

# NURSING FORENSICS, CERTIFICATE

Requirements for an undergraduate certificate may be completed at any campus location offering the specified courses for the certificate.

## Program Description

This 12-credit certificate introduces students to forensic health sciences, forensic nursing, and the nursing role in the scientific investigation of violence. Through this course series, nurses gain foundational forensics knowledge and skills, including evidence collection and preservation; forensic documentation; recognition of domestic violence, assault, and stalking; related public policy and regulatory guidelines; and legal and ethical issues. This program prepares nurses to provide care that is more specialized for victims and perpetrators of physical, psychological, and social violence or abuse.

## What is Nursing Forensics?

Violence impacts our communities at a local, national and global level. It's an unfortunate reality that a high number of patients who access healthcare services are the victims of violence, abuse, or neglect. When these victims enter the healthcare system, professionals trained in forensic nursing are often their first line of defense. In addition to providing routine medical care, forensic nurses must understand the legal and ethical implications of treating victims of violence and abuse. Forensic nurses must be skilled at injury identification, evaluation, and documentation. Proper observation, collection and preservation of evidence is often critical in determining the legal outcome of traumatic events. Penn State's Nursing Forensics certificate provides nurses with the knowledge and skills to effectively help these patients.

## You Might Like This Program If...

You are interested in working with victims who have experienced violence or trauma. Nurses working in emergency and community services with individuals who have experienced trauma will gain skills to better identify signs of violence and understand resources and interventions available. Enrollment in this certificate allows students in the R.N. to B.S.N. program to gain an additional area of concentration while pursuing their degree.

## Program Requirements

To earn an undergraduate certificate in Nursing Forensics, a minimum of 12 credits is required.

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Prescribed Courses</b>		
NURS 245	Violence and the Impact on Society	3
NURS 409	Introduction to Forensic Nursing	3
NURS 410	Forensic Evidence Collection and Preservation	3
NURS 411	Seminar in Forensic Nursing	3

Prerequisites Required.

## Academic Advising

### University Park

**Undergraduate Advising Office**  
210 Nursing Sciences Building

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## World Campus

**College of Nursing**  
**Undergraduate Advising**  
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## Career Paths

Forensics nurses connect the medical and legal communities by completing medical assessments and providing treatment to the individual, as well as collecting evidence and giving expert testimony to support criminal investigations. A general understanding of nursing forensics can support any nurse working in their traditional role in community and emergency services. However, nurses can also pursue more specialized forensic nursing roles with this certificate or continue onto advanced graduate degree programs and board certification.

## Careers

Graduates of the Nursing Forensics Certificate Program obtain positions in hospitals, community anti-violence centers, medical examiners/coroner offices, corrections institutions, public health departments, and psychiatric hospitals. Typical roles could include:

- medical examiner nurse investigator
- forensic clinical nurse specialist
- correctional facility nurse
- emergency room forensic nurse
- nurse coroner
- assault or abuse nurse examiner
- legal nurse consultant

Nurses interested in earning the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE), or Advanced Forensics Nursing Board Certification, may use the undergraduate Forensic Nursing Certificate Program as a starting point for meeting eligibility requirements, though the certificate program will not fulfill all criteria. Additional information about these certifications can be found on the International Association of Forensic Nurses website (<http://www.forensicnurses.org>).

## Opportunities for Graduate Studies

Nurses interested in advancing their education in forensics nursing can pursue graduate-level forensic Nursing certificate and degree programs. Additionally, to apply for Advanced Forensics Nursing board certification, a graduate degree in nursing is required. Although Board Certification is not a requirement to practice in most areas, certification demonstrates expertise and a commitment to excellence in the area of forensics nursing. More information can be found on the International Association of Forensic Nurses website (<http://www.forensicnurses.org>).

## Professional Resources

- International Association of Forensic Nurses (<http://www.forensicnurses.org>)

## **Contact**

### **University Park**

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<https://www.nursing.psu.edu/undergraduate-certificates/>

### **World Campus**

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<https://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/degrees-and-certificates/forensic-nursing-certificate/overview>