

Graduate Nursing Programs

The School of Nursing offers post-baccalaureate credentials, the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN), post-masters' certificates, the doctor of nursing practice (DNP) and the doctor of philosophy in nursing (Ph.D.) Baccalaureate-prepared nurses can advance their careers to become healthcare administrators, clinical nurse specialists, nurse educators, nurse practitioners, or school nurses. All programs are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education and approved by the California Board of Registered Nursing. The School Nurse Service Credential Program is accredited by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

The curriculum for these programs combines theory, research, and experiences necessary to develop professional skills. It reflects the School of Nursing Mission and is aligned with professional standards and guidelines for nursing education. Graduates of Advanced Practice Nursing tracks are eligible for California state certification and national board certification examinations in the population focus area.

Master of Science in Nursing

The master of science in nursing program is designed for working nurses and can be completed in six to nine semesters, depending on the specialty chosen. It prepares the nurse for advanced nursing practice as advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs), nurse educators, and healthcare administrators. The School Nurse Services Credential and the APRN program is a hybrid program with a combination of on-campus meetings, supervised direct clinical practice, synchronous online classes, and asynchronous classes. Students applying to the APRN program must have a minimum of one year of nursing experience and must reside in Southern California. The nurse educator and healthcare administration programs are asynchronous online and available to any applicant.

The core curriculum of the MSN program deepens the ability of nurses to reason, lead, engage in scholarly inquiry, and apply knowledge from nursing and other disciplines to improve the healthcare of patients and populations in a complex health-care system. Core courses include GNRS 504 Bioethics and Healthcare, GNRS 506 Spiritual Concept Analysis in Health Care, and GNRS 508 Research and Theory. Candidates for the MSN successfully complete GNRS 597 Comprehensive Exam Directed Study by proposing a change project in their area of specialization.

Post-Master Certificates

All master's level tracks are available to students who possess a masters or doctoral degree in nursing based on seating availability. Previous coursework is reviewed and a tailored program of study is created for each candidate who matriculates into the program. All requirements for national certification and California BRN licensing as a nurse practitioner or clinical nurse specialist must be met before the credential will be issued.

Doctoral Studies

The Department of Doctoral Studies offers two doctoral programs, the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Nursing and the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP). Scholarship is fundamental to both programs. The PhD is a research-based program that primarily prepares students to conduct independent research and disseminate their findings. The DNP program is clinically focused and provides graduates with the expertise to assess nursing research evidence, evaluate the impact of nursing research on nursing practice (evidence-based practice), and take a leadership role in making changes in the healthcare environment to enhance the quality of care. The department also offers a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) to DNP pathway that allows RNs with a BSN to enter directly into the DNP program without first earning an MSN degree.

Nursing Education

The Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) in Nursing Education (<http://catalog.apu.edu/academics/college-nursing-health-sciences/school-nursing/graduate-nursing-programs/nursing-education/nursing-education-msn/>) prepares nurses for teaching roles in a variety of settings, including traditional and nontraditional academic settings, online/distance settings, and clinical and community settings, using cutting-edge technology and teaching-learning methods. The program emphasizes competencies needed for students to complete the Certified Nurse Educator (CNE) certification examination, and is aligned with the American Association of Colleges of Nursing's The Essentials of Master's Education in Nursing (AACN, 2011) and the National League for Nursing's Nurse Educator Competencies (NLN, 2022).

Healthcare Administration

The Master of Science in Healthcare Administration (<http://catalog.apu.edu/academics/college-nursing-health-sciences/school-nursing/graduate-nursing-programs/healthcare-administration/healthcare-administration-ms/>) is for those with bachelor degrees in nonclinical fields who are working professionals that want to advance and are interested in management and leadership positions in healthcare settings. The program provides students with the competencies necessary to develop and implement solutions that address today's unique challenges facing the healthcare industry. Conceptual, analytical, and experiential skills required to manage contemporary healthcare organizations are emphasized with field experience designed to advance preparation for a management role.

Master of Science in Nursing Program Learning Outcomes

Graduates of the Master of Science in Nursing program will be able to:

1. Articulate a Christian worldview, demonstrating respect for the dignity and uniqueness of others, valuing diversity, and applying spiritual concepts.
2. Engage in scholarly inquiry and critical thinking, including evaluation and application of evidence-based research.

3. Appraise and apply knowledge to develop, implement, and evaluate interventions that promote health and prevent disease.
4. Demonstrate thoughtful analysis of the legal, political, ethical, and/or financial factors impacting health care.
5. Use information systems and other technology to communicate, manage knowledge, promote quality, mitigate error, and support decision making.
6. Demonstrate the ability to coordinate and collaborate with other healthcare team professionals.
7. Engage in clinical reasoning and effective communication, and act as a change agent to develop professional identity and practice skill.

Transfer of Credits

Following admission, 9 units of approved graduate work completed elsewhere may be applied toward the MSN degree. Advanced Health Assessment may be considered for transfer credit if it was taken postlicensure as a registered nurse and the student was enrolled in an advanced practice nursing program. Advanced Pharmacology may be considered for transfer credit toward GNRS 611 (formerly GNRS 594) if it was taken less than 24 months prior to the APU MSN program admit date.

Additional Requirements

During the admission process, a review of academic transcripts is performed to assess whether the applicant has completed the prerequisite courses listed below. If not, students must complete the prerequisite courses as part of their MSN program before continuing to advanced practice courses (e.g., take undergraduate health assessment before advanced health assessment; take applied statistics and a nursing research course before the advanced practice research course).

Code Title Prerequisite Courses for MSN APRN Program

At the beginning of clinical coursework, including health assessment lab, students are required to provide documentation including RN licensure, CPR certification, TB screening, and immunizations appropriate for the clinical setting.

A student's health status must permit him/her to safely undertake and complete clinical experience required for the degree. As a fully prepared health professional, the student is expected to take responsibility for self-evaluation of her/his health status, including an assessment of the safety and appropriateness of practice in the clinical context, for the student and the patient.

The Joint Commission (<https://www.jointcommission.org/>), contracted facilities, and the School of Nursing require that all graduate students undergo a background check prior to their placement at clinical sites. The cost of the background check is the responsibility of the student. International students will have additional fees based on the cost of a background check in their country.

The MSN program requires that students have ongoing clinical work experience. Students may select additional elective courses to support their programs of study as directed by faculty.