# Key Differences between DNP and PhD/DNS Programs

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<th>DNP</th>
<th>PhD/DNS</th>
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| **Program of Study**    | *Objectives:* Prepare nurse leaders at the highest level of nursing practice to improve patient outcomes and translate research into practice  
                          *Competencies:* See AACN’s Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice (2006) | *Objectives:* Prepare nurses at the highest level of nursing science to conduct research to advance the science of nursing  
                          *Content:* See The Research-Focused Doctoral Program in Nursing: Pathways to Excellence (2010) |
| **Students**            | Commitment to practice career  
                          Oriented toward improving outcomes of patient care and population health | Commitment to research career  
                          Oriented toward developing new nursing knowledge and scientific inquiry |
| **Program Faculty**     | Practice or research doctorate in nursing, and expertise in area teaching  
                          Leadership experience in area of role and population practice  
                          High level of expertise in practice congruent with focus of academic program | Research doctorate in nursing or related field  
                          Leadership experience in area of sustained research funding  
                          High level of expertise in research congruent with focus of academic program |
| **Resources**           | Mentors and/or preceptors in leadership positions across practice settings  
                          Access to diverse practice settings with appropriate resources for areas of practice  
                          Access to financial aid  
                          Access to information and patient-care technology resources congruent with areas of study | Mentors and/or preceptors in research settings  
                          Access to research settings with appropriate resources  
                          Access to dissertation support dollars and financial aid  
                          Access to information and research technology resources congruent with program of research |
| **Program Assessment & Evaluation** | *Program Outcome:* Healthcare improvements and contributions via practice, policy change, and practice scholarship  
                          Receives accreditation by nursing accredditor | *Program Outcome:* Contributes to healthcare improvements via the development of new knowledge and scholarly products that provide the foundation for the advancement of nursing science  
                          Oversight by the institution’s authorized bodies (i.e., graduate school) and regional accredditors |

*Updated July 2014*