GRADUATE PROGRAMS IN NURSING

The focus of the Graduate Programs in Nursing is to prepare graduates to work throughout the healthcare delivery system as nurse educators, healthcare organization leaders, and advanced practice registered nurses with the goal of improving health of individuals, families, and communities.

Courses within the selected programs of Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner, Adult-Gerontology Clinical Nurse Specialist, Adult-Gerontology Nurse Practitioner, Family Nurse Practitioner, Nurse Educator, and Nursing and Organizational Leadership, provide specialized knowledge and practice opportunities in each advanced nursing role. Graduates of the MS programs are prepared for a variety of advanced nursing roles (e.g. nurse educators, nurse leaders, nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists). These graduates also have the foundation for continued graduate studies (i.e. DNP or PhD). Graduates of the DNP program are prepared for the highest level of clinical nursing practice.

Master in Science Degree, Doctor of Nursing Practice, and Graduate Certificate Programs

Program: Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (MS: 54 S.H.; DNP: 74 S.H.; GC: 18 S.H.)

Students choosing the Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (AGACNP) program are prepared to provide and manage health care of the acutely ill and the critically or chronically ill adult patient in a wide range of settings. AGACNP practice includes decision-making, both independently and interdependently; and is directly accountable for clinical judgments. In addition to the nursing science core and direct care core courses, content includes differential diagnosis and disease management; diagnostic and therapeutic interventions to manage acute and critical health problems; participation in and use of research; development and implementation of health policy, leadership, education, case management; and consultation with emphasis on interdisciplinary therapeutics. Clinical practicums under the supervision of qualified nurse practitioner and physician preceptors will focus on acute care in a variety of specialty areas. Students who choose the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree program in this area complete additional coursework in the areas of applied biostatistics, epidemiological approaches to population health, select electives, and a clinical scholarship project conducted within the clinical setting. Graduates with the MS and DNP awards are able to take the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Acute Care NP exam. The Graduate Certificate (GC) is for nurses who have completed a previous graduate degree in nursing from a nationally accredited graduate nursing program and desire to prepare for certification as an ACNP; GC graduates are also eligible to sit for the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Acute Care NP exam.


Students who elect the Adult-Gerontology Clinical Nurse Specialist (AGCNS) program will develop, test, and practice the role of clinical nurse specialist with the adult-gerontology population. Extension of advanced nursing practice roles of expert clinician, leader/manager, teacher, consultant, and researcher will be demonstrated within the framework of clinical nurse specialist practice in adult health/gerontology nursing. Clinical Nurse Specialist students will demonstrate competencies in three spheres of influence:
patient/client, nurse/nursing personnel, and systems/organizations. Students who choose the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree program in this area complete additional coursework in the areas of applied biostatistics, epidemiological approaches population health, select electives, and a clinical scholarship project conducted within the clinical setting. Graduates with the MS and DNP award are eligible to take the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Adult Health Clinical Nurse Specialist exam. The Graduate Certificate (GC) is for nurses who have completed a previous graduate degree in nursing from a nationally accredited graduate nursing program and desire to prepare for certification as an AGCNS; GC graduates are also eligible to sit for the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Adult Heath CNS exam.


Students who elect the Adult-Gerontology Nurse Practitioner (AGNP) program are prepared to perform an expanded role in the delivery of primary health care. In addition to the nursing science core courses and the direct care core courses, content includes comprehensive assessment of the health status of the adult and gerontology population; management of common acute and chronic health problems; provision of counseling and teaching in areas of health promotion and disease prevention; and collaboration with other health professionals. Clinical practicums under the supervision of qualified nurse practitioner and physician preceptors will focus on primary health care in a variety of settings with emphasis on rural and underserved communities. Students who choose the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree program in this area complete additional coursework in the areas of applied biostatistics, epidemiological approaches population health, select electives, and a clinical scholarship project conducted within the clinical setting. Graduates with the MS and DNP award are able to take the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Adult-Gerontology exam. The Graduate Certificate (GC) is for nurses who have completed a previous graduate degree in nursing from a nationally accredited graduate nursing program and desire to prepare for certification as an AGNP; GC graduates are also eligible to sit for the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Adult-Gerontology NP exam.


Students who elect the Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) program are prepared to perform an expanded role in the delivery of primary health care. In addition to the nursing science core courses and the direct care core courses, content includes comprehensive assessment of the health status of individuals across the lifespan and families; management of common acute and chronic health problems; provision of counseling and teaching in areas of health promotion and disease prevention; and collaboration with other health professionals. Clinical practicums under the supervision of qualified nurse practitioner and physician preceptors will focus on primary health care in a variety of settings with emphasis on rural and underserved communities. Family Nurse Practitioner students also have theory and clinical content related to the care of children. Students who choose the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree program in this area complete additional coursework in the areas of applied biostatistics, epidemiological approaches population health, select electives, and a clinical scholarship project conducted within the clinical setting. Graduates with the MS and DNP award are able to take the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s FNP exam. The Graduate Certificate (GC) is for nurses who have completed a previous graduate degree in nursing from a nationally accredited graduate nursing program and desire to prepare for certification as an FNP; GC graduates are also able to sit for the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s FNP exam.

In 2007, WSU was selected for the “Outstanding Practice Award” from the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculty (NONPF).
Program: **Nurse Educator (MS: 48 S.H.; GC: 12 S.H.)**

Students who elect the Nurse Educator (NE) program are prepared to teach in an academic or health care setting. In addition to the nursing science core and direct care core courses, content is offered in knowledge and skills related to the teaching/learning process in nursing, as well as curriculum and program design, instruction, assessment, and evaluation. Students practice teaching under the guidance of preceptors in academic and health care settings. Graduates with the MS award are eligible to take the National League for Nursing Certified Nurse Educator (CNE) Examination after two years of full-time employment in the academic faculty role. The Graduate Certificate (GC) is for nurses who have completed a previous graduate degree in nursing from a nationally accredited graduate nursing program and desire to prepare for certification as an NE; GC graduates are also eligible to sit for the National League for Nursing Certified Nurse Educator (CNE) Examination after two years of full-time employment in the academic faculty role.

Program: **Nursing and Organizational Leadership (MS: 43 S.H.; DNP: 72 S.H.; GC: 24 S.H.)**

Students who elect the Nursing and Organizational Leadership (NOL) program are prepared for administrative and leadership positions in a health care setting. In addition to the core courses, content focuses on elements of a nursing care system; the responsibilities of the Nursing and Organizational Leader in research, education, and clinical practice; human resource management; fiscal accountability; information and project management; the functions of the Nursing and Organizational Leader in the organization and system; and on issues and trends in nursing organizational management. Clinical practicums in advanced nursing for the Nursing and Organizational Leader emphasize management of clients, nurses, other health care personnel and resources. The Nursing Leadership Practicums offer students the opportunity to apply nursing leadership and administrative principles under the guidance of a qualified preceptor. Students who choose the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree program in this area complete additional coursework in the areas of applied biostatistics, epidemiological approaches to population health, select electives, and a clinical scholarship project conducted within the clinical setting. Graduates with the MS and DNP award are eligible to take the American Organization of Nurse Executives exam to become certified as an Executive in Nursing Practice (CENP) exam after two years of practice as a nurse executive. The Graduate Certificate (GC) is for nurses who have completed a previous graduate degree in nursing from a nationally accredited graduate nursing program and desire to prepare to take the American Organization of Nurse Executives Certified in Executive in Nursing Practice (CENP) exam after two years of practice as a nurse executive.

**Post-Master’s DNP Programs**

Master's prepared advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) and leaders in advanced nursing practice may apply to complete the post-master's DNP. The post-master's DNP program is 30-33 credits and five semesters in length. Students take 3-9 credits per semester. The program is designed for nurses who have role preparation and have completed practicum hours as an APRN or as a nurse leader. Students complete a minimum of 375 hours of clinical scholarship work in the post-master’s program (total of master’s specialty plus post master’s DNP clinical hours totals 1,000 clinical hours).

Nurses with a non-APRN role master’s who desire to expand practice to any of the APRN roles (NP or CNS) may apply to complete Graduate Certificate program to prepare for the desired role and, if admitted, can plan with the advisor for entrance into the DNP program.

The full-time post-baccalaureate DNP plan of study is six semesters plus one to two summer sessions long. A part-time plan of study for all programs is available. Students accumulate at least 1,000 hours of direct care and clinical scholarship experience.

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All programs consist of didactic and clinical course work structured around the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) Essentials of Doctoral Education and competencies of one of the following, as appropriate for the designated program: the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF); the American Organization of Nurse Executives; or the National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists. Didactic and clinical course work culminates in the completion of an evidence-based clinical capstone project during the Clinical Scholarship course sequences.

Each cohort will begin in the summer session with Statistics 601 unless that has been taken previously. The post-baccalaureate DNP program includes a total of at least 72 semester credits and at least 1000 clinical hours. The AACN requires 600 clinical hours at the Master’s level and 1000 clinical hours at the Doctoral level to sit for advanced practice national certification.

Degree requirements must be completed within seven years of beginning DNP coursework.

**Master’s Step-Out for Nurse Practitioner Students**

The post-baccalaureate DNP program offers a step-out at the master’s level for the FNP, AGNP and the AGACNP. The Step-Out Master’s option includes a 2-credit Evidence Based Practice Project/Thesis; the students who move straight through the program to the DNP will not be required to complete the Evidence Based Practice Project/Thesis at the master’s level. Winona State University plans to continue this step-out at the master’s level as long as the master’s degree is accepted as entry to practice for advanced practice nurses. When the DNP becomes the entry to practice requirement in 2015 as recommended by AACN, or later, the plan is for the master’s step out to be eliminated.

**Course Delivery Methods**

All programs use a combination of course delivery methods. Courses in the nursing science core and the direct care core are offered by traditional one-day-per week (typically Wednesdays and Thursdays), hybrid (primarily online with the remainder of the course meeting four times during the semester on the WSU-Rochester Campus and transmitted by ITV to Winona), or fully online (such as the NURS 616 Molecular/Genetic and Immune Mechanisms and NURS 617 Advanced Clinical Pharmacology). Once students begin the role/population clinical courses in the APRN roles, weekly on campus meetings are required in addition to clinical hours with the clinical preceptor. Nursing and Organizational Leadership specialty courses are all offered in hybrid format.

**For more information contact:**

*Graduate Programs in Nursing*
*859 30th Avenue SE*
*Rochester, MN 55904*
*507.285.7473*
*www.winona.edu/graduatenuising*