



COLORADO MESA
UNIVERSITY

Department of Health Sciences
Moss School of Nursing

Master of Science
Degree in Nursing
(MSN)



MSN Program Information Packet

The Master of Science in Nursing degree will provide graduates with a foundation for practice as a leader and educator in health care systems or academic settings. The program contains 18 credit hours of core knowledge essential for practice as a leader including coursework in nursing theory and research, health information systems, organization leadership, health policy and quality improvement and three credit hours for a final capstone project. There are two 15-credit hour cognates to choose from, Advanced Nursing Practice Cognate or Nursing Education Cognate.

Graduates of master's degree programs in nursing are prepared with additional knowledge and clinical expertise building on baccalaureate nursing practice. The MSN program at Colorado Mesa University is based on the "Essentials of Masters Education for Advanced Nursing Practice" identified by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing. The ten *AACN Essentials* include scientific background for practice, organizational and systems leadership, quality improvement and safety, translational scholarship for evidence-based practice, information and healthcare technology for transformation of microsystems, healthcare policy for advocacy in health care, inter-professional collaboration for improving patient and population health outcomes, clinical prevention and population health for improving health, advancing professionalism and professional values, and master's level nursing practice.

The MSN program is designed for students already possessing a baccalaureate degree in nursing and adds the first graduate step on the nursing career ladder at Colorado Mesa University. MSN graduates will be prepared to advance to higher levels of nursing education including Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) or Doctoral of Philosophy in Nursing (PhD) programs.

The program is a hybrid format, providing flexibility for students to remain in their current work positions and home communities in western Colorado using online course delivery methods; this format provides opportunities for personal interaction with faculty and peers in focused intensive sessions at selected points during each semester.

We recommend keeping in touch regarding any possible changes via our website, www.coloradomesa.edu/healthsciences.

Colorado Mesa University

Master of Science in Nursing

Mission

The program prepares nurses to provide expert leadership in the delivery of healthcare services and programs to individuals, families, and communities across the lifespan in a variety of settings. Graduates prepared to practice as nurse educators and leaders with the critical thinking skills and knowledge necessary to promote the profession of nursing through guiding clinical practice, teaching, research, program development and implementation, and scholarship.

Program Goals

The goals of the MSN program are to prepare graduates:

1. As a nurse leader and educator in health care systems or academic settings.
2. To seek new knowledge by means of critical thinking, creative reasoning, and scientific investigation in relation to nursing theory, science, and practice.
3. To disseminate nursing knowledge and research to consumers and health care professionals.
4. As nurse leaders capable of determining effective strategies to promote change within the profession and leading to a more effective management of the health care delivery system.
5. As decision-makers who consider ethical principles in serving the needs of diverse individuals, populations, and society
6. As learners who possess the foundation for doctoral education.

Expected Student Outcomes

1. Synthesize advanced theoretical, empirical, and ethical knowledge for application to a chosen domain of nursing.
2. Incorporate leadership skills and behaviors to foster best practices, promote professional growth, and positive change in people and systems within health care and education.
3. Evaluate quality improvement and safety initiatives, accountability and communication to improve patient outcomes.
4. Engage in systematic critical inquiry as a basis for practice decisions for diverse patient populations.
5. Apply current evidence-based knowledge to inform and/or initiate change in educational, clinical, and organizational environments.
6. Utilize information systems, technology, and patient data for ethical, clinical decision-making that promotes cost effectiveness and positive health care outcomes.
7. Critique public policy which impacts professional nursing practice and health care delivery.
8. Advocate for policies to improve the health outcomes of populations and the quality of the health care delivery system.
9. Employ interprofessional collaborative strategies in the design, coordination, evaluation, and leadership of patient-centered care teams.
10. Appraise the impact of social determinants, culture, diversity, values, and globalization in the delivery of population health.
11. Develop strategies to improve individual and population health outcomes based on health promotion and disease reduction principles.
12. Contribute to the nursing profession through mentoring, professional service and life-long learning.
13. Utilize problem identification and outcome measurement as a basis for improving nursing practice.

Admission Standards General Requirements

Students wishing to be admitted to the Master of Science in Nursing program must:

1. Complete the CMU graduate application and application fees.
2. Possess a baccalaureate degree in nursing from a regionally accredited and discipline specific (CCNE or NLNAS) college or university.
3. Possess a current, unrestricted license to practice as a registered nurse in State of Practice.
4. Have maintained a GPA of 3.0 or better in nursing coursework earned toward a baccalaureate degree in nursing.
5. Have maintained a GPA of 3.0 or better for prior graduate work.
6. Submit two copies of official transcripts from all colleges or universities attended.
7. Provide three letters of professional and academic recommendation.
8. Submit a 2,500 word-count essay demonstrating scholarly writing, critical thinking, depth of analysis and common knowledge of nursing current events.
 - a. This essay is an essential aspect of the admission process and will be carefully evaluated by the faculty in order to make a decision on your direct entry into either the MSN or DNP program. Develop and format your essay according to APA criteria. While specific references are not required it is highly recommended that you support your assertions (as needed) with scholarly peer-reviewed citations.
 - b. The essay should address **two areas**: in the first part, discuss why you are interested in completing a graduate degree in nursing. In the second part, describe the population and problem you are interested in studying for your Capstone project. Consider a problem experienced by this population that you would like to focus your project. Describe one or two evidence-based strategies for improving the practice-based problem. Describe the type of agency and/or specific work until where you would wish to complete your project.
9. Interview, if required, with members of the Graduate Admission Committee.

Candidates meeting the above requirements may be admitted under full status.

Students wishing to take graduate courses not associated with CMU's graduate program must still gain admission to CMU as a non-degree seeking graduate student.

A maximum of nine (9) credit hours may be taken in a "non-degree seeking" status and later applied to program requirements. Only courses with a grade of "B" or better may be applied. A maximum of nine (9) graduate credit hours with grades of "B" or better may be transferred from a regionally accredited institution into the program.

Graduation Requirements

To graduate from the Master of Science in Nursing program, a student must complete the prescribed course of study with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher and complete a capstone project requirement. Students are expected to complete their program within four (4) years.

Capstone Project

Each graduate will complete a directed capstone project as part of their course of study. The capstone is a project demonstrating synthesis of the student's graduate work and laying the groundwork for future scholarship. The capstone project reflects the student's clinical practice setting with a selected population group and is developed by the student working in conjunction with a faculty member on the topic of study, project design, implementation and evaluation. Approval from the graduate nursing committee, graduate program director, and academic department head are required.

The project is initiated, developed, conducted, completed and reported by the student and must relate to as many courses completed in the MSN program as possible. NURS 575 is the three-hour course for the capstone project. All MSN courses must be completed prior to enrolling in the Capstone course, **unless**

approved by the Capstone Committee. The project will culminate in a formal paper and presentation of project in an academic setting.

Oral Comprehensive Examination

Each MSN student must pass an oral comprehensive examination. The purpose of the examination is to demonstrate mastery of student learning outcomes and evaluate the student's ability to analyze, synthesize, evaluate, and communicate knowledge from and interrelationships between the capstone project and the MSN coursework. The Graduate Nursing Program Director will determine the student's eligibility for taking the examination as well as scheduling time, date, and place of the examination. The examination may not be taken until the student has:

1. completed MSN course requirements;
2. maintained a GPA of at least 3.0;
3. and received approval from the Graduate Nursing Program Director.

The student must apply to the Graduate Nursing Program Director for the comprehensive examinations and will receive information regarding examination format, procedures, time, date, and place.

1. The MSN written comprehensive exam will normally consist of questions requiring high-level analysis and application of MSN course content.
2. Students will complete a written scholarly paper during NURS 575 as a culmination of the MSN capstone project and present the paper to the Capstone Committee.
3. Each student's oral examination will consist of questions related to their MSN capstone project and MSN course content.
4. Questions will be developed by graduate nursing faculty.
5. Comps will be scheduled for a two-hour block of time during the last semester of a student's program.
6. Students will not be allowed to access personal computers during the comp.
7. Response to comp questions will be graded by graduate nursing faculty. All comp questions will be graded as "Pass" or "Fail" on: analytical skills, communication skills, and subject knowledge.
8. Results for each student's comp questions will be forwarded to the Graduate Nursing Committee where a final overall comp evaluation will be made. Final overall evaluation options are "Pass" or "Fail."

Once the examination has been evaluated, the Graduate Nursing Director must return the signed report form to the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs indicating a pass or failure of the examination. In addition, a copy of the final Capstone paper must be sent to Academic Affairs. This must be done on or before the published deadline to submit the results of the oral comprehensive examination for that semester.

Graduation

1. It is your responsibility to determine whether you have met the requirements for your degree. Please see the Department of Health Sciences for a complete list of graduation requirement.
2. You must turn in your "Intent to Graduate" form to the Registrar's Office **by September 15 if you plan to graduate the following May, and by February 15 if you plan to graduate the following December.**
3. The program sheet must be submitted with your graduation planning sheet to the Nursing Graduate Program Director during the **semester prior to the semester of graduation, no later than October 1 for spring graduates, no later than March 1 for the fall graduates.**
4. The Nursing Graduate Program Director will sign and forward the Program Sheet and Graduation Planning Sheet to the Department Head for signature.
5. Finally, the Department Head or the department administrative assistant will take the signed forms to the Registrar's Office. (Students cannot handle the forms once they advisor signs).

The current Petition/Program Sheet can be found at: http://www.coloradomesa.edu/academics/1314_program_sheets.html

COLORADO MESA UNIVERSITY

Department of Health Sciences

Common Questions & Answers about the MSN Program (FAQs)

When are the applications available to apply to the MSN program?

Application forms are available on our website: www.coloradomesa.edu/healthsciences.

Is there a deadline to apply to the MSN program?

Yes, all application materials must be turned into the Department of Health Sciences office no later than April 1st for admission to the Fall semester.

How many students are accepted into the MSN program each year?

We will accept 15 students on a yearly basis for each semester.

Is the GRE required to apply to the MSN program?

The GRE is required of those applicants whose cumulative undergraduate GPA is less than 3.0.

How much is the tuition for classes in the MSN program?

Each semester credit hour for instate graduate nursing students will be an estimated \$336. Thus, a three (3) credit class will cost \$1022 and a four (4) credit class will cost \$1362. *Please note: please contact the Office of the Financial Aid for current tuition rates or the CMU website at: <http://www.coloradomesa.edu/businessoffice/expenses.html>.*

Do I have to be accepted into the University *before* I can be accepted into the nursing program?

Yes.

How long is the MSN program?

The MSN program is 36 credit hours, which can be taken in your desired structure. 9 credit hours per semester are considered full time. Please note, you must complete all 36 credits of the MSN within 4 years of starting the program.

How many credit hours are required to complete the MSN program?

36 credit hours of course work. Core classes will highlight the following: strong foundation in health policy, quality improvement, health information systems; organizational leadership/management skills; health promotion and chronic disease management; nursing theory and research, while you can choose from many areas to fulfill the elective course work.

Why do I need to complete Pharmacology, Pathophysiology and Health Assessment at the graduate level?

Across the nation, these courses are considered advanced science courses for the MSN/DNP.

Must I complete a capstone?

The student must complete a capstone project and an oral comprehensive exam.

COLORADO MESA UNIVERSITY
Department of Health Sciences
Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Program
Summary Sheet: Checklist for Application

You may fax items to the Department of Health Sciences, Attention: Renae Phillips at (970) 248-1133.

This list is to help you meet the degree seeking MSN Application requirements.

Degree seeking MSN candidates must make sure all of the following is received in the Department of Health Sciences by 12pm (noon) on the application deadline of April 1st for Fall Class Cohort, April 1st for Summer Class Cohort or November 1st for the Spring Class Cohort.

You are encouraged to turn in your application, and then turn in other items as you complete them:

- _____ 1. Complete the Colorado Mesa University graduate application and pay the appropriate application fees (via online admission application process through the Colorado Mesa University Admissions website, this applies to both degree seeking and non-degree seeking candidates).
- _____ 2. Submit two copies of **OFFICIAL** transcripts from all colleges or universities attended along with the Colorado Mesa University graduate application.
- _____ 3. Submit a copy of an unrestricted license to practice as a registered nurse.
- _____ 4. Provide three letters of professional and academic recommendation.
- _____ 5. Submit a 2,500 word-count essay demonstrating scholarly writing, critical thinking, depth of analysis and common knowledge of nursing current events.
 - a. This essay is an essential aspect of the admission process and will be carefully evaluated by the faculty in order to make a decision on your direct entry into either the MSN or DNP program. Develop and format your essay according to APA criteria. While specific references are not required it is highly recommended that you support your assertions (as needed) with scholarly peer-reviewed citations.
 - b. The essay should address **two areas**: in the first part, discuss why you are interested in completing a graduate degree in nursing. In the second part, describe the population and problem you are interested in studying for your Capstone project. Consider a problem experienced by this population that you would like to focus your project. Describe one or two evidence-based strategies for improving the practice-based problem. Describe the type of agency and/or specific work until where you would wish to complete your project.

It is the student's responsibility to make sure all necessary paperwork is received in the Department of Health Sciences office prior to the deadline.

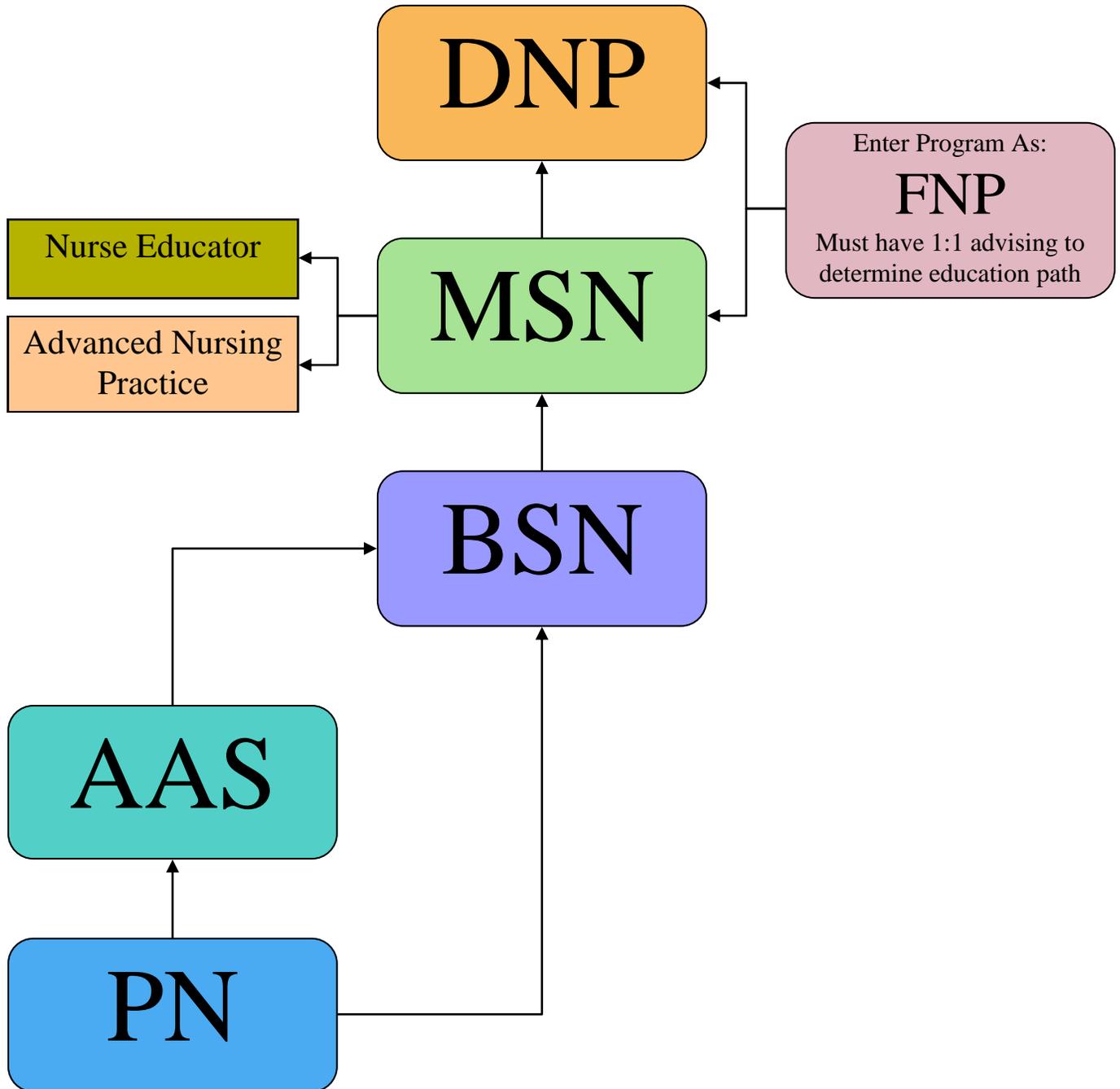
*****Applications and application materials are collected until the application deadline. The applications will be processed, reviewed and evaluated after the application deadline. It will take approximately 3-5 weeks for the committee to complete the application review process, then a letter will be sent to all applicants with the committee's decision on admission.*****

Non-degree seeking MSN candidates must make sure the following is received in the Department of Health Sciences by 12pm (noon) for the non-degree seeking deadline of August 1st for Fall Class Cohort, May 1st for Summer Class Cohort or December 1st for the Spring Class Cohort.

You are encouraged to turn in your application, and then turn in other items as you complete them:

- _____ 1. Complete the Colorado Mesa University graduate application and pay the appropriate application fees (via online admission application process through the Colorado Mesa University Admissions website, this applies to both degree seeking and non-degree seeking candidates).
- _____ 2. Submit a copy of an unrestricted license to practice as a registered nurse.

Expanding CMU Nursing Career Ladder



MSN Curriculum

Suggested Course Guideline
Core Courses may be taken in any order

