

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING

Program Description

The Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program at Point Loma Nazarene University is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) and approved by the California Board of Registered Nurses (BRN). The program is designed to prepare graduates as competent advanced practice nurses in leadership roles. After completion of the program, students are eligible for national certification (ie, Clinical Nurse Specialist, Certified Nurse Manager and Leader, Executive Nursing Practice Certification, Nurse Executive Advanced Certification). There are four (4) tracks within the MSN program:

1. MSN: Adult-Gerontology CNS
2. MSN: Adult-Gerontology CNS with Women's Health Specialty
3. MSN: Pediatric CNS
4. MSN: Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP)

Depending on which degree track is selected, nurses may be prepared for the following positions: nursing program faculty, Clinical Nurse Specialist, Family Nurse Practitioner, staff developer, unit based educator, patient education coordinator, magnet coordinator, nurse manager, nurse lead, nursing supervisor, nursing project manager, quality manager, quality improvement coordinator, or case manager.

Program Learning Outcomes

- **Inquiring Faithfully:** The student will demonstrate knowledge, skill, and behavior of the evidence-based practice of nursing which integrates growth in reasoning, analysis, decision-making, and the application of theory with the goal of advocating for others and/or self. This includes holistic nursing skills and the nursing process.
- **Caring Faithfully:** The student will embrace a calling to the ministry of compassionate care for all people in response to God's grace, which aims to foster optimal health and bring comfort in suffering and death.
- **Communicating Faithfully:** The student will actively engage in the dynamic interactive process, both intrapersonal and interpersonal, with the goal of advocating for others and/or self. This includes effective, culturally appropriate communication which conveys information, thoughts, actions, and feelings through the use of verbal and nonverbal skills.
- **Following Faithfully:** The student will integrate the ordinary work¹ by complying with and adhering to regulatory and professional standards (e.g., American Nurses Association Code of Ethics, The California Board of Registered Nursing, Scope of Nursing Practice, PLNU School of Nursing Handbook). This includes taking responsibility, being accountable for all actions, and treating others with respect and dignity.
- **Leading Faithfully:** The student will incorporate a foundational relationship with Christ and others and embrace a willingness to serve others in the midst of life circumstances (e.g., illness, injustice, poverty). The student will model the need for "Sabbath Rest" as a means of personal renewal, and true care of self, so that service to others is optimally achieved. The student will incorporate the characteristics of a servant leader including: humility, courage, forgiveness, and discernment.

¹ Defined as claiming the challenge from Florence Nightingale that nursing is a "divine imposed duty of ordinary work."

Academic Performance

Satisfactory Academic Performance

Satisfactory academic performance is defined as meeting all of the following:

- letter grade of "B-" (81%) or higher in all required theory and elective courses.
- grade of "Credit" in all clinical residency courses.
- minimum GPA of 3.000 on a 4.000 scale in all required courses.

Repeatability and Academic Status Progression

Satisfactory completion of all courses is required in the MSN program of study.

Students must repeat any course in which they fail to receive a minimum grade of "B-" or "Credit." If a course must be repeated, the following requirements will apply:

- A required theory or elective graduate nursing course may be repeated only once.
- No more than two total required theory or elective graduate nursing courses may be repeated.
- **Student may not continue with any academic or clinical coursework** until notified by the Program Director of their status in the School of Nursing.

Students should refer to the Graduate and Professional Studies Student Handbook (<https://pointloma-public.courseleaf.com/prior-catalogs/2024-2025/handbooks/grad-handbook/>) for academic status progression policy (e.g., probation and dismissal).

Academic Honesty & Integrity

In matters related to integrity, such as those listed below, the School of Nursing will follow policies as shared in the Academic and General Policies (<https://pointloma-public.courseleaf.com/prior-catalogs/2024-2025/grad-catalog/academic-general-policies/>) section of the PLNU Graduate Catalog. Students may be recommended to the Vice Provost for Academic Administration for **dismissal** from the program:

- inappropriate clinical judgment (e.g. SON policy violation, HIPAA violations);
- violation of Academic Honesty (<https://pointloma-public.courseleaf.com/prior-catalogs/2024-2025/grad-catalog/academic-general-policies/#academichonesty>);
- other situations that compromise the PLNU University Student Conduct policy (refer to the Graduate and Professional Studies Student Handbook (<https://pointloma-public.courseleaf.com/prior-catalogs/2024-2025/handbooks/grad-handbook/>)) or the School of Nursing Values and policies (refer to the School of Nursing Graduate Student Handbook), such as the ANA Code of Ethics and/or CA Nurse Practice Act (<https://www.rn.ca.gov/practice/npa.shtml/>).

Registered Nurse (RN) Entry Without Bachelor of Science in Nursing Degree (BSN)

- An Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) or equivalent degree from a National League for Nursing (NLN), Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) or accredited program (i.e., WASC);
- Current California licensure as a registered nurse **or** in state of residence if attending clinical outside of California¹;
- Current employment as an RN or at least 1 year of full time RN practice in the last 5 years is required prior to the start of clinical coursework;
- Official transcripts from previous colleges and universities. All foreign transcripts must have a course by course evaluation by World Education Services or another member of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services that includes a degree equivalency and GPA;
- A college grade-point average of 3.200 (candidates with a grade-point average of 3.000 to 3.199 may be considered under the Admissions Exceptions Policy (<https://pointloma-public.courseleaf.com/prior-catalogs/2024-2025/grad-catalog/admissions/#admissionunderexception>));
- A completed university application (available on the website);
- Two (2) professional references (use professional recommendation form available on the website);
- A completed School of Nursing graduate program application;
- A personal essay of 250 words demonstrating graduate-level writing skills;
- An interview with the graduate nursing selection committee;
- A BSN is not granted.

Registered Nurse (RN) with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)

- A Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from a National League for Nursing (NLN) or Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) or accredited program (i.e., WASC);
- Current California licensure as a registered nurse **or** in state of residence if attending clinical outside of California¹;
- Current employment as an RN or at least 1 year of full time RN practice in the last 5 years is required prior to the start of clinical coursework;
- Official transcripts from previous colleges and universities. All foreign transcripts must have a course by course evaluation by World Education Services or another member of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services that includes a degree equivalency and GPA;
- An undergraduate grade-point average of 3.200 (candidates with a grade-point average of 3.000 to 3.199 may be considered under the Admissions Exceptions Policy (<https://pointloma-public.courseleaf.com/prior-catalogs/2024-2025/grad-catalog/admissions/#admissionunderexception>));
- A completed university application (available on the website);
- Two (2) professional references (use professional recommendation form on the website);
- A personal essay of 250 words demonstrating graduate-level writing skills;
- An interview with the graduate nursing selection committee.

California, per California BRN process and federal Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) requirements. The student must be registered in the SCRA State Registration Database available on the CA Department of Consumer Affairs (<https://www.dca.ca.gov/military/federal.shtml/>) website.

English Language Requirements

A satisfactory command of the English language is required for admission to the Graduate School of Nursing. All applicants whose native language is not English, must meet this requirement - including international applicants, permanent residents, immigrants, and transfer students who are not citizens of the United States on the date of admission. A Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is the measure of competency. The test must have been taken within the past two years with minimum scores of:

- 550 for the paper-based test
- 80 for the internet- based test with a minimum section requirement score of 20 in reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Only the following countries are exempt from proof of English proficiency: Australia, Canada, Ireland, United Kingdom, and New Zealand.

Other Provisions

To satisfy the requirements of the university's clinical agencies, upon acceptance into the program students are required to provide copies of the following documentation:

- Current California licensure as a registered nurse **or** in state of residence if attending clinical outside of California;
- Current Healthcare Provider CPR certificate from the American Heart Association;
- Completed School of Nursing Health Form Packet with officially documented proof of immunizations;
- Current TB screening upon admission into the program (2 step process);
- Current HIPAA certificate;
- Infection Control Module; and
- Background check and drug screening (failure to pass this may result in an inability to complete the program).

Per agreement with the San Diego Nursing Service Education consortium and affiliated hospitals, a background check and drug screening is required prior to the student's first clinical experience. If a red flag occurs from either the background check or drug screening, this may result in immediate dismissal from the program.

Note for non-enrolled students taking graduate courses: we recommend allowing non-Bachelor prepared students to take 5000-level classes and Bachelor prepared students to take 6000-level classes that do not have the clinical component.

Exceptions Policy

Applicants who do not meet the above eligibility standards, but who can demonstrate an exceptionally rich experiential background and/or demonstrate dramatic change in academic performance, may petition the School of Nursing to review their status (see Admissions Exceptions Policy (<https://pointloma-public.courseleaf.com/prior-catalogs/2024-2025/grad-catalog/admissions/#admissionunderexception>)).

¹ A valid RN license in good standing in another state may suffice for active military service members or their spouses for clinical within

RN to MSN Transition Courses

For those entering the program with an RN (without a BSN), the courses below must be successfully completed before advancement in the MSN GNSG 6000-level courses. The courses must be taken in order and outside transfer is not accepted. These courses are not required for those entering with a BSN.

Code	Title	Units
Choose one (1) of the following sequences:		11
<i>Sequence 1</i>		
GNSG 5001	Writing and Research	
GNSG 5045	RN-MSN Transition I	
GNSG 5046	RN-MSN Transition II	
<i>Sequence 2</i>		
NRS 3050	Communicating and Following Faithfully	
NRS 3060A	Inquiring Faithfully I: Nursing Research	
NRS 3060B	Inquiring Faithfully I: Nursing Research	
NRS 4020	Caring Faithfully in the Community	
Total Units		11

MSN: CNS Tracks

The MSN: Adult-Gerontology CNS and MSN: Pediatric CNS tracks consist of 6 Graduate core courses (13 units), 4 APRN Core courses (9 units), and 9 CNS-specialty courses (21 units, which includes 12 units/500 clinical practicum hours).

The MSN: Adult-Gerontology CNS with Women's Health Specialty track consists of 6 Graduate core courses (13 units), 4 APRN Core courses (9 units), and 11 CNS-specialty courses (24 units, which includes 12 units/580 clinical practicum hours).

Code	Title	Units
Graduate Core Courses		
GNSG 6003	Following Faithfully: Healthcare Policy and Ethics	3
GNSG 6009	Health Promotion Across the Lifespan	2
GNSG 6021	Foundations for Evidence-Based Nursing Practice	2
GNSG 6023	Planning and Management of Evidence-Based Initiatives	2
GNSG 6088	Healthcare Leadership and Innovation	3
GNSG 6096	Comprehensive Exam	1
APRN Core Courses		
GNSG 6006	Advanced Pathophysiology	3
GNSG 6007	Advanced Pharmacology	3
GNSG 6008	Advanced Health Assessment Across the Lifespan	3
GNSG 6008L	and Advanced Health Assessment Across the Lifespan Practicum	
CNS-Specialty Courses		21-24

Choose one (1) of the following options:

<i>MSN w/ Adult-Gerontology CNS:</i>		
GNSG 6014	Advanced Health Assessment: Adult Gerontology	
GNSG 6034	Adult Gerontology CNS Role Acquisition I	
GNSG 6044	Adult Gerontology CNS Role Acquisition II	
GNSG 6054	Adult Gerontology CNS Role Acquisition III	
GNSG 6064 (A, B, C, D, E)	Adult Gerontology CNS Role Practicum	
<i>MSN w/ Pediatric CNS:</i>		

GNSG 6015	Advanced Health Assessment: Pediatrics	
GNSG 6035	Pediatric CNS Role Acquisition I	
GNSG 6045	Pediatric CNS Role Acquisition II	
GNSG 6055	Pediatric CNS Role Acquisition III	
GNSG 6065 (A, B, C, D, E)	Pediatric CNS Role Practicum	
<i>MSN w/ Adult-Gerontology CNS with Women's Health Specialty:</i>		
GNSG 6014	Advanced Health Assessment: Adult Gerontology	
GNSG 6016	Advanced Health Assessment: Women's Health	
GNSG 6034	Adult Gerontology CNS Role Acquisition I	
GNSG 6036	Women's Health CNS Role Acquisition I	
GNSG 6044	Adult Gerontology CNS Role Acquisition II	
GNSG 6054	Adult Gerontology CNS Role Acquisition III	
GNSG 6064 (A, B, C, D, E)	Adult Gerontology CNS Role Practicum ¹	
GNSG 6066 (A)	Women's Health CNS Role Practicum	
Total Units		43-46

¹ Adult Gerontology CNS with Women's Health Specialty tracks do not include GNSG 6064A. Instead, GNSG 6066A is completed.

MSN FNP Track

The MSN FNP track consists of 5 Graduate core courses (12 units), 4 APRN Core courses (9 units), 12 FNP-specialty courses (33 units, which includes 16 units/750 clinical practicum hours).

- All graduate students take 3Ps courses (GNSG 6006-Advanced Pathophysiology, GNSG 6007-Advanced Pharmacology, and GNSG 6008-Advanced Health Assessment) as foundational courses for the advanced nursing practice role. Any applicant may submit prior course syllabi to be reviewed for course equivalency. A prerequisite or transfer 3Ps course must meet the required criteria per California Board of Registered Nursing for Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs). Syllabi may be required to verify equivalency prior to acceptance of any course toward PLNU Graduate Nursing program requirements. Students who have not taken APRN Core Prerequisite Courses may take them concurrently with their program at PLNU.
- FNP students will be required to pass a Blended 3Ps exam in order to progress to FNP specialty coursework. The option to audit and/or retake 3Ps courses is available and encouraged for the purpose of thorough preparation of the blended exam.
- At a minimum, a total of 750 direct patient care clinical hours are to be included in the past APN graduate education program and post-graduate certificate program, specifically to meet the end-of-program hours for the new NP role and/or new population (National Task Force on Quality Nurse Practitioner Education, 2022, Criterion III.N).

Code	Title	Units
Graduate Core Courses		
GNSG 6003	Following Faithfully: Healthcare Policy and Ethics	3
GNSG 6009	Health Promotion Across the Lifespan	2
GNSG 6021	Foundations for Evidence-Based Nursing Practice	2
GNSG 6088	Healthcare Leadership and Innovation	3
GNSG 7029	Diagnostic Testing and Laboratory Interpretation	2
APRN Core Courses		
GNSG 6006	Advanced Pathophysiology	3
GNSG 6007	Advanced Pharmacology	3

GNSG 6008 and GNSG 6008L	Advanced Health Assessment Across the Lifespan and Advanced Health Assessment Across the Lifespan Practicum	3
FNP Specialty Courses		
GNSG 7030 and GNSG 7030L	Introduction to Advanced Practice Nursing and Diagnostic Reasoning and Diagnostic Reasoning and Procedures Practicum	4
GNSG 7031 and GNSG 7031L	Health Management I: Adults with Acute and Episodic Conditions in Primary Care and Health Management I Practicum: Adults with Acute and Episodic Conditions in Primary Care	6
GNSG 7032 and GNSG 7032L	Health Management II: Behavioral and Mental Health Conditions in Primary Care and Health Management II Practicum: Behavioral and Mental Health Conditions in Primary Care	6
GNSG 7033 and GNSG 7033L	Health Management III: Adults with Chronic and Complex Conditions in Primary Care and Health Management III Practicum: Adults with Chronic and Complex Conditions in Primary Care	6
GNSG 7034 and GNSG 7034L	Health Management IV: Pediatric and Adolescent in Primary Care and Health Management IV Practicum: Pediatric and Adolescent in Primary Care	6
GNSG 7035 and GNSG 7035L	Health Management V: Clinical Immersion and Health Management V Practicum: Clinical Immersion	4
GNSG 7036	Entry to the Advanced Practice Role	1
Total Units		54

6. All requirements for graduate degrees must be completed within an eight-year period from the time of initial enrollment in the program.

Total Units (with RN-MSN transition courses):

- CNS Track: 54-57
- FNP Track: 65

Total MSN Units (BSN entry):

- CNS Track: 43
- FNP Track: 54

Minimum Required Clinical Hours for All MSN Tracks: 500

Graduation Requirements

In order to earn and receive a Master of Science in Nursing degree, a student must satisfy all of the following:

1. A completed Application for Degree Candidacy (online).
2. Completion of the approved graduate program.
3. A cumulative grade-point average of 3.000 or higher. A minimum grade of B- is required to progress in the program. Students needing to repeat more than two courses may not progress in the program and may be dismissed.
4. Payment in full of all tuition, fees, and other financial obligations owed to the university, including a degree processing fee.
5. All Comprehensive Exams must be submitted within one (1) year from when the exam was originally due. Failure to meet this requirement may result in dismissal from the program. Please refer to the Comprehensive Exam Handbook for specific policies.