduate?
- Are DNP graduates used differently from master's-prepared nurses?
- Are DNP graduates compensated differently by employers compared to other graduates (i.e. BSN, MSN, PhD)?
- Perceptions of DNP preparation
 - Describe how graduates working in the practice arena believe their educational preparation and competence has prepared them to impact the care of patients and systems, including quality of care, system innovation/redesign, organizational policy change, etc.
 - Describe how graduates working in academia believe their educational preparation and competence has prepared them to teach and augment nursing education programs.
 - Describe how employers perceive the benefits of the educational preparation and competency of DNP graduates and what knowledge/competency gaps, if any, may persist
- Assessing impact
 - Application of knowledge - Describe how DNP graduates are applying the knowledge gained in their academic programs in the work environment.
 - Describe the impact of DNP graduates compared to other nursing graduates on patient and system outcomes, quality of care, leadership, education, and policy development.
 - Identify what metrics practice sites are using to assess the impact of DNP graduates.
 - Describe if/how patient and system outcomes differ with graduates of post-MSN versus post-BSN DNP programs.
 - Describe academic-practice partnerships that advance DNP practice. Models of academic partnerships with other schools or other agencies/communities should be included.
- Assessing DNP program quality
 - Detail AACN's expectations related to maintaining quality in DNP programs
 - Describe the variability that exists in how DNPs are prepared (i.e., educational pathways, program delivery method, credit hours, clinical hour requirements)
 - Determine if this variability impacts level of competence and outcomes in practice
 - Make recommendations related to sustaining quality in DNP programs

The final report also must include specific action items for AACN to support the national movement of advanced nursing practice preparation at the DNP level. Vendors responding to this RFP must outline their plan for conducting the study, including methodology, detailed timeline for completion, and budget. In addition, responses to this RFP will be evaluated based on the applicant's experience mounting similar studies, a demonstrated understanding of the issues associated with this transition within nursing education, and an understanding of the relationship between education, patient, and healthcare outcomes. Note: Academic institutions are not eligible to submit proposals in response to this solicitation.

Technical Support: AACN maintains the nation’s premiere database on enrollment and graduation data from the nation’s nursing schools with baccalaureate and graduate programs. AACN will furnish contact information for nursing schools and provide expert advice on how to interpret findings in consultation with the selected vendor.

Timeline:

RFP Issued:	Tuesday, September 29, 2020
Technical Assistance Calls:	Individually arranged as needed
Proposal Due Date:	Friday, November 13, 2020
Vendor Selected:	Monday, December 14, 2020

Resources: To assist in the preparation of proposals and enhance understanding about the state of the DNP, please see the following:

DNP Fact Sheet <https://www.aacnnursing.org/News-Information/Fact-Sheets/DNP-Fact-Sheet>

The DNP by 2015: A Study of the Institutional, Political, and Professional Issues that Facilitate or Impede Establishing a Post-Baccalaureate Doctor of Nursing Practice Program.
<https://www.aacnnursing.org/Portals/42/DNP/DNP-Study.pdf>

The Doctor of Nursing Practice: Current Issues and Clarifying Recommendations
<https://www.aacnnursing.org/Portals/42/DNP/DNP-Implementation.pdf>

AACN Position Statement on the Practice Doctorate in Nursing
<https://www.aacnnursing.org/Portals/42/News/Position-Statements/DNP.pdf>

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