

Advanced Practice Registered Nurses Handout

Overview of the programs, where they exist and when you should apply

Overview

Advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) are recognized as vital to meeting the medical needs of the American public. Certified nurse practitioners, certified nurse-midwives, certified registered nurse anesthetists, and clinical nurse specialists take on primary roles identified by patient population, and often sub-specialize by setting, disease, or type of care.

It's sometimes difficult to distinguish between a Nurse Practitioner (NP), and a Registered Nurse (RN), since they often play similar roles in examining and treating patients. National and regional requirements vary, but generally speaking, an entry-level RN requires fewer years of education than an entry-level NP, and may not be able to perform certain tasks. An NP can do all of the things that an RN can do, but they can also order diagnostic tests and interpret test results. Some states also allow NPs to prescribe medicine, though this varies. Additionally, NPs can have their own private practices in some areas.

The nurse practitioner (NP) role was the most recent advanced practice registered nursing (APRN) role to be defined and developed. In 2011, the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners reported that of the 267,000 APRNs in practice, more than 140,000 were nurse practitioners. With approximately 9,000 new NPs being licensed each year, it has become clear that this advanced practice role is invaluable to the healthcare system. An NP can practice as a generalist or acquire specialty certification for practice in one or more specialty areas: Family, Neonatal, Pediatric, Adult, Women's Health, Gerontological, Psychiatric/Mental Health.

National avg. salary range for NPs in 2011 was between **\$83,000** and **\$107,000**, with average starting salary around **\$70,000**. The job growth is expected to grow **26% by 2020**

Programs

- *MSN* - The Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) now represents the educational standard upheld by national certification organizations offering credentials to certified nurse midwives, clinical nurse specialists, certified registered nurse anesthetists, and certified nurse practitioners, as well as state Boards of Nursing responsible for the issuance of advanced practice authorization.
- *DNP* - The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) established the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) as the educational requirement for national certification and state licensure in all APRN roles starting in the year 2015
- *Ph.D.* - The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and Doctor of Nursing Science (DNS, DSN, DNSc) have historically been research-focused degrees held by tenured university professors, clinical research coordinators, and principal investigators representing the field of nursing

For more information and a list of all colleges of nursing programs, please visit the following resources

- American Association of Colleges of Nursing at www.aacn.nche.edu
- GraduateNursing.edu.org at www.graduatenuisingedu.org

Typical Admission Requirements

The admission requirements for graduate programs in nursing vary a great deal. Generally, a bachelor's degree from a school accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education or by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission and a state RN license are required. Scores from the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) or the Miller Analogies Test (MAT), college transcripts, letters of recommendation, and an essay are typically required. **Non nurses and nurses with non nursing degrees have special requirements.** It is important to remember that admission officers look at a student's transcripts, clinical work, and letters of recommendation together. A low grade point average is not an automatic knockout-- admissions officers are after a composite package.

- *Typical prerequisites* - Please see program website for specifics. Usually require a minimum 3.0 GPA in the following courses:
 - Anatomy & Physiology I or Human Anatomy (4cr. with lab)
 - Anatomy & Physiology II or Human Physiology (4 cr. with lab)
 - Chemistry I or Inorganic Chemistry (4 cr. with lab)
 - Research and/or Statistics (3 cr.)
 - Life Span Development or Human Growth & Dev. (3 cr.)
 - Microbiology (4 cr. with lab)
 - Chemistry II or Organic/Biochemistry (4 cr. with lab)
 - Nutrition (3 cr.)
 - General Pharmacology (2 cr)
- *Graduate Record Exam (GRE)* - Must be within the last five years. Scores at or near the 50 percentile in each area are typically considered competitive
- *Application* - Completed application form and paid application fee
- *Personal statement* – Purpose and goals statement, including a narrative discussion of professional experience, future scholarly endeavors, and career trajectory
- *Letters of recommendation* – At least 2 letters and many programs request 3 or 4
- *Resume*

Where Recent Alumni Have Gone

- *The Ohio State University*

Typical Application Timeline

Many application deadlines are either in December or January for acceptance decisions in May. However, some programs have deadlines as late as May. Please see the school's website for specifics.

