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SECOND EDITION



Proposal Writing for Clinical Nursing and DNP Projects

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Second Edition

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Preface

As new graduate programs evolve at schools across the country, diverse student cohorts have the opportunity to enhance their skill sets in planning and writing proposals. This book shares the “must know” for gaining a set of clinical scholarship tools for writing a concise, scholarly project proposal. The purpose of the text is to provide practical guides for graduate students and advanced clinicians to organize and package their clinical projects through tight proposals.

The concept of advanced clinical projects is described broadly. All health care professionals, whether they are in direct or indirect practice roles, are, in essence, seeking to provide improved health outcomes for all populations and quality, efficient patient care. This uniqueness provides an opportunity to raise awareness of diverse important problems or concerns in various practice areas.

A well-written clinical project proposal is a form of scholarly communication and is expected in advanced practice. The text is broadly written to support diverse clinical project topics. Although the uniqueness of advanced nursing practice allows no one proposal “formula,” there are guides for taking unique topics and relating these to common project models. Focus is on the use of the best evidence in projects, including synthesis of the literature for further project development.

Gaining ongoing skills for quality improvement, evaluation, and collaborative research is valued. Although clinical projects can have similarities to theses and dissertations in some cases, the clinical project proposals are much more focused on gaining best evidence for use in advancing quality patient care. Often the tools of research will be used in writing proposals, but the focus of the clinical project is to gain best use of evidence for improving clinical care. This book guides the reader in using tools gained in previous courses, such as theory, research, and statistics, to develop a sound proposal for a quality advanced clinical project. The “must know” information from these courses is reinforced, and resources for further reading are recommended.

Being a reflective clinician brings an important component to a clinical project proposal. This relates to thinking prospectively of the big picture of the project, from start to finish, so important parts are not missed. A toolkit of resources, including a project triangle framework, guides graduate students

and clinicians in attaining practical skills for proposal planning and writing. Using a reflective-clinician approach, guidelines and checklists are provided to develop quality clinical project proposals. Students interact with the content through the ongoing reflective prompts and questions that guide them in reflective writing to better understand their projects and what they propose to do. The unique chapter format reminds students that development of a proposal is an integrative process, with many components that must be considered together. The following broad themes, corresponding to main sections of the book, organize the 16 chapters in a logical flow toward completion of planning and writing a clinical project proposal.

1. **Writing Your Proposal: Putting Your “Problem” in Context.** Putting a clinical problem in context, including an introduction to the topic and problem statement, is important in making the case for and outlining a project. Context also includes synthesizing the literature on a clinical topic and placing a project within that existing literature.
2. **Writing Your Proposal: Designing and Setting the Stage for Your Project.** The key points of a scholarly methods section that flows from a purpose statement are considered. Traditional quality improvement methods and research methods are discussed as tools for DNP projects.
3. **Writing Your Proposal: Adding the Detail for Proposal Completion.** The importance of visualizing the finished product; editing for concise, understandable language; and fine-tuning proposal methods and analyses are all considered. Next steps for using the project proposal are also considered.

This book provides students with tools to implement in their own scholarly practice. A chapter new to this edition focuses on quality-improvement concepts and provides the opportunity to further address this common approach to clinical projects. Chapters now feature boxes offering advice from doctor of nursing practice (DNP) students who have completed project proposals. New-project proposal abstracts have been added. Each chapter has been thoroughly updated and edited to enhance clarity. In response to reviewers’ requests, websites for further learning have been added to most chapters. Key features to engage readers continue from the first edition; these include reflective questions, tips for making proposals complete and concise, exemplars, and reader activities. This text helps develop reflective clinical scholars who can write about clinical challenges, propose solutions, and use the methods of science to develop scholarly proposals.

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