

NURSING

Degree Requirements

Master of Science in Nursing (M.S.N.)

Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-700 Professional Degree Policies (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>).

The Master of Science in Nursing (M.S.N.) requires a minimum of 30 credits at the 400, 500, or 800 level, with a minimum of 18 credits at the 500 or 800 level, and at least 6 credits at the 500 level, including:

- 9 credits of M.S.N. Program Core courses,
- 18 credits of electives, and
- at least 3 credits in a capstone course or project.

Code	Title	Credits
Required Courses		
<i>M.S.N. Program Core</i>		
NURS 501	Issues in Nursing and Health Care	3
NURS 510	Theoretical and Scientific Foundations of Advanced Nursing Practice	3
NURS 830	Evidence-Based Practice I: Inquiry and Research Methods	3
Electives		
Additional courses that will count as electives towards this degree can be chosen from a list of approved elective courses maintained by the graduate program office.		18
Culminating Experience		
Students in the M.S.N. degree program are required to complete a capstone course or project, which demonstrates the application of theory and research to a clinical problem based on review of the literature and research utilization for that problem. For M.S.N. students who do not choose to complete an option, a capstone project is completed while enrolled in NURS 596 (3 credits).		3
Total Credits		30

The two advanced role options offered in the M.S.N. degree program include nurse educator and nurse administrator. Students in these options complete the 9 credits of M.S.N. Program Courses as described above. The option-specific course requirements described below replace the requirement for 18 credits of electives.

Nurse Administrator Option

Students must earn a minimum of 36 credits for the M.S.N. with the Nurse Administrator option.

Code	Title	Credits
Required Courses		
NURS 501	Issues in Nursing and Health Care	3
NURS 510	Theoretical and Scientific Foundations of Advanced Nursing Practice	3
NURS 830	Evidence-Based Practice I: Inquiry and Research Methods	3
<i>Nurse Administrator Option Required Courses</i>		
NURS 808	Population Health Perspectives	3
NURS 836	Healthcare Informatics	3

NURS 845	Healthcare Economics and Policy for Nurse Administrators	3
NURS 846	Leadership Concepts and Theories for Nurse Administrators	3
NURS 847	Human Resource and Work Force Issues for Nurse Administrators	3

Electives

Students in this option are required to take 6 additional elective credits chosen from a list of approved elective courses maintained by the graduate program office.

Culminating Experience

NURS 848	Synthesis and Application of the Nurse Administrator Role (Capstone Course)	6
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Total Credits **36**

Nurse Educator Option

Students must earn a minimum of 36 credits for the M.S.N. with the Nurse Educator option.

Code	Title	Credits
Required Courses		
NURS 501	Issues in Nursing and Health Care	3
NURS 510	Theoretical and Scientific Foundations of Advanced Nursing Practice	3
NURS 830	Evidence-Based Practice I: Inquiry and Research Methods	3
<i>Nurse Educator Option Required Courses</i>		
NURS 802B	Physical Assessment Through The Lifespan	3
NURS 803	Pathophysiology for the Advanced Practice Nurse	3
NURS 804	Pharmacologic Therapy for the Advanced Practice Nurse	3
NURS 836	Healthcare Informatics	3
NURS 840	Nursing Education Theories and Strategies	3
NURS 841	Assessment and Evaluation in Nursing Education	3
NURS 842	Curriculum and Program Development in Nursing Education	3
Culminating Experience		
NURS 843	Synthesis and Application of the Nurse Educator Role (Capstone Course)	6
Total Credits		36

Doctor of Nursing Practice (D.N.P.)

Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-700 Professional Degree Policies (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>).

Students may enter the program directly with a B.S.N. degree or following completion of a Master's degree in nursing.

For the B.S.N. to the D.N.P., a core of master's courses is required. A minimum of 60 credits, 1000 hours of practicum time, and a DNP project is required. The 60 credits include:

Code	Title	Credits
Required Courses		
<i>Master's Core Courses</i>		
NURS 510	Theoretical and Scientific Foundations of Advanced Nursing Practice	3

NURS 830	Evidence-Based Practice I: Inquiry and Research Methods	3
NURS 845	Healthcare Economics and Policy for Nurse Administrators	3
NURS 831	Evidence-Based Practice II: Translating Inquiry into Practice	3
NURS 832	Doctor of Nursing Practice: Leadership I	3
NURS 837	Evidence-Based Practice III: Project Development	3
NURS 590	Colloquium	1
NURS 887	Ethics in Professional Nursing Practice	1
NURS 836	Healthcare Informatics	3
NURS 808	Population Health Perspectives	3
<i>Advanced Practice Clinical</i>		3
If needed to meet the 1000 hour practicum requirement. Students in one of the Nurse Practitioner options do not need NURS 834.		
NURS 834	Doctor of Nursing Practice Clinical Practicum	3-4
Other Required Courses for Base Program (Students not in an option)		
NURS 501	Issues in Nursing and Health Care	3
NURS 588	Healthcare Policy for Nurse and Healthcare Scholars	3
Electives		
14-15 credits of electives chosen from a list of approved elective courses maintained by the graduate program office		14-15
Culminating Experience		
NURS 835	Doctor of Nursing Practice Project (Only 4 credits of NURS 835 needed for the NP Options)	6
Total Credits		60

The Master of Science in Nursing (M.S.N.) to D.N.P. program requires a minimum of 30 post-master's degree credits completed at Penn State. The curriculum is individualized based on previous course work and number of practicum hours completed during the master's program. A maximum of 550 practicum hours from the previous master's program will be accepted to fulfill the 1000 hours of required practicum hours. The curriculum is composed of 5 components, for a minimum of 38 credits:

Code	Title	Credits
Required Courses		
<i>D.N.P. Core Courses</i>		
NURS 830	Evidence-Based Practice I: Inquiry and Research Methods	3
NURS 831	Evidence-Based Practice II: Translating Inquiry into Practice	3
NURS 832	Doctor of Nursing Practice: Leadership I	3
NURS 833	Doctor of Nursing Practice: Leadership II	3
NURS 837	Evidence-Based Practice III: Project Development	3
NURS 590	Colloquium	1
NURS 887	Ethics in Professional Nursing Practice	1
NURS 808	Population Health Perspectives	3
NURS 836	Healthcare Informatics	3
NURS 845	Healthcare Economics and Policy for Nurse Administrators	3
Electives		
6 credits of electives chosen from a list of approved elective courses maintained by the graduate program office		6
Culminating Experience		

NURS 835	Doctor of Nursing Practice Project	6
Total Credits		38

In addition to the minimum 38 credits, up to 7 credits of NURS 834 may be required for M.S.N. to D.N.P. students, depending on the number of practicum hours completed in the student's M.S.N. program.

For students in the Leadership Option, students are required to participate in 2 intensives offered at the University Park or Hershey Medical Center campus. For full-time students, the first intensive is August of semester I for M.S.N. to D.N.P. and Semester III for B.S.N. to D.N.P. students. Intensive 2 is at the end of semester II for M.S.N. to D.N.P. and semester IV for B.S.N. to D.N.P. students. For students in the Nurse Practitioner Options, three intensives are required at the University Park Campus or the Hershey Campus. The first intensive is Semester 2 in August prior to the beginning of the Fall Semester. The second intensive is during Semester 4 at the end of July or early August. The third intensive is at the beginning of Semester 7 (Summer) during May. For part-time M.S.N. to D.N.P. students the first intensive is August of semester III and intensive 2 is the end of semester IV.

In addition to course work, all students are required to complete a series of three benchmarks, Qualifying Examination, Comprehensive Examination, and a Final Oral Presentation.

D.N.P. Doctoral Committee Composition

The doctoral committee will consist of the student's academic adviser and two additional members of the Graduate Faculty. The academic adviser will be the chair of the committee.

Qualifying Examination

All students must satisfactorily complete the qualifying examination, which is designed to evaluate the student's past performance and potential for successfully completing the program. The qualifying examination occurs prior to the 2nd intensive, which follows completion of one semester of full-time study for the M.S.N. to D.N.P. student, and within three semesters of full-time study for the B.S.N. to D.N.P. student. Students who fail the examination on the first attempt may repeat it once. Students who fail the examination the second time are terminated from the program.

Comprehensive Examination

The comprehensive examination marks the student's progression into their D.N.P. project. Students will present their D.N.P. project proposal. The comprehensive examination needs to be successfully completed prior to the submission of the proposal for human subjects' review or carrying out the project (if it does not require a review). Students who fail the examination on the first attempt may repeat it once. Students who fail the examination the second time are terminated from the program.

Final Oral Presentation

Upon completion of the project, the Final Oral Presentation is scheduled. Students are required to present the project for approval by their doctoral committee. The Associate Dean for Graduate Education & Research will sign off on the final paper, following completion of the paper during NURS 835 and the student's passing of the oral presentation. Students who fail the presentation on the first attempt may repeat it once. The student's final paper will be made publicly available through ScholarSphere (<https://scholarsphere.psu.edu/>).

Options

The five options offered in the D.N.P. degree program include: Leadership, Family/Individual across the Lifespan Nurse Practitioner, Adult

Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner, Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner, and Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner. Students in these options complete the D.N.P. Program Courses as described above. The option specific course requirements described below replace the required elective credits.

Leadership Option

Students must earn a minimum of 61 credits and complete a minimum of 1000 practicum hours for the D.N.P. with the Leadership option.

Code	Title	Credits
Required Courses		
<i>D.N.P. Core Courses</i>		
NURS 510	Theoretical and Scientific Foundations of Advanced Nursing Practice	3
NURS 590	Colloquium	1
NURS 830	Evidence-Based Practice I: Inquiry and Research Methods	3
NURS 831	Evidence-Based Practice II: Translating Inquiry into Practice	3
NURS 832	Doctor of Nursing Practice: Leadership I	3
NURS 836	Healthcare Informatics	3
NURS 837	Evidence-Based Practice III: Project Development	3
NURS 845	Healthcare Economics and Policy for Nurse Administrators	3
NURS 887	Ethics in Professional Nursing Practice	1
NURS 808	Population Health Perspectives	3
<i>Leadership Option Required Courses</i>		
NURS 501	Issues in Nursing and Health Care	3
NURS 833	Doctor of Nursing Practice: Leadership II	3
NURS 846	Leadership Concepts and Theories for Nurse Administrators	3
NURS 847	Human Resource and Work Force Issues for Nurse Administrators	3
NURS 848A	Synthesis and Application of the Nurse Administrator Role	4
STAT 507	Epidemiologic Research Methods	3
<i>Advanced Practice Clinical (Needed to meet the 1000 hour practicum requirement)</i>		
NURS 834	Doctor of Nursing Practice Clinical Practicum	4
Electives		
6 credits of an administrative elective chosen from a list of approved elective courses maintained by the graduate program office		6
Culminating Experience		
NURS 835	Doctor of Nursing Practice Project	6
Total Credits		61

Family/ Individual Across the Lifespan Nurse Practitioner Option

Students must earn a minimum of 67 credits and complete a minimum of 1125 practicum hours for the D.N.P. with the Family/Individual Across the Lifespan Nurse Practitioner option.

Code	Title	Credits
Required Courses		
<i>D.N.P. Core Courses</i>		
NURS 510	Theoretical and Scientific Foundations of Advanced Nursing Practice	3

NURS 590	Colloquium	1
NURS 830	Evidence-Based Practice I: Inquiry and Research Methods	3
NURS 831	Evidence-Based Practice II: Translating Inquiry into Practice	3
NURS 832	Doctor of Nursing Practice: Leadership I	3
NURS 836	Healthcare Informatics	3
NURS 837	Evidence-Based Practice III: Project Development	3
NURS 845	Healthcare Economics and Policy for Nurse Administrators	3
NURS 887	Ethics in Professional Nursing Practice	1
NURS 808	Population Health Perspectives	3
<i>Family/ Individual Across the Lifespan Nurse Practitioner Option Required Courses</i>		
NURS 802	Advanced Health Assessment of Adult Populations	3
NURS 803	Pathophysiology for the Advanced Practice Nurse	3
NURS 804	Pharmacologic Therapy for the Advanced Practice Nurse	3
NURS 588	Healthcare Policy for Nurse and Healthcare Scholars	3
NURS 870F	Family Nurse Practitioner Role with Healthy Family/Individual	3
NURS 871F	Family Nurse Practitioner Role with Individuals and Families with Complex and/or Chronic Health Prob	3
NURS 802A	Advanced Health Assessment of Pediatric Populations	1
NURS 872F	Family/Individual Across the Lifespan Nurse Practitioner Doctoral Practicum I	2
NURS 873F	Family/Individual Across the Lifespan Nurse Practitioner Doctoral Practicum II	3
NURS 874F	Family/Individual Across the Lifespan Nurse Practitioner Integrative Doctoral Practicum	5
NURS 875	Nurse Practitioner Role with Children and Families	2
NURS 876F	Family/Individual Across the Lifespan Nurse Practitioner Doctoral Practicum in Child Health	1
NURS 877F	Clinical Practice Synthesis for Family/Individual Across the Lifespan Nurse Practitioner	3
Culminating Experience		
NURS 835	Doctor of Nursing Practice Project	6
Total Credits		67

Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner Option

Students must earn a minimum of 64 credits and complete a minimum of 1125 practicum hours for the D.N.P. with the Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner Option

Code	Title	Credits
Required Courses		
<i>D.N.P. Core Courses</i>		
NURS 510	Theoretical and Scientific Foundations of Advanced Nursing Practice	3
NURS 590	Colloquium	1
NURS 830	Evidence-Based Practice I: Inquiry and Research Methods	3

NURS 831	Evidence-Based Practice II: Translating Inquiry into Practice	3
NURS 832	Doctor of Nursing Practice: Leadership I	3
NURS 836	Healthcare Informatics	3
NURS 837	Evidence-Based Practice III: Project Development	3
NURS 845	Healthcare Economics and Policy for Nurse Administrators	3
NURS 887	Ethics in Professional Nursing Practice	1
NURS 808	Population Health Perspectives	3

Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner Option Required Courses

NURS 802	Advanced Health Assessment of Adult Populations	3
NURS 803	Pathophysiology for the Advanced Practice Nurse	3
NURS 804	Pharmacologic Therapy for the Advanced Practice Nurse	3
NURS 588	Healthcare Policy for Nurse and Healthcare Scholars	3
NURS 870	Nurse Practitioner Role with Healthy Individuals and Families	3
NURS 871	Nurse Practitioner Role with Individuals and Families with Complex and/or Chronic Health Problems	3
NURS 872D	Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner Doctoral Practicum I	3
NURS 873D	Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner Doctoral Practicum II	3
NURS 874D	Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner Integrative Doctoral Practicum	5
NURS 877	Clinical Practice Synthesis for Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner	3

Culminating Experience

NURS 835	Doctor of Nursing Practice Project	6
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Total Credits **64**

Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse practitioner Option

Students must earn a minimum of 66 credits and complete a minimum of 1125 practicum hours for the D.N.P. with the Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Option

Code	Title	Credits
Required Courses		
<i>D.N.P. Core Courses</i>		
NURS 510	Theoretical and Scientific Foundations of Advanced Nursing Practice	3
NURS 590	Colloquium	1
NURS 830	Evidence-Based Practice I: Inquiry and Research Methods	3
NURS 831	Evidence-Based Practice II: Translating Inquiry into Practice	3
NURS 832	Doctor of Nursing Practice: Leadership I	3
NURS 836	Healthcare Informatics	3
NURS 837	Evidence-Based Practice III: Project Development	3
NURS 845	Healthcare Economics and Policy for Nurse Administrators	3
NURS 887	Ethics in Professional Nursing Practice	1

NURS 808	Population Health Perspectives	3
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Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Option Required Courses

NURS 802	Advanced Health Assessment of Adult Populations	3
NURS 803	Pathophysiology for the Advanced Practice Nurse	3
NURS 804	Pharmacologic Therapy for the Advanced Practice Nurse	3
NURS 588	Healthcare Policy for Nurse and Healthcare Scholars	3
NURS 860	Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Role I	3
NURS 861	Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Role II	3
NURS 862D	Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Doctoral Practicum I	3
NURS 863D	Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Doctoral Practicum II	3
NURS 864D	Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Integrative Doctoral Practicum	5
NURS 865	Pharmacology for Acute Care Nurse Practitioners	1
NURS 866	Health Assessment of the Adult Gerontology Population in Acute Care	1
NURS 867	Clinical Practice Synthesis for Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner	3

Culminating Experience

NURS 835	Doctor of Nursing Practice Project	6
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Total Credits **66**

Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Option

Students must earn a minimum of 72 credits and complete a minimum of practicum 1125 hours for the D.N.P. with the mental health individual.

Code	Title	Credits
Required Courses		
<i>D.N.P. Core Courses</i>		
NURS 510	Theoretical and Scientific Foundations of Advanced Nursing Practice	3
NURS 590	Colloquium	1
NURS 830	Evidence-Based Practice I: Inquiry and Research Methods	3
NURS 831	Evidence-Based Practice II: Translating Inquiry into Practice	3
NURS 832	Doctor of Nursing Practice: Leadership I	3
NURS 836	Healthcare Informatics	3
NURS 837	Evidence-Based Practice III: Project Development	3
NURS 845	Healthcare Economics and Policy for Nurse Administrators	3
NURS 887	Ethics in Professional Nursing Practice	1
NURS 808	Population Health Perspectives	3
<i>Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Option Required Courses</i>		
NURS 802	Advanced Health Assessment of Adult Populations	3
NURS 802M	Psych MHNP Integrative Biopsychosocial Assessment & Differential Diagnosis Across the Lifespan	2

NURS 803	Pathophysiology for the Advanced Practice Nurse	3
NURS 804	Pharmacologic Therapy for the Advanced Practice Nurse	3
NURS 807	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Advanced Nursing Practice	2
NURS 809	Crisis and Trauma-Informed Care for Advanced Nursing Practice	2
NURS 810	Theoretical Foundation and Application of Psychotherapy with Individuals, Groups, and Families	3
NURS 811	Family and Organizational Systems Across the Lifespan for Advanced Nursing Practice	2
NURS 870M	Neuroscience and Psychobiology of Mental Illness and Across the Lifespan	3
NURS 871M	Neuropsychopharmacology and Biologically Based Treatments Across the Lifespan	3
NURS 872M	Psychiatric Mental Health Across the Lifespan Nurse Practitioner Doctoral Practicum I	3
NURS 873M	Psychiatric Mental Health Across the Lifespan Nurse Practitioner Doctoral Practicum II	3
NURS 874M	Psychiatric Mental Health Across the Lifespan Nurse Practitioner Integrative Doctoral Practicum	5
NURS 877M	Clinical Practice Synthesis for Psychiatric Mental Health Across the Lifespan Nurse Practitioner	3
Culminating Experience		
NURS 835	Doctor of Nursing Practice Project	6
Total Credits		72

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-600 Research Degree Policies. (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>)

Students may enter the program directly with a B.S.N. degree or following completion of a B.S.N. and a Master's degree (either in Nursing or non-Nursing).

Students entering with an M.S.N. will complete a minimum of 43 credits. The curriculum is composed of 3 components:

Code	Title	Credits
Required Courses		
<i>Nursing Science Core Courses</i>		
NURS 580	Theoretical and Philosophical Basis of Nursing	3
NURS 582	Literature Synthesis for Nursing Science	4
NURS 583	Advanced Seminar in Nursing Science	3
NURS 587	Ethics in Health Research	1
NURS 588	Healthcare Policy for Nurse and Healthcare Scholars	3
NURS 590	Colloquium	2
<i>Research Methodology and Statistics</i>		
Minimum of 15 credits approved by the student's adviser and/or Ph.D. committee		15
<i>Courses for Individual Specialty</i>		
Minimum of 12 credits; minimum of 15 credits for a minor		12-15
Total Credits		43

¹ Required of students who are not research assistants on an active faculty research study.

In addition to course work, all students are required to complete a series of examinations: the Qualifying Examination, the Comprehensive Examination (written and oral components), the Dissertation Proposal Defense, and Final Oral Examination. Students are required to pass the Final Oral Examination, have the dissertation approved and submitted, and graduate within five years of passing the qualifying examination.

Qualifying Examination

All students must satisfactorily complete the qualifying examination, which is designed to confirm the student's mastery of basic nursing theory and research methods. For students entering the doctoral program with a master's degree, the qualifying examination must be taken at the end of the first year of full-time study or the equivalent. Students who fail the examination on the first attempt may repeat it once. Students who fail the examination the second time are terminated from the program.

Comprehensive Examination

The comprehensive examination is designed to test the student's mastery of and ability to synthesize and integrate the theoretical basis for nursing science, advanced research methods, and the chosen specialty area. This examination is taken when a student has substantially completed all course work. Students who fail the examination on the first attempt may repeat it once. Students who fail the examination the second time are terminated from the program.

Dissertation and Final Oral Examination (the Dissertation Defense)

Upon completion of the doctoral dissertation, the candidate must pass a final oral examination (the dissertation defense) to earn the Ph.D. degree. Each student is required to conduct an original and independent research project which adds to nursing's body of knowledge, and to communicate the research report in a written dissertation. A written dissertation proposal is required and must be approved at a proposal hearing by a majority vote of the student's Ph.D. committee. A majority vote is also required for approval of the completed written dissertation at the Final Oral Examination (the dissertation defense). The dissertation must be accepted by the Ph.D. committee, the head of the graduate program, and the Graduate School.