

## DNP Scholarly Project Paper Guidelines\*

### Bradley University

These guidelines should serve as a rough guide for the DNP Scholarly Paper. All sections should be present in your paper/project, with a few exceptions depending on the project design.

Several explanations/descriptions are given, but these serve as examples and can vary depending on the type of project you are implementing. Please consult with your DNP Project Team chairperson and make sure you are clear as to the extent and detail needed under each component.

Course	Component	Description
625	Title	Briefly describes the project, population and setting
827	Abstract	Concisely summarizes key project information (proposal) in one double-spaced paragraph (150-250 words)
<b>Introduction (<i>Why did you start?</i>)</b>		
625	Introduction to Problem	Why did you select this area of interest for your project? Basic overview of project and describes the contribution it will make to change practice and impact outcomes.
625	Background & Significance	Describe the impetus to the project, the relevance of the topic, and prevalence and scope of the potential problem. Why is it important for this work to be completed? Description of the problem/gap includes: population affected, what is currently happening, why the audience should care, what we currently know, and what we need to find out. The significance is explained in detail to include the impact/status of the problem/gap on population, cost, policy, education, healthcare, and beyond. Describe the characteristics of the organization in which the problem occurs.
625	Needs Assessment	Verification that the phenomenon of interest is worth exploring. Describes the current state of the phenomenon, how the proposed project could address the findings, as well as potential project impact. Specify process used, such as SWOT analysis or community assessment.
625	Problem Statement	Concise statement that clearly articulates the breadth and depth of the problem, why it is a concern, and why it should be evaluated. Justify the need for embarking on this project.
625	Project Aim or Purpose	Describes what the project will involve and what it will accomplish. This is a broad reflection of the focus of your project. Identify specific project objectives that are explicitly related to project aim(s): Objectives are measurable actions which support project aim; use SMART format: specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, timely.
625	Clinical Question/PICOT	State precisely the primary question and any secondary questions that the intervention is being designed to answer. Use

		PICOT format.
625	Congruence with organizational strategic plan	How does the project align with organizational or community strategic plan, mission, and vision?
625	Synthesis of Evidence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Literature search strategy, databases used, selection criteria, publication years included in search, inclusion/exclusion criteria with rationale</li> <li>2. Minimum of 20 articles</li> <li>3. Thorough review and critical analysis of the literature</li> <li>4. Synthesis of the evidence supporting the problem statement and identifies gaps in knowledge. Interventions should be evaluated for effectiveness as related to the Scholarly Project. There must be adequate evidence to support the proposed problem and the subsequent recommendation for practice change.</li> <li>5. Completion of <i>Evidence Evaluation Table</i></li> </ol>
625	Conceptual or Theoretical Framework	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identifies the theoretical underpinnings of the project to support change and provide a framework for the project</li> <li>2. Description of the model or framework to be used to guide the project</li> <li>3. Justification and relevance of the framework to the clinical question</li> </ol>
<b>**Methods (What did you do?)</b>		
725	Project Design	Identify the type of project to be implemented (e.g., quality improvement project, pilot study, rapid improvement cycle, Evidence-based practice initiative, experimental, non-experimental)
725	Setting	Describe the environment in which the project will take place (e.g., type of facility, number of beds, rationale for selecting this setting). What are the relevant elements of the setting (geography, physical resources, organizational culture, staffing or leadership issues)
725	Population/Sample	Describe the population attributes, approximate size of population you will be using, sampling procedures, inclusion/exclusion criteria, recruitment plan, how this patient population and unit/department/setting compares to those described in the literature.

725	Tools and/or instruments	Description of tools that will be used to evaluate the phenomenon of interest (questionnaires, evaluation forms, surveys). Is the tool established or developed by the student? If established, provide description of the tool and description of reliability and validity. If tool is developed by student, describe how it will be developed and evidence that supports its development. Provide copy of tool/instrument in appendix. Provide copy of permission to use tool in appendix.
725	Project Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Detailed step by step description of the interventions or implementation process. Include flow charts/diagrams in appendix as needed. Why were these interventions chosen (rationale)? What factors contributed to your choice of intervention(s)?</li> <li>2. Outcomes that will be measured (SMART objectives):       <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. How will you measure the success of implementing the change/innovation?</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Procedures for data collection:       <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Identify who will collect data and how they will be trained. If more than one person is collecting data, discuss how you will determine inter-rater reliability.</li> <li>b. Describe the process for data collection (e.g., access to data, privacy provision, administration of the tool, any anticipated barriers to data collection).</li> <li>c. Identify time frame for data collection (e.g., before you implement the change and after implementation).</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Evaluation and Sustainability Plan: Identify a plan to evaluate the results of the project and/or analyze the data. What sustainability measures will be in place to sustain results and prevent regression?</li> <li>5. Timeline of your project – include in appendix</li> </ol>
725	Data Analysis	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe the process that will be used to analyze the data. Describe how you will prepare the data for analysis (i.e., who will enter the data, into what computer? Will there be double entry of data to insure no mistakes? Who will transcribe narrative? How have these individuals been trained? Who is the statistical consultant (if needed)?</li> <li>2. Provide detail of qualitative or quantitative methods used to draw inferences from the data.</li> </ol>
725	Institutional Review	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe ethical aspects of project implementation such as: protection of participants' rights and welfare, privacy,</li> </ol>

	Board/Ethical Issues	<p>confidentiality, informed consent, vulnerable population. How were any ethical concerns addressed? Include informed consent form in appendix if applicable.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Address IRB application and approval process if applicable.</li> <li>3. Include any HIPAA protection statements as appropriate.</li> </ol>
<b>Organizational Assessment &amp; Cost Effectiveness Analysis</b>		
725	Organizational Assessment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assessment of the organization in which the project will be carried out:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Readiness for change</li> <li>b. Anticipated barriers and facilitators to implementation</li> <li>c. Risks and/or unintended consequences such as unexpected benefits, problems, failures or costs associated with the intervention(s)</li> <li>d. Describe the role of interprofessional collaboration</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
725	Cost Factors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Budgetary Needs: Provide a budget table in appendix. Identify resources available and/or needed (e.g., information technology, data bases, personnel, statistician).</li> <li>2. Cost avoidance or savings associated with implementation</li> </ol>
<b>Results (What did you find?)</b>		
826/827	Outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Analysis of the implementation process:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Explain the initial steps of the intervention(s) and their evolution over time (e.g., time-line diagram, flow chart or table), including modifications made to the intervention during the project. Describe how the actual plan compared to the initial plan and most important lessons learned.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Analysis of project outcome data:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Report findings for all process and outcome measures (quantitative/qualitative)</li> <li>b. Include summary of any missing data</li> <li>c. Include well-designed tables and graphs that support the discussion of findings and clearly display data</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<b>Discussion (What does it mean?)</b>		
826/827	Discussion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Summary of major findings and outcomes linked to SMART objectives             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Identify main changes observed in care delivery and clinical outcomes.</li> <li>b. Identify the most important successes and difficulties in implementation.</li> <li>c. How effective was the intervention?</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Limitations or deviations from project plan (e.g., small sample size, project design flaw that might have affected intervention effectiveness)</li> <li>3. Implications for practice change, future research, impact on nursing, and health policy change             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Practice:                 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Sustainability of the change</li> <li>ii. Potential project implementation modifications to improve future performance</li> <li>iii. Generalizability or transferability of intervention</li> </ol> </li> <li>b. Future Research                 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration related to area of interest</li> <li>ii. Potential research questions or areas of future scientific/practice inquiry</li> <li>iii. Plan for dissemination (within setting, organization)</li> </ol> </li> <li>c. Nursing                 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Discuss significance of your project to nursing.</li> <li>ii. What are your suggested changes for nursing practice, especially Advanced Practice Nurses? For nursing education?</li> </ol> </li> <li>d. Health Policy                 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Identify relevant health care policy/regulatory issues related to the project or area of interest.</li> <li>ii. Discuss opportunities for policy development/reform at the unit, system, local, regional and national levels as appropriate.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<b>Conclusion</b>		
826/827	Conclusion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The value and impact (usefulness) of the project to health care and practice</li> <li>2. Articulate specific DNP <i>Essentials</i> met by implementation and completion of project.</li> <li>3. Plan for Dissemination: Poster presentation, podium presentation, presentation to organization, local/regional/national conference, submit for publication, etc.</li> <li>4. Attainment of personal and professional goals</li> </ol>

625/725/ 826/827	References	Use of current reputable evidence as appropriate for topic. Correct use of APA format
625/725/ 826/827	Appendices	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Measurement tools (if applicable)</li> <li>2. Written permission to use tools (if applicable)</li> <li>3. Project Timeline</li> <li>4. Budget table or Business Plan</li> <li>5. Informed Consent form (if applicable)</li> <li>6. IRB approval documents (if applicable)</li> <li>7. Implementation process</li> <li>8. Other items as needed (e.g., participant instructions, letters to stakeholders, transcripts of interviews, needs assessment report, SWOT analysis report)</li> </ol> <p>Appendices must correspond to required elements and in sequential order</p>

\* DNP Scholarly Project Paper Guidelines adapted from SQUIRE 2.0: Revised Standards for Quality Improvement Reporting Excellence. Available at <https://tinyurl.com/squire-statement>

\*\*All components of this section may not apply.