



The Next Step

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
SCHOOL OF NURSING

GRADUATE PROGRAMS

DNP • PHD



At the University of Wisconsin–Madison School of Nursing, we develop leaders for the nursing profession and for society. We make discoveries, enhance systems, and improve health through research, education, and practice.

The school is the preeminent nursing research institution in Wisconsin and a fundamental part of the state's health care system. We are committed to the academic preparation of nurses at all levels of practice and scholarship. The school offers the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN), Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP), and Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing (PhD) degrees, as well as continuing education and certificate programs. Our impact is immediate and our influence profound as we endeavor to better lives throughout Wisconsin's communities, hospitals, clinics, schools, and homes.

Located near the School of Medicine and Public Health, the School of Pharmacy, and UW Hospital and Clinics, the School of Nursing is well positioned for collaboration across health care professions. Our faculty and staff work together with scientists and renowned scholars across the UW–Madison campus, the nation, and the world. We work independently and in partnership to generate discoveries that are innovative, translational in nature, and grounded in practical application.

AS A TOP-RANKED RESEARCH UNIVERSITY, faculty and doctoral students at the UW–Madison School of Nursing are committed to advancing nursing science and practice. We strive to improve the health of individuals and populations, and to enhance nursing practice and health care systems by developing new knowledge and translating research evidence into practice.

In our two doctoral degree programs, faculty work closely with students to design personalized educational experiences that emphasize leadership development and position graduates for continuous advancement in both research and clinical practice careers.



Leaders in Practice (DNP)

The UW–Madison Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program prepares students with skills, knowledge, and expertise for exceptional advanced nursing practice.

Complementary to the research doctorate (PhD), the DNP curriculum readies students to integrate and apply research findings to real-world solutions. Similarly, DNP-prepared nurses shape and enhance nursing research by raising authentic questions and sharing our knowledge and expertise from practice.

Firmly rooted in the philosophies, science, ethical values, and art of nursing, the DNP curriculum builds from these foundations to realize new possibilities in practice. Through challenging coursework and practica, students are prepared to practice at the highest levels of nursing and transform systems for better health.

With seven options for advanced practice specialization, DNP students choose one of five different clinical APRN certifications or advanced practice roles in population health or systems leadership and innovation.



Leaders in Research (PhD)

The UW–Madison Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing (PhD) program prepares students to pose innovative questions and lead research teams in building the knowledge base that guides nursing practice.

The PhD curriculum provides the foundation necessary for designing and conducting research, and includes individualized coursework, mentored research experiences, and professional development in the student's selected area of research focus. Our students work with nationally renowned nursing faculty who have established programs of research and strong track records of securing grant funding, publishing and presenting research findings, and mentoring the next generation of nurse scientists.

Through one-on-one relationships with faculty advisors, PhD students develop expertise in selected research methods (quantitative and qualitative), approaches (e.g., informatics, health systems research), populations (e.g., children, women, families, older adults), and phenomena (e.g., aging, chronic illness, symptom science, palliative care, mental health, health disparities). Mirroring the interprofessional nature of modern health care, faculty from diverse backgrounds including medicine, public health, psychology, sociology, engineering, and other disciplines collaborate in our PhD student training and development.

TWO DOCTORAL PROGRAMS

Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)

Prepares nurses for leadership, clinical scholarship, and specialized practice at the highest level of nursing.

OVERARCHING PURPOSE

Exceptional advanced practice at the highest level of nursing. Options for specialization include population health, systems leadership, and APRN certification as a nurse practitioner or clinical nurse specialist. Graduates may also pursue clinical faculty positions and roles in quality improvement or health policy.

CAREER FOCUS

Advanced nursing practice: Theory, science, and skills for specialized nursing practice at the highest level

Clinical scholarship: Critical program evaluation and the systematic application of evidence to ensure current, high-quality practice with optimal outcomes

Organizational leadership and policy development: Promote health and practice from a systems perspective

CURRICULUM FOCUS

All DNP students complete a series of increasingly complex, individually precepted practicum experiences, totaling 1,000 hours. These immersions allow students to fully prepare for the scope and expected competencies of practice in their selected specialty.

PRACTICA

Culminating in a final scholarly project, the DNP curriculum prepares students to practice at the highest level within their specialty and to systematically lead change that improves outcomes and systems of care.

SCHOLARSHIP REQUIREMENTS

- Certified advanced practice nurse (e.g., nurse practitioner or clinical nurse specialist)
- Leadership in health care organizations, public health, and community-based agencies
- Clinical nursing faculty
- Health care innovators, entrepreneurs, and quality improvement specialists
- Policy development and advocacy positions

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Prepares nurse scientists with the skills to design and conduct research that generates new knowledge to advance nursing practice and improve health.

Conduct and disseminate independent research, as well as participate in and lead interdisciplinary research teams to build new knowledge related to nursing and health. Graduates advance the discipline through research, professional leadership, and education of the next generation of nurses.

Scientific inquiry: Philosophy of knowledge development, research design, methods, statistics, and responsible conduct of research

Foundational knowledge in the students' area of research interest: Theory, nursing science electives, minor coursework

Professional role development: Proseminar in nursing research, nursing education, and policy and leadership

Guided and independent dissertation research

Option of clinical research or policy practicum experience completed near the end of required coursework.

Faculty-mentored research experiences throughout the program with increasing level of independence, culminating in the dissertation study.

- Nursing faculty and other academic roles including research, education, and administrative leadership
- Nurse scientist for health care organizations, industry, or government
- Leadership positions in a variety of organizations



DNP Program Overview



THE DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE (DNP)

program prepares experts in specialized nursing practice. Students are able to focus on one of the following areas while developing leadership skills to expand their job prospects:

- Adult/Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner
- Adult/Gerontology Clinical Nurse Specialist
- Adult/Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner
- Pediatric Primary Care Nurse Practitioner
- Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner
- Population Health
- Systems Leadership and Innovation

Through a combination of coursework, a scholarly project, and supervised practicum hours, students are prepared to transform practice and improve outcomes. They gain advanced knowledge and skills in systems, leadership, program evaluation, informatics, and policy. Our graduates evaluate, influence, and lead practice in a variety of settings.

Scholarly Project

In the final year of the program, all DNP students complete an individual scholarly project representing the culmination of their doctoral education. The independent projects use current evidence and advanced practice knowledge to evaluate and improve outcomes at a systems level.

Students develop their scholarly project over three semesters to produce a paper of publishable quality and deliver an oral presentation to faculty, students, and the community. The scholarly project challenges students to tackle complex problems using systems-level thinking and analysis, and prepares them for visionary leadership in their careers. It is a key element of the DNP curriculum that sets both our program and our graduates apart.

DNP in Advanced Clinical Practice (APRN Roles)

The DNP in Advanced Clinical Practice tracks are designed to prepare students for exceptional APRN practice with select patient populations in acute, specialty, or primary care. Five options are available to students offering the opportunity to pursue APRN certification as a clinical nurse specialist (CNS) or nurse practitioner (NP) as the clinical focus of DNP study.

A Blend of Online and Classroom Learning

Our hybrid classes offer the best of both worlds: the convenience of online classes combined with the benefits of classroom learning. It's a format proven to be effective in keeping students engaged and improving learning outcomes.

On-campus meetings are required for all courses. Meeting frequency varies based on the course. The in-person class meetings offer dynamic discussions and case studies as well as the opportunity to get to know peers and faculty.

Clinical and Leadership Practicum Experiences

As part of the DNP program, post-BS students complete a minimum of 1,000 practicum hours: 800 hours in clinical practice and 200 hours in clinical leadership. Post-MS students complete a minimum of 500 hours in clinical leadership. All clinical placements are arranged and overseen by DNP clinical faculty, taking advantage of established academic partnerships with major health care systems across Wisconsin. We attempt to honor student requests to complete clinicals near their home community or another site of interest, provided the site meets the requirements of the course and the student's selected area of specialization, and a qualified preceptor is available.

GRADUATE PROFILE



Adam Schneider, DNP'17
Senior Organ Procurement Coordinator,
University of Wisconsin Organ and
Tissue Donation

"I am currently in my dream job. I used to help facilitate the organ donation process, working with the families of dying patients who want to try to provide the gift of life to potential recipients. Now that I have my DNP, not only do I get to still help families, but I get to focus on improving the process at a higher level for our team. I'm able to perform literature reviews, data collection, and change our process using my clinical background. Already, we've recovered lungs on patients we typically wouldn't recover due to the changes that my team and I have implemented. It was so successful that we plan to perform a similar project about heart donations, and I'm confident even more lives will be saved."

CORE AREAS OF STUDY	POST-BS OPTION MINIMUM CREDITS	POST-MS* OPTION MINIMUM CREDITS <small>*APRN Certified</small>
Systematic Evaluation of Practice	18	15
Leadership & Policy	14	8
Practice	36	9
Total Minimum Credits	68	32

Applicants with prior graduate education may be able to waive up to 18 credits based on previous graduate coursework, pending review of transcripts and syllabi.

DNP in Population Health



The DNP in Population Health is designed to provide a course of study that fosters the development of competencies required for leading population health improvement across health care, public health, and community systems. This advanced practice nursing program of study emphasizes the values of the nursing profession, applying a broad perspective on health determinants, coordinating care across providers and sites, collaborating with other professionals and community stakeholders, and advocating for individuals, communities, and populations. Graduates of this program will be well prepared to shape population health improvement and lead population health programs.

Online Learning

The DNP in Population Health coursework is offered entirely online to facilitate access to the program. The online format allows students to continue to be engaged in the field while still learning in a cohort model through the online courses. Using the cohort model, students progress in a group, following the course sequence of the program together. By taking classes with the same people every semester, students are able to strengthen their relationships and build on shared experiences to challenge each other academically and professionally.

Population Health and Leadership Practicum Experiences

Students in the DNP in Population Health specialization will complete a minimum of 1,000 practicum hours over the course of four semesters in the program. Practice immersions are scaffolded to become increasingly complex and diverse, helping students to develop competencies for the full scope of a practice in population health.

CORE AREAS OF STUDY	POST-BS OPTION MINIMUM CREDITS
Systematic Evaluation of Practice	27
Leadership & Policy Practice	17
	14
Total Minimum Credits	58

Applicants with prior graduate education may be able to waive up to 18 credits based on previous graduate coursework, pending review of transcripts and syllabi.

“The DNP in Population Health and Systems Leadership and Innovation tracks are set to prepare the nurses we need to help resolve some of the greatest challenges we’re facing as a society: rising rates of chronic disease, figuring out how to adequately and affordably care for an aging population, health disparities, access to care and the skyrocketing costs of that care, substance use disorders, climate change, emerging infectious diseases, and a global pandemic. The opportunities to make a difference are endless.”

—Pam McGranahan, MS’04, DNP’12, RN
DNP Program Director

DNP in Systems Leadership and Innovation

The DNP in Systems Leadership and Innovation is designed to provide an agile, customized course of study that will support the development of advanced practice nursing leaders for a variety of health care roles. These leaders will understand multifaceted human-environment and other factors for systems innovation, and will incorporate the values of the nursing profession in positions of influence. Learners will build the knowledge and skills necessary for health care transformation, innovation, and effective leadership in a wide variety of settings. Graduates of this program will be well prepared to leverage a broad perspective on systems innovation, and will be able to design and lead new models of care delivery.

Online Learning

The DNP in Systems Leadership and Innovation didactic coursework is offered entirely online to increase access to the program. The online format allows students to continue to be engaged in the field while still learning in a cohort model through the online courses. Using the cohort model, students progress in a group, following the course sequence of the program together. By taking classes with the same people every semester, students are able to strengthen their relationships and build on shared experiences to challenge each other academically and professionally.

Systems Leadership and Innovation Practicum Experiences

Students in the DNP in Population Health specialization will complete a minimum of 1,000 practicum hours over the course of the program. Practice immersions are scaffolded to become increasingly complex and diverse, helping students to develop competencies in systems leadership, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

CORE AREAS OF STUDY	POST-BS OPTION MINIMUM CREDITS
Systematic Evaluation of Practice	27
Leadership & Policy	17
Practice	14
Total Minimum Credits	58

Applicants with prior graduate education may be able to waive up to 18 credits based on previous graduate coursework, pending review of transcripts and syllabi.



PhD Program Overview

THE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PhD) program prepares researchers to develop, evaluate, and disseminate new knowledge in nursing and health science. Our program provides nurses with the foundation to become leaders in research that advances the scientific basis of nursing and contributes to public health.

We offer three options for entry into the PhD program: post-BS, post-MS, and an early entry option for students enrolled in our BSN program. PhD students have opportunities to work with talented and enthusiastic young investigators as well as award-winning senior nurse scientists. Our faculty members have a wide variety of research interests and expertise to support PhD students' knowledge and skill development. Areas of particular strength and depth include the following:

- Aging
- Chronic illness management
- Symptom science and palliative care
- Care of children and families
- Health systems and care delivery
- Psychiatric mental health
- Health disparities

We supplement core areas of coursework with intentional and collaborative guided research experiences and coursework outside the nursing discipline. We augment this combination of research and coursework with practica and close mentoring as we prepare PhD students to be stewards of the discipline of nursing.

Coursework

Our program requires a minimum of 52 credits and can be completed in as few as three years. Students complete core courses in the areas of scholarly inquiry, theory and practice of nursing, policy and leadership, and nursing education. Our program is delivered in a face-to-face format to actively and personally engage students in research, and to allow students to take advantage of the expertise on the university campus.

In addition to classroom courses, students select a practicum experience in the conduct of clinical research or in policy and leadership. The clinical research practicum engages students as participants and observers in a clinical or other care setting that corresponds to their research phenomena or populations of interest. Students focus on deepening their knowledge of health problems, developing research questions, and refining proposals for research conduct in the care setting. The policy and leadership practicum



engages students as participants and observers in public policy agencies working on research addressing public health; economic, social, ethical, political factors; health care disparities; or workforce issues associated with the health of individuals, communities, and populations.

Early Immersion Research & Mentoring

Students are carefully matched with faculty mentors based on common interests and/or methodologies. Students are immediately immersed in research from their first semester, allowing them to gain hands-on experience and formulate their own dissertation study and subsequent program of research.

Throughout the program, PhD students participate in their faculty advisor’s research group, which often includes interdisciplinary collaborators, research staff, and students from across programs (undergraduate, DNP, and PhD). Participation in research groups provides students with the opportunity to discuss and present their research ideas to faculty and peers. Students are encouraged to present early findings at poster fairs and conferences, and many PhD students have successfully sought grant funding that supports their research and funds all or part of their travel to conferences and seminars.

Collaboration within the School, across Campus, into the Community

While we are committed to fully supporting our graduate students within the School of Nursing, we also embrace opportunities for cross-campus and external training and career development that allow us to partner, share information and best practices, and connect research with nursing practice.

We are fortunate to be a part of a thriving, world-class research university that offers vast resources beyond our walls and brings diverse perspectives and insights to our work. We encourage and foster cross-campus collaboration with other disciplines, such as medicine, public health, psychology, engineering, business, and education. PhD students can also access campus-based research support services (including data management tools), consulting, and mentorship through organizations including the Institute for Clinical and Translational Research (ICTR). Additionally, there are campus and external funding opportunities that support specialized training and professional development opportunities for health sciences graduate students.

GRADUATE PROFILE



Jessica Rainbow, PhD '18
Assistant Professor, University of Arizona
College of Nursing

“My research focuses on how we can improve the health care work environment to advance the health and safety of nurses, which will in turn improve the care that patients receive. I am interested in anything that would lead a nurse to be present at work but not be able to fully conduct their job, a concept called presenteeism, and how we can address these work environment and health issues.

At UW–Madison, I learned how to design and carry out research studies, apply for funding, write manuscripts for publication, teach, mentor, and so much more. I use all these skills daily in my job as an assistant professor.”

CORE AREAS OF STUDY

MINIMUM CREDITS

Scholarly Inquiry	18
Policy & Leadership	3-9
Theory & Practice of Nursing	3-9
Nursing Education	3
Guided Research and Dissertation	10
PhD Minor	9
Total Minimum Credits	52

Application Requirements

	DNP			PhD
	Advanced Clinical Practice (Post-BS)	Advanced Clinical Practice (Post-MS) *APRN Certified	Population Health and Systems Leadership and Innovation	
Bachelor of Science in Nursing	●	●	●	●
Master of Science in Nursing		Master's degree in a specialty track from an accredited nursing program		
GPA	GPA of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) on the last 60 credits for the baccalaureate degree	GPA of 3.5 (on a 4.0 scale) for the master's degree	GPA of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) on the last 60 credits for the baccalaureate degree; 3.5 for the master's degree	GPA of at least 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) on the last 60 credits of the most recent baccalaureate degree
Statistics	Grade of B or better in a graduate-level statistics course within the last 5 years*	Grade of B or better in a graduate-level statistics course within the last 5 years*	Grade of B or better in a graduate-level statistics course within the last 5 years*	
Licensure	RN required	RN required	RN required	RN preferred
Experience	minimum of 1 year of professional nursing experience	minimum of 1 year of professional nursing experience	minimum of 1 year experience in nursing, public health, or a health-related field	
Application Form	●	●	●	●
Transcripts	●	●	●	●
Personal Statements	●	●	●	●
Recommendations	●	●	●	●
Scholarly Writing Samples				●

*Note: The course does not need to be taken before applying, but must be successfully completed prior to the start of the fall term.

Application Timeline



Scholarships and Funding Opportunities

The School of Nursing is committed to funding DNP and PhD students. Several forms of financial aid are available. These include assistantships (project, research, and teaching), fellowships, traineeships, and other sources. Graduate students who have a qualifying assistantship or fellowship are eligible to receive tuition remission or deferral. Financial aid is renewable but dependent on the availability of funds and satisfactory academic progress of students.

Assistantships administered by the School of Nursing are funded by faculty research grants and gifts to the School of Nursing. Several fellowships are available to students from underrepresented and/or economically disadvantaged backgrounds who show excellence in their research areas. Students in the PhD program are also strongly encouraged to apply for and have been successful in obtaining federal predoctoral fellowships from the National Institutes of Health. Faculty advisors guide students in preparing competitive fellowship applications during their time in the PhD program.



“The UW-Madison School of Nursing provided me the experience to conduct interdisciplinary research with scholars from different areas that could build from nursing research questions. This allowed me to conduct a dissertation study that involves nursing, neuroscience, and sleep medicine.”

— **Chooza Moon**, PhD'16



Contact the **School of Nursing Admissions Office** at admissions@nursing.wisc.edu

University of Wisconsin–Madison



FOUNDED IN 1848, the University of Wisconsin–Madison is a public land-grant university and comprehensive research institution where students and faculty members contribute to world-class education and solve real-world problems. Students have opportunities that range from conducting research to participating in interprofessional education to developing cultural competency. Learning in and out of the classroom creates a complete student experience.



Wisconsin Idea

UW–Madison’s research mission stems from the Wisconsin Idea. The Wisconsin Idea is a longstanding, deeply held university belief that education should influence lives beyond the boundaries of the classroom. Synonymous with Wisconsin for more than a century, this idea has become the guiding philosophy driving university outreach efforts throughout Wisconsin and around the world.

Life in Madison

Madison is a vibrant community that blends the art and culture of city living with a Midwestern friendliness and accessibility. Funky neighborhoods offer festivals, galleries, and shopping, while an urban downtown brims with farm-to-table restaurants, music venues, and theater. Sports fans cheer on the Badger teams across campus throughout the year, and recreational athletes take to the bike trails and roadways for exercise and amateur competition. With miles of shoreline along several lakes, rolling hills to the west, and native prairies and bucolic country sides all just a few minutes from the outskirts of town, Madison and Dane County are also a nature-lover's dream no matter the season. With Milwaukee just over an hour to the east and Chicago less than three hours south, the amenities of larger metropolitan areas are also close at hand.

COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

Diversity and inclusivity are infused into our curricula, resources, services, and events for students, faculty, and staff. We are committed to promoting dialogue and learning around diversity, fostering an inclusive climate, and supporting students from underrepresented groups. Members of our community come from diverse and rich backgrounds in terms of race/ethnicity, sexuality, socioeconomic status, religion, nationality, and many other identities.

We believe that understanding diversity is also necessary to improve health, ensure equity, and eliminate the health disparities that exist across many populations. Our tradition of integrated research and practice focuses on the needs of those whose health status or social condition leaves them underrepresented or places them at risk. Our collaborative innovations increase the diversity of participation in health care research, promote sharing of diverse interprofessional perspectives, provide tools to support those working with underrepresented populations, and enhance community engagement.





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School of Nursing
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