

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Master of Science in Nursing – Application Process & Instructions Academic Year: 2009-2010

The School of Nursing welcomes applications to its MSN program. If you have additional questions after reviewing the following instructions, please contact the Schools noted at the end of the document.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The School of Nursing admits students primarily for fall semester each year. A small number of students may be admitted for spring semester, depending on the number of clinical slots available.

Fall Semester

Priority Application Deadline: December 15th

All complete applications received by the priority date are considered for University merit scholarship funding.

Final Application Deadline: March 1st

The completed application must be electronically submitted, and all supporting documents must be postmarked, by this date.

Spring Semester

Application Deadline: October 1st

The completed application must be electronically submitted, and all supporting documents must be postmarked, by this date. Note: University merit scholarship funding is not available for spring enrollees.

NOTE: Applications deemed incomplete by the posted deadlines may not be reviewed.

PROGRAM PREREQUISITES

1. **Registered Nurse:** all applicants must hold a current unencumbered license as a registered nurse in the state in which the student will do clinical course work. Note: an “encumbered license” means neither the license, the licensee’s practice, nor the licensee is associated with any type of restriction, encumbrance, or probationary limitations imposed by the applicable Board of Nursing or any judicial entity. Documentary evidence must be submitted with the application.
2. Educational Background:
 - a. **Bachelor of Science in Nursing:** The bachelor’s degree must be awarded by a school of nursing accredited by the National League for Nursing (NLN) or the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE).

OR

- b. An **RN-MSN option** is available for registered nurses without a bachelor’s degree or with a bachelor’s degree in a field other than nursing. The following 51 college level pre-requisite credits must be completed by registered nurse applicants:

- English Composition (3 credits)
- Humanities (9 credits)
- Biological Sciences including Anatomy and Physiology (12 credits)
- Other Science (6 credits)
- Social Sciences (12 credits)
- Human Growth & Development (3 credits)
- Statistics (3 credits)
- Elective (3 credits)

To assist the RN-MSN applicant, the School of Nursing offers an unofficial transcript evaluation service; more information is available at:

http://nursing.unc.edu/degree/pdf/transcript_evaluation_form.pdf

IMPORTANT NOTE Effective 2010, RN to MSN applicants may only apply for fall admission consideration. Spring admission will no longer be an option due to difficulties involved with course availability and sequencing. Spring 2009 (application deadline October 1, 2008) is the final time that RN to MSN applications will be accepted.

3. **Work experience as a Registered Nurse:** Advanced Practice Area (APA) requirements for a minimum of one year of work experience as an RN within the past five years are listed below.
 - **Adult Nurse Practitioner** program applicants must have experience with adults in any medical-surgical type setting.
 - **Family Nurse Practitioner** program applicants should have nursing experience in community or ambulatory settings (either as a paid employee or as a volunteer)
 - **Health Care Systems** program applicants should have experience in a leadership role within a health care setting. Applicants to this specialty may select from among five areas of study: Administration, Clinical Nurse Leader, Education, Informatics and Outcomes Management.
 - **Pediatric Nurse Practitioner/Clinical Nurse Specialist** program applicants must have experience in a neonatal or pediatric setting.
 - **Psychiatric-Mental Health Clinical Nurse Specialist or Clinical Nurse Specialist/Nurse Practitioner** program applicants must have experience in a psychiatric or mental health setting.
 - **Women's Health Nurse Practitioner/Clinical Nurse Specialist** program applicants must have experience in a women's health setting.
4. **Completion of Prerequisite Coursework:** All applicants are required to have completed the following courses:
 - a. Introductory-level statistics course (may be part of the undergraduate degree) with an earned grade of C or better. **The course must have been completed within 10 years of the date of matriculation into the MSN Program.**
 - b. Health assessment course: Students **must** complete a health assessment course **within two years of starting the first master's level clinical course**. See item 6 under Application Materials, for details on course requirements. (Students enrolling in the Administration, Education, Informatics or Outcome Management options of the Health Care Systems advanced practice area are exempt from this requirement.)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICATION

This document contains instructions for the integrated online application process; the UNC-Chapel Hill Graduate School and School of Nursing Supplemental Application have been combined for user-ease and processing efficiency. Please carefully read and follow the application instructions below.

1. The following application materials must be submitted to The Graduate School:
 - The Graduate School**
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Bynum Hall, CB #4010
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-4010
 - a. Graduate School Application: It is preferable that this application be submitted online via <https://admissionsapp.unc.edu/grad/DEFAULT.ASP>
 - b. **One official transcript** from **all** post-secondary schools attended since High School should be submitted; these documents should reflect all college-level course work (including prerequisite coursework) you have taken.

- c. Graduate Record Examination scores: One official score report should be sent by Educational Testing Service (ETS) to the Graduate School. Processing your application can be initiated using unofficial scores. (Note: UNC-Chapel Hill's School Code is R5816.)
 - d. North Carolina Residency Application: The residency application is required of all applicants claiming NC residency for tuition purposes, however cannot be completed until after the offer of admission has been accepted and the enrollment deposit paid indicating you plan to matriculate.
<http://gradschool.unc.edu/residency/index.html>
 - e. Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) results: required of all international students. Official scores should be sent by ETS to the Graduate School (Note: UNC-Chapel Hill's School Code is R5816.)
 - f. Application fee: \$77.00 (may be paid by check, money order or online by credit card)
2. The following materials should be submitted to the School of Nursing:

**Office of Admissions & Student Services
School of Nursing, Carrington Hall; CB #7460
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7460**

- a. **One official transcript** from **all** post-secondary schools attended since High School should be submitted; these documents should reflect all college-level course work (including prerequisite coursework) you have taken.
- b. Documentation substantiating the applicant holds a current unrestricted/unencumbered RN license
- c. Three Letters of Recommendation may be submitted in sealed envelopes or electronically (see #3 below)
- d. Professional Statement must be submitted as part of the online application.
- e. Resume must be submitted as part of the online application.
- f. Health Assessment Evaluation: A health assessment course completed *within two years of starting the first master's level clinical course* is required. Applicants must include the syllabus of a recently completed course **must** be submitted as part of the online application. (see item 6 below for more details). Note: two options are available at the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Nursing for completing this requirement. Contact the Graduate Admissions Counselor at 919-966-4260 for assistance.
- g. Financial Certificate with supporting documents (*for international students only*).

APPLICATION MATERIALS

The following materials are required facets of the application portfolio. Minimum requirements of The Graduate School for admission to the MSN program are explained where appropriate.

1. **Transcripts of Undergraduate Education**: Two official transcripts must be submitted from each college/university that you have attended. (**One** to the Graduate School and **one** to the School of Nursing). The Bachelor's degree in nursing must be awarded from an NLN or CCNE accredited School of Nursing. It is recommended by The Graduate School that applicants have earned a **3.0 GPA** (on a scale of 4.0) or better in their BSN program. The GPA for RN-MSN applicants is calculated using the 51 pre-requisite credits required for admission.
2. **Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores**: An applicant's GRE scores must be less than five years old at the time of application submission. ETS will generate scores for persons taking the computerized version of the GRE quickly and distribute to designated schools within two-three weeks. Those taking the paper version of the GRE should allow 4-6 weeks for scores to reach designated schools. Applicants should take these timeframes into consideration when planning for portfolio completeness.

Applicants are more competitive when their scores reach or exceed the 50th percentile on the verbal and quantitative sections. While the GRE is an important factor in admissions decisions, it is essential to note that it is not the sole factor on which decisions are made. An applicant's total portfolio is considered by the Admissions Committee in admissions decisions.

3. **Letters of Recommendation:** Three references are required for each applicant. Two letters of recommendation are needed from **faculty members** who can speak to your academic qualifications and strengths as a student. Specifically, the letters should address your potential for success in graduate education, leadership ability, and personal characteristics that will help or hinder development as an advanced practice nurse.

References should be returned in sealed envelopes bearing the referent's signature across the back flap, or completed and submitted online. If a manual form is preferred, please obtain at <http://gradschool.unc.edu/pdf/recform.pdf>

Note: applicants who have been out of school five or more years and have difficulty locating former faculty members, may substitute professional colleagues as referents. If this option is utilized, the professional colleagues must have an earned graduate degree (master's or doctorate) and possess the ability to speak to your potential for success in graduate school.

The third reference must be submitted by your **immediate supervisor** or the department head from your current or most recent nursing position. Please use the Employment Reference Form at http://nursing.unc.edu/admissions/application/msn_employer_reference.pdf

4. **Professional Statement:** This narrative is a very important part of your portfolio. The quality of the Professional Statement is often crucial in admissions decisions since it provides the Admissions Committee a first-hand example of your writing skills and your ability to present ideas in a clear, logical and coherent manner. In lieu of an interview, the professional statement provides the Committee with your personal perspective on your professional contributions, strengths as a student, current skills and abilities, and prior experiences. Proofread your statement carefully!

Please address EACH of the following subjects in your professional statement. Create a header for each topic noted and specifically respond to the topics as noted below. Failure to do so will weaken your portfolio notably.

- a. Explain why you have chosen this specific advanced practice area in the MSN program and discuss how your work experiences (paid and voluntary) demonstrate your fit with your selected specialty.
- b. Define your professional goals and how this program will contribute to your achieving them.
- c. Discuss your academic and clinical strengths.
- d. Discuss your academic and clinical areas in need of improvement.
- e. Identify a contemporary problem in your advanced practice area and discuss, specifically but briefly, a potential solution to the problem.

Consider this your opportunity to communicate with Admissions Committee members about your professional background and reasons for pursuing a graduate degree in your selected advanced practice area at this point in your career.

The Professional Statement should be three to four typed, double-spaced pages and should focus in detail on all elements noted above. The document should then be submitted with your application as an uploaded MS Word ".doc." file.

5. **Resume:** Please submit a current resume or curriculum vitae with your application as an uploaded MS Word ".doc." file. The resume must be thorough, detailing your education and employment history; any gap of greater than one year should be explained. It is important to ensure that all entries be properly dated indicated when your activity relative to the entry began and concluded. A standard resume format is acceptable.

6. **Health Assessment Evaluation Section:** A health assessment course, approved by the School of Nursing, is required and must be successfully completed within two years of enrollment in the first master's level clinical course. Applicants must indicate on the Health Assessment Evaluation section of the application, your background and proficiency in assessment skills. The health assessment course shall consist of a thorough review of all body systems including demonstrations and practice performing a full health assessment on each system. The course must include a minimum of 24 hours of classroom instruction and 24 hours of lab/clinical practice.

If you have taken a course other than what is offered by UNC-CH School of Nursing within the two year timeframe, submit a syllabus or other course material for review by School faculty. You will receive written notification of the outcome of this review.

Please be advised: In addition to fulfilling this prerequisite for admission, you are required to demonstrate basic competence in health assessment knowledge and skills during your first clinical course. Competency assessments typically occur within the first two weeks of the course and include the following expectations:

- a. Ability to interview a patient (on videotape) and write a detailed report of the history of the presenting illness.
- b. Ability to perform a head-to-toe physical examination under faculty observation and write a thorough report on the examination.
- c. Achieve 80% on a written examination covering techniques for patient interviewing, structure of the health history, techniques for performing a physical examination, and knowledge of common normal and abnormal findings which may be found on physical examination.

INTERVIEWS

If at any time additional information is needed to clarify or supplement your application portfolio, you will be contacted for an interview. Note: all applicants educated outside the US will be interviewed in person or via phone depending on geographical location.

FULL- VERSUS PART-TIME STATUS

Each applicant is expected to indicate on the application whether they are applying for full- or part-time study. In addition to personal and professional time constraints and the fact that the MSN program is demanding, several factors should be considered carefully when making this decision.

1. Full-time students are expected to take three or more courses per semester (at least nine credit hours); part-time students may take fewer courses, or from one to 8.9 credit hours per semester.
2. Full-time students can typically complete degree requirements within two full years plus one intervening summer term. Part-time study will increase the time to complete the degree by at least one year, possibly two. The Graduate School permits all students a maximum of five years to complete degree requirements.
3. Full-time students are eligible to apply for scholarships, traineeships and merit assistantships through the School of Nursing. Part-time students are encouraged to pursue external funding opportunities.
4. Full-time students are discouraged from working full time due to the demands of the program.
5. There is very limited course availability for students admitted in spring semester. Students admitted to matriculate in spring semester should expect to register for only one to two courses (3 to 6 credit hours), thus will be classified as part-time. As a result, the length of your program of study may be extended by at least one semester. (Note: The clinical course sequence only begins each fall semester.)

Enrollment status is *not* a factor considered by the Admissions Committee when making decisions.

NOTIFICATION OF DECISION

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the appropriate office (Graduate School or School of Nursing) receives your application materials by the posted deadline and that your file is complete. You can check the status of your application review by logging on to the application to see if any required items are missing. The Admissions Committee only considers COMPLETE applications.

You will receive written notification of the Admissions Committee's decision and rationale. All admissions decisions are immediately forwarded to the Graduate School for deliberation. Once approved, you will receive a formal offer of admission from the Dean of the Graduate School. Upon your formal acceptance and payment of the enrollment deposit (if applicable), you will be contacted by the Office of Admissions and Student Services regarding orientation and registration for your first semester of study.

Please notify the Office of Admissions & Student Services in the School of Nursing, (919) 966-4260, and The Graduate School, (919) 966-2611, of any change in the name or address after your application is submitted.

QUESTIONS:

Questions regarding the instructions, application requirements, or the status of your application, should be directed to the Office of Admissions & Student Services in the School of Nursing at (919) 966-4260 or via email to nursing@unc.edu. Thank you for your interest in the School of Nursing at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Revised 063008; 0809

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Critical Information for International Applicants:

Admissions Requirements (Effective 07/01/2007):

This MSN Program is available to international students. It is essential that international students be fluent in English. Presently, the University (including the School of Nursing) does not offer ESL programs or an English language institute. For this reason, candidates interested in attending the University **must** be able to understand rapid, idiomatic English as spoken in lectures, group discussions, and clinical settings by individuals of widely varying accents. Students from non-English-speaking countries must be able to communicate quickly and clearly in spoken and written English.

TOEFL

International applicants must achieve a minimum total score of 575 (with a minimum of 50 in each section) on the written version of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or minimum of 233 (with a minimum of 18 in each subsection) on the computer-based test, or a total score of 89 on the internet-based test with the following minimum section requirements: Reading, 21; Listening, 22; Speaking, 24; Writing, 22. This is not a requirement of applicants who are residents of a country where English is the language of instruction or if applicants hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited United States institution of higher education.

Meeting the minimum total score on TOEFL does not guarantee admission to the School of Nursing. Admission decisions are made on the basis of multiple factors including: scholastic performance; English proficiency; essays; letters of recommendation; GRE scores; the appropriateness of the requested advanced practice area to the applicant's goals and clinical experiences; and verification of financial support to insure proper visa status.

Letters of Recommendation

Three current letters of recommendation are required from persons qualified to speak to your knowledge, skills and abilities. Specifically, the letters should address the candidate's potential for success in graduate education, leadership ability, and personal characteristics that will help or hinder development as an advanced practice nurse. All candidates for whom English is a second language (non-native language), must submit at least one additional letter of reference that addresses your ability to communicate fluently in the English language.

English Proficiency

All admitted international students are required to take an English Proficiency exam prior to enrolling for classes and must register for a non-credit English course (English 601) their first semester of enrollment. Failure to take the test and/or register for the required course will prevent future registrations. International students not deemed fluent in English, may not enter the clinical setting and may need to lengthen their program of study to focus on their English language skills.

Interview

An interview is required of all international applicants who are non-native English speakers. The interview (personal or telephone) will be conducted by faculty who teach in the candidate's clinical area of interest. The interview has two distinct foci: part one will focus on information provided in the application materials (for example, essay and future goals); the second part will evaluate the interviewee's English proficiency.

Health Assessment

All nonnative speaking applicants must have successfully completed a formal health assessment course conducted in English within two years of the beginning the first clinical course. A course that provides face-to-face clinical and classroom components is highly recommended.