

NURSING PRACTICE, DNP: CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALIST: ADULT-GERONTOLOGY

The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Program at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee prepares clinician advanced practice scholars and healthcare systems leaders. The degree represents the highest academic preparation in clinical nursing. Clinical practice is the core of the program with emphasis on inquiry, implementation science and quality management to inform health care policy and systems leadership.

The UWM DNP Program fully conforms to APRN Consensus Model and abides by curricular standards set by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties, the National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists and the National Task Force.

The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) is a 72-credit program with options for full- and part-time study. The program admits students in Fall and Spring semesters. Students in this entry point receive one of the following transcript-designated concentrations:

- Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP)
- Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (AG-ACNP)
- Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP)
- Adult-Gerontology Clinical Nurse Specialist (AG-CNS)
- Nursing System Leadership (admissions suspended Spring 2026)

Admission Requirements

Application Deadlines

Application deadlines vary by program, please review the application deadline chart (<http://uwm.edu/graduateschool/program-deadlines/>) for specific programs. Other important dates and deadlines can be found by using the One Stop calendars (<https://uwm.edu/onestop/dates-and-deadlines/>).

Admission

The admission requirements of the DNP program in Nursing follow standards specified by the Graduate School of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. In addition, students must also meet the following requirements:

1. A bachelor's degree or a master's in Nursing from a nationally accredited program.
2. Minimum undergraduate grade point average of at least 3.0 (4.0 scale) in the most recent degree program.
3. One year of RN practice experience at the time of program start.
4. Completion with a grade of B or higher of an upper-level undergraduate or graduate course in statistics within the last ten years.
5. A current unencumbered Registered Nurse license.
6. Two (2) letters of recommendation from persons most knowledgeable about the applicant's recent academic and work experiences.
7. Completion of a personal statement.
8. Current CV or resume.

9. Personal interview with a member of the DNP Program Holistic Admissions Committee.

This program is not eligible for F-1 visa status due to its delivery format.

Reapplication

A student who receives a master's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee must formally reapply for admission to the Graduate School before continuing studies toward the DNP.

Credits and Courses

Post-Baccalaureate Entry Point

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The 27-credit DNP core curriculum includes Foundations core (6 credits), Implementation science core (9 credits) and Systems core (12 credits). Students in these entry points will complete all core courses prior to beginning the DNP Project core (8 credits), with exceptions granted by the DNP Program Director. Students will also complete APRN Core and specialty coursework as detailed below based on their chosen role designation.

Code	Title	Credits
Core Theoretical Coursework		
<i>Foundations Core</i>		
NURS 728	Population Health for Advanced Practice Nursing	3
NURS 735	Foundations of Scholarly Writing	3
<i>Implementation Science Core</i>		
NURS 724	Biostatistics and Epidemiology for Advanced Practice	3
NURS 725	Advanced Evidence-Based Practice in Health Care	3
NURS 805	Implementation Science Methods	3
<i>Systems Core</i>		
NURS 750	Quality Outcomes and Safety	3
NURS 773	Applied Health Informatics	3
NURS 803	Health Systems Policy and Economics	3
NURS 804	Health Systems Leadership	3
APRN Role Track Theory and Practicum 37		
Project Core		
NURS 993	DNP Project I: Plan	2
NURS 994	DNP Project II: Proposal	2
NURS 995	DNP Project III: Leadership Practice Immersion ¹	4
Total Credits		72

¹ May be completed over 1 or 2 semesters with approval of the Program Director.

Post Generalist Master's Curriculum (MN or equivalent)

The Post Generalist Masters entry point consists of 41 credits that builds upon the required entry point of a generalist master's in nursing (MN or equivalent). Where course background varies, an individual plan of study will be developed based on review of the previous Master's Program coursework and transcript. These students are not eligible for the Post APRN Master's online-only entry point.

Post-Master's Curriculum (Other Nursing Master's Degrees)

The UWM DNP Program recognizes that nursing programs prepare students at the master's level for a variety of clinical and non-clinical roles not designated as one of the four APRN roles. Examples may include but are not limited to a master's in nursing education or nursing leadership. The UWM DNP Program will admit these students as Post-Master's DNP students with an individual plan of study based on review of the previous coursework and transcript by the DNP Program Director and a gap analysis of practice hours. These students are not eligible for the Post APRN Master's online-only entry point.

Adult-Gerontology Clinical Nurse Specialist Requirements

The theory courses vary by population focus and must provide content across the continuum from wellness through acute care for the selected population. The plan for theory course work must be approved by the CNS option coordinator. The following courses under the Specialty Theory Electives heading are examples of those that can be included as specialty support credits. Other courses can be included with advisor approval.

Code	Title	Credits
APRN Core		
NURS 707	Advanced Pharmacology and Therapeutics	3
NURS 753	Advanced Physiology and Pathophysiology	3
NURS 754	Advanced Health Assessment	3
NURS 755	Diagnostic Reasoning for Advanced Practice	3
Specialty Theory Electives: Adult Gero CNS		
NURS 702	Advanced Health and Illness Management for Adult-Gerontology Acute Care I	3
NURS 703	Advanced Health and Illness Management for Adult Gerontology Acute Care II	3
NURS 765 or SOC WRK 855	Processes of Aging Practice Skills and Concepts for Aging and Health	3
Practicum		
NURS 832	Adult-Gerontology Clinical Nurse Specialist Practicum I	4
NURS 833	Adult-Gerontology Clinical Nurse Specialist Practicum II	4

NURS 834	Adult-Gerontology Clinical Nurse Specialist Practicum III	4
NURS 835		4
Total Credits		37

Additional Requirements

Faculty Advisor

The student must have a Faculty Advisor to advise and supervise the student's studies as specified in Graduate School regulations. The student is assigned to a Faculty Advisor at the time of admission.

Leadership Practice Immersion

Both the post baccalaureate and post master's curriculum include a 4-credit DNP Project III, an experience that will include the required DNP project. This residency experience will include 460 additional clinical hours in the student's specialty focus area and will include an emphasis on the evidence-based practice, leadership and system competencies of the DNP prepared graduate.

Time Limit

Students in the post baccalaureate DNP program must complete all degree requirements within seven years of the first enrollment semester as a degree student. Students in the post master's DNP program must complete all degree requirements within five years of the first enrollment semester as a degree student.

Minimum Grade Requirement

For continuation in the program, in addition to general Graduate School requirements (<https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/students/academic-policies-and-procedures/doctoral-resources/doctoral-requirements/>), students must achieve a minimum grade of B- in all required nursing courses. However, an overall GPA of 3.00 is still required for the degree.

Residence

The student must meet minimum Graduate School residence requirements.

DNP Project II: Proposal/Doctoral Preliminary Examination

The student must pass a doctoral preliminary examination to qualify for formal admission to candidacy for degree. The doctoral examination comprises a written portfolio and an oral component, taken in that sequence, with each component requiring a passing grade for successful completion. The examination is an integrative experience that is designed to validate the student's mastery of the content of the DNP curriculum and must be completed prior to beginning the residency experience.

DNP Project III: Leadership Practice Immersion

The candidate will complete a final comprehensive clinical project as part of the Leadership Practice Immersion experience which demonstrates the ability to implement the principles of evidence-based practice and translation under the direction of the faculty advisor.

The candidate must, as the final step toward the degree, pass an oral examination in defense of the clinical project. A candidate who does not pass this examination may apply for reexamination within one year from the initial examination date. This reexamination may occur only one time. A candidate who does not pass this examination within program time

limits may be required to undergo another comprehensive preliminary examination and be readmitted to the program and/or candidacy.

Nursing Practice DNP Learning Outcomes

Students graduating from the Nursing Practice, DNP program will be able to:

1. Lead, translate and integrate knowledge from nursing and other disciplines, including a foundation in liberal arts, natural and social sciences at the advanced nursing practice specialty level.
2. Design, lead, coordinate and evaluate person-centered care that is evidence-based, inclusive and respects patients as full partners in providing compassionate, developmentally appropriate, and culturally safe care at the advanced nursing practice specialty level.
3. Lead and evaluate initiatives that advocate for equitable population health outcomes across the healthcare delivery continuum, through engagement with partners, communities, public health, industry, academia, health care, local government entities, and others.
4. Generate, synthesize, translate, and disseminate nursing knowledge using a spirit of inquiry to improve health and transform complex health care systems.
5. Design, lead, implement, and disseminate quality and safety initiatives using improvement science to enhance outcomes and minimize risk of harm to patients and providers through both system effectiveness and individual performance.
6. Lead interprofessional care teams to facilitate intentional collaboration with patients, families, and community partners, fostering a climate of mutual respect and shared values to enhance the healthcare experience and improve outcomes.
7. Direct transformation within complex healthcare system to use resources effectively and provide safe, quality, cost-effective, and equitable care within the advanced nursing practice specialty.
8. Use and evaluate healthcare, information, and communication technologies to gather data, inform decision making, provide and document safe care, and drive improvement that aligns with best practice and professional and regulatory standards.
9. Cultivate and model a professional identity in alignment with the school of nursing's mission, vision, and values, demonstrating wisdom and ethics for the advanced nursing role and leadership practice.
10. Cultivate personal health and resilience, to expand professional identity and leadership competencies through reflective practice and lifelong learning within the advanced nursing practice specialty role.