



American Academy of Nurse Practitioners
American College of Nurse Practitioners
Association of Faculties of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Conference of Gerontological Nurse Practitioners
National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties

NURSE PRACTITIONER DNP EDUCATION, CERTIFICATION AND TITLING: A UNIFIED STATEMENT

DNP (Doctor of Nursing Practice)

1. Nurse practitioner education prepares graduates to provide safe, high quality, cost-effective, coordinated, and comprehensive clinical care grounded in evidence-based practice. Strategies of care include advocacy for individuals and groups, decision making related to personal health, mobilization of resources, therapeutics (pharmacologic/nonpharmacologic), health education and counseling, coordination of services, and evaluation of treatment outcomes.
2. Nurse practitioner education builds on the strong disciplinary foundations of the sciences, as well as the art and science of nursing, which includes health promotion, disease prevention and the diagnosis and management of acute and chronic illness.
3. Nurse practitioners use knowledge across disciplines to determine the current best evidence to provide quality primary and specialty care services to clients.
4. Current master's and higher degree nurse practitioner programs prepare fully accountable clinicians to provide care to well individuals, patients with undifferentiated symptoms, and those with acute, complex chronic and/or critical illnesses. The DNP degree more accurately reflects current clinical competencies and includes preparation for the changing health care system. It is congruent with the intense rigorous education for nurse practitioners. This evolution is comparable to the clinical doctoral preparation for other health care professions.
5. While all health care professions draw on shared knowledge and learning opportunities, nurse practitioners have a distinct body of knowledge and unique competencies.

Certification

1. Certification is a method by which professional knowledge and skills are evaluated through rigorous and psychometrically sound examination processes.

2. Certification examinations for nurse practitioners are based upon sound scientific principles of advanced nursing practice and knowledge. These examinations are developed from the discipline of nursing and do not draw from another discipline's examination or examination mechanism.
3. Accredited, psychometrically sound nurse practitioner certification examinations are currently used to evaluate competency within a specified population focus.
4. Psychometrically sound examinations are based on role delineation studies conducted on a regular basis to determine the test blueprint for a given professional discipline.
5. Through the utilization of appropriate psychometric processes, current certification examinations will evolve with changes in the nurse practitioner body of knowledge and practice.
6. PhD, DNSc, DNP, MSN are credentials that represent academic degrees earned by individuals when they successfully complete the requisite course of study. An academic degree is not a role. Certification examinations test the competencies of the role and not the degree. It is not appropriate to attempt to validate an academic degree with a certification examination. Any certification examination at the degree level would be too broad to determine the knowledge and skills that are applicable to the roles or specialties associated with the roles
7. The seamless transition from the masters to doctoral preparation for nurse practitioner practice does not require additional testing beyond nurse practitioner certification to measure competency to practice.

Utilization of the Title “Doctor” by Nurse Practitioners

1. The title “Doctor” represents an academic credential, and is not limited to professional programs. Graduate educational programs in colleges and universities in the United States confer academic degrees, which permit graduates to be called “doctor”. No one discipline owns the title “doctor”.
2. In the health care field, the term doctor is not limited to medical doctors. Other health care professions use their academic title: e.g. Doctor of Osteopathy, Doctor of Pharmacy, Doctor of Podiatry, Doctor of Psychology, Doctor of Physical Therapy and others.
3. While the titles “Medical Doctor” or “Doctor of Osteopathy” may be title protected by statute in a given state, the term “doctor” alone is not.
4. Recognition of the title, “Doctor”, for doctorally prepared nurse practitioners facilitates parity within the health care system.

© June 18, 2008 Nurse Practitioner Roundtable
This document may be reproduced freely in its entirety with attribution.

Preferred citation format is: Nurse Practitioner Roundtable (June, 2008). *Nurse Practitioner DNP Education, Certification and Titling: A Unified Statement*. Washington, DC: Author

The Nurse Practitioner Roundtable is a coalition of nurse practitioner organizations formed to collaborate, unify, and address issues of importance to nurse practitioners. The Nurse Practitioner Roundtable is currently composed of the organizations listed above.