



## Program of Study: Registered Nurse to Master of Science–Nursing: Adult Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS)

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### Program Description

This program is a blend of the existing Registered Nurse to Bachelor of Science in Nursing and Master of Science–Nursing programs. The RN to BSN curriculum will be truncated by several courses whose content will be covered in the Master’s materials. After the third semester in the course of study below, students will be eligible to transfer into the existing MS-CNS concentration, which prepares the advanced professional nurse as an advance practice nurse. The CNS addresses health care needs in the three CNS spheres of influence – the patient/client, nurses and nursing practice, and systems and organizations. The dimensions of the CNS role include clinical judgment, clinical inquiry, facilitator of learning, collaboration, systems thinking, advocacy/moral agency, caring practices, and response to diversity.

### Admission Requirements

In addition to the general Undergraduate Admission Requirements listed in the Admission Policy and Procedure section of the Grand Canyon University catalog, the following admission requirements must be met.

1. Applicants for the RN to MSN track must have a current unencumbered, unrestricted license as a registered nurse in the state where they are employed as an RN.
2. Cumulative GPA of 3.0 or greater is required for admittance to the program.
3. Applicants must have at least 83 undergraduate credits that include Statistics and Pathophysiology classes with or transferable to Grand Canyon University before beginning the Program of Study listed below.

### RN to MSN Undergraduate Core:

Course Number	Course Title	Course Description	Credits
NRS 430	Professional Dynamics	This course is a bridge course for the RN returning to formal education for the baccalaureate degree in nursing. The course focuses on differentiated nursing practice competencies, nursing conceptual models, professional accountability, integrating spirituality into practice, group dynamics, and critical thinking. <u>Emphasis is placed as well on writing and oral presentation skills.</u>	3
NRS 429	Family Centered Health Promotion	This course focuses on family theories, health promotion models, cultural diversity and teaching learning principles. The course emphasizes the family as the client, family FHP health assessments, screenings across the life span, communication, community resources, and family education. Appropriate health promotion education will be evaluated against evidence based research and practice.	3

NRS 433	Introduction to Nursing Research	This course promotes the use of research findings as a basis for improving clinical practice. Quantitative and qualitative research methodologies are presented. Emphasis is on the critical review of research studies and their applications to clinical practice. An overview of evidence-based practice is provided. This course is designated as a GCU Writing Intensive Course.	3
NRS 434	Health Assessment	This course focuses on methods of health history taking, physical examination skills, documentation, and health screening. The course emphasizes the individual as the client, functional health patterns, community resources, and the teaching learning process.	3
NRS 431	Community Health Systems and Concepts I	This course focuses on the community as a large system of people, cultures, geography, economics, spiritual values, and legal-political influences that impact the health of the community. Emphasis is placed on critical analysis, using epidemiological data and functional health pattern assessments to plan and intervene in areas of health promotion with community groups.	3
NRS 438	Community Health Systems and Concepts II	This course focuses on nursing care of populations and communities, especially health promotion and communication. There is a concentration on selected vulnerable subgroups in the community. Emphasis is placed on critical analysis, using epidemiological data and functional health pattern assessments to plan and intervene with vulnerable groups.	3
NRS 437	Ethical Decision Making in Healthcare	This course is a general introduction to the field of biomedical ethics. Students study the application of ethics and moral theories to concepts and issues arising in the health care professions. The course provides students, both as consumers and providers, an opportunity to study ethical decision making, health care situations with implications for ethical decision making and analysis of ethical behavior of individuals involved in health care. Topics will include exploration of major ethical theories and principles, informed consent, confidentiality and ethical implications of selected issues such as abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide and allocation of scarce resources.	3
NRS 451	Nursing Leadership and Management	Registered nurses with current licensure have a basic understanding of the role of the professional nurse. This course emphasizes further development of the professional nurse role. Critical management and leadership values, styles, and skills are a major focus. Particular attention is given to the identification of personal leadership styles and values. Importance is placed on development of effective management and leadership skills with emphasis on effective communication.	3
NRS 349	Spirituality in Healthcare	This course explores the concept of spirituality as it relates to the person who is involved in the health care system. Since illness and stress can amplify spiritual concerns and needs, health care professionals are in a unique position to assist the patient/client in meeting those needs. This course explores the relationship between health care professionals and those they serve. Topics include performing spiritual assessment, identifying those experiencing spiritual well-being as well as those experiencing a threat to spiritual well-being, and planning and evaluating care related to spiritual wellness. A spiritual care framework is used to apply these concepts to a variety of populations in diverse clinical settings.	3

*Total Undergraduate Core Credits: 27*

**Nursing Graduate Core:**

NUR 501	Advanced Nursing Issues and Roles	This course examines the expanded practice of the Advanced Professional Nurse. The focus of the course is scope of practice, role behavior, and depth and breadth of knowledge in selected areas of advanced practice (FNP and CNS) and nurses in role specialties such as nursing education and nursing leadership. Course content includes an exploration of critical questions and current issues related to the various defined Advanced Professional Nursing roles and examination of the related role issues with an emphasis on caring, diversity, and spiritual aspects in nursing care delivery.	3
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NUR 503	Healthcare Policy and Finance Issues	This course integrates the process of health care policy development with a critical focus on the organizational and financial aspects of health care delivery systems including managed care systems, Medicare and Medicaid issues, and continuous quality improvement (CQI).	3
NUR 505	Advanced Nursing Theory	This course focuses on the critical evaluation and utilization of the theoretical foundations of nursing as well as pertinent theoretical concepts from related fields of study such as the social and biological sciences, educational, organizational, and leadership theory.	3
NUR 507	Health Care Research Analysis and Utilization	This course focuses on the critical analysis of health care and nursing research with a focus on the utilization of evidence-based research as foundation of client care and development of client services. Advanced research methods as applied toward complex clinical and organizational problems will be integrated.	3
NUR 511	Evidence-based Practice Project	This course provides an opportunity to prepare an evidence-based practice (EBP) project proposal that addresses a problem, issue, or concern in professional practice. Students will identify a problem focus, propose a research-based solution, search for evidence using the evidence-based databases that support their solutions, and develop implementation, evaluation, and dissemination plans. Students will focus on developing an EBP project that is appropriate for their educational track: nursing leadership, adult clinical nurse specialist, nursing education, or family nurse practitioner.	3

*Total Nursing Graduate Core Credits: 15*

**Advanced Nursing Core:**

NUR 642	Advanced Physiology and Pathophysiology	This web-enhanced course focuses on the advanced physiology and pathophysiology principles. This course will be used to guide the Nurse Practitioner, Clinical Nurse Specialist, and the Nursing Education student in interpreting changes in normal function that result in symptoms indicative of illness. The emphasis will be placed on the genetic, molecular, cellular, and organ system levels. Prerequisite: Undergraduate Pathophysiology.	3
NUR 644	Advanced Pharmacology	This course focuses on the advanced pharmacotherapy principles and practices to enable students to prescribe and monitor the effects of medications and selected herbal therapy. Emphasis is on the pharmacodynamics of clients with common, acute and chronic health problems in various stages of the life cycle in diverse populations. Evidence-based research provides the basis for selecting effective, safe but cost-efficient pharmacologic or integrative regimens. Appropriate client education as to various prescribed pharmacologic agents in incorporated. Legal requirements for prescriptive writing and dispensing authority are covered. Prerequisite: NUR 642.	3
NUR 640	Advanced Health Assessment and Diagnostic Reasoning	This course builds upon the student's previous assessment skills offering more advanced health assessment content to provide the foundation for the advanced practice-nursing role. This course gives emphasis to focused assessments for a chief complaint that include physical, psychosocial and spiritual health assessment, risk assessment, functional assessment, and physical examination in diverse populations. The student uses a systematic method of diagnostic reasoning and clinical decision-making to establish a differential diagnosis. An overview of appropriate protocols for performing health screening and ordering, performing, and interpreting lab, radiographic, and other diagnostic data are included based on best practice consistent with resource allocations. Effective communication and client teaching/counseling to eliciting clients' interpretation of their health status and perceived barriers, is incorporated throughout the course so to maintain a nursing focus on patient responses to illness or the threat of illness. Effective documentation and medical record keeping are required. To begin the transformation to an advanced professional nurse, students are to start a professional journal that they are to keep throughout the program. (1 clinical credit = 50 contact credits). Prerequisite Course: Undergraduate Health Assessment course. Co-requisite: NUR 640C.	3

NUR 640C	Advanced Health Assessment and Diagnostic Reasoning Clinical	The clinical experience will take place in the student's chosen specialty area and integrate the theoretical concepts covered in the Co-requisite. Clinical requirement for Advanced Health Assessment and Diagnostic Reasoning. (1 clinical credit = 50 contact credits) Prerequisite/Co-requisite: NUR 640.	1
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*Total Advanced Nursing Core Credits: 10*

**Adult Clinical Specialist Core:**

NUR 655	CNS I: Theoretical Foundations	This course focuses on the theories, conceptual models and research that are the basis of CNS practice. Building on advanced practice nursing theory, students will engage in discussion of theoretical and empirical knowledge of illness and wellness, both of disease and non-disease etiologies, from the three spheres of influence, particularly the patient/client sphere. Advanced health assessment, advanced pharmacology and advanced physiology and pathology principles are integrated along with professional/legal, and spirituality concepts. Content will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theoretical foundations of CNS practice.</li> <li>• Phenomena of nursing concern, integrating health promotion.</li> <li>• Design and development of innovative nursing interventions.</li> <li>• Clinical inquiry/critical thinking using advanced knowledge.</li> <li>• Consultation, teaching and coaching with focus on the individual/family/groups</li> <li>• Measurement, outcome evaluation, including cost-effectiveness and evidence-based research focused on the patient/client sphere.</li> </ul> Co-requisite: NUR 655C.	3
NUR 655C	CNS I: Theoretical Foundations Clinical	The clinical experience will take place in the student's chosen specialty area and integrate the theoretical concepts covered in the Co-requisite. Clinical requirement for CNS I - Theoretical Foundations. (2 clinical credits = 100 contact credits) Prerequisite/Co-requisite: NUR 655.	2
NUR 645	Theories and Methods of Teaching	This course focuses on theories of teaching/, traditional, and alternative instructional strategies, and evaluation methods applicable to nursing education in the classroom and clinical setting. Strategies to enhance critical thinking are included. The course includes the development of learning activities for adult learners from diverse backgrounds. Prerequisite: NUR 649.	3
NUR 657	CNS II - Influence Change in Health Care Systems	This course focuses on the essential characteristics and competencies of the CNS, exploring the CNS roles of clinical leader, collaborator, change agent, consultant, educator and researcher. The student will discover how utilizing those roles, a CNS can influence the quality of care within health care systems. The course builds on the patient/client sphere of influence focusing on the broader nurse/nursing practice and organizational/systems spheres of influence. Content will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influencing change.</li> <li>• Systems thinking.</li> <li>• Leadership for multidisciplinary collaboration.</li> <li>• Consultation, teaching and coaching focused on groups.</li> <li>• Measurement, outcome evaluation including cost effectiveness, and evidence-based research focused on the group/organization.</li> <li>• Technology, products and devices development/evaluation.</li> <li>• The clinical experience will take place in the student's chosen specialty area and the above concepts will be integrated in that specialty setting.</li> </ul> Prerequisite: NUR 655. Co-requisite: NUR 657C.	3
NUR 657C	CNS II - Influence Change in Health Care Systems Clinical	The clinical experience will take place in the student's chosen specialty area and integrate the theoretical concepts covered in the Co-requisite. Clinical requirement for CNS II - Influence Change in Health Care Systems. (3 clinical credits = 150 contact credits) Prerequisite/Co-requisite: NUR 657.	3

NUR 663	CNS Internship	(4 clinical credits = 200 contact credits) A culminating practicum experience, completed in person with a preceptor, provide experiences in the three spheres of influence of CNS practice- patient/client, nurses and nursing practice and organization/system within their specialty area. This clinical practice will afford the student opportunity to refine their clinical decision-making skills in differential illness diagnoses and treatments that require nursing interventions, to develop their CNS roles of clinical expert, leader, collaborator, consultant, educator, researcher and change agent and to explore how their professional attributes, ethical conduct and professional citizenship are integrated in CNS practice to affect outcomes within the spheres. The course includes the application of the core content specific to CNS practice identified in the CNSI and CNSII courses. Online case study discussions analyzed by evidence-based practice guidelines are utilized. Impact of the student CNS on nursing practice and system level outcomes are identified. Prerequisite: NUR 657 CNS II.	4
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*Total Clinical Hours: 300*

*Total Adult Clinical Nurse Specialist Core Credits: 18*

*Total RN to BSN Undergraduate Core Credits: 27*

*Total Nursing Graduate Core Credits: 15*

*Total Advanced Nursing Core Credits: 10*

*Total Registered Nurse to Master of Science–Nursing: Adult Clinical Nurse Specialist Credits: 70*