

# School of Nursing

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*Master of Science in Nursing  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Doctor of Nursing Practice*

The Master of Science in Nursing degree and the Doctor of Nursing Practice programs are fully accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). All graduate degree programs, including the Doctor of Philosophy program, are reviewed periodically by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

## For More Information

**Campus address:** School of Nursing, phone (512) 232-4780 fax (512) 232-4777; campus mail code: D0100

**Mailing address:** The University of Texas at Austin, Graduate Student Services, School of Nursing, 1710 Red River Street Stop D0100, Austin TX 78712-1499

**E-mail:** [nugrad@uts.cc.utexas.edu](mailto:nugrad@uts.cc.utexas.edu)

**URL:** <http://nursing.utexas.edu>

## Facilities for Graduate Work

In addition to the extensive library and computer resources of the University, certain special resources within the School of Nursing provide support for graduate work.

**The Cain Center for Nursing Research.** The focus of this office is the promotion of funded research by nursing faculty members. The staff provides support and consultation services and compiles information about opportunities for research funding and presentations; including some for which graduate students are eligible. The computer laboratory is used for graduate courses and is available for graduate student research projects. The Cain Center also provides employment opportunities for graduate students interested in experience as research assistants.

**The Learning Enhancement and Academic Progress (LEAP) Center.** The LEAP Center is a link to a variety of services to optimize student support and development. The center contains a simulation and skills lab, where students practice basic to advanced psychomotor skills; student academic support – including individual academic counseling, academic peer tutoring; study skills workshops, and a Computer Testing Center. LEAP Center staff offer referrals to campus services.

**Clinical research and practice sites.** The School of Nursing has access to a variety of private practice, community, and state facilities for field research and clinical placement. These include all major health care facilities in Austin and surrounding communities.

## Areas of Study

Graduate work in the School of Nursing may lead to a Master of Science in Nursing, a Doctor of Nursing Practice, a Doctor of Philosophy, a post-master's Advanced Practice Registered Nurse certificate, and a Teaching Nursing certificate.

The Master of Science in Nursing (MSN): Individuals interested in preparing for a career emphasizing leadership in complex health care system should choose the leadership in diverse settings track. Leadership in Diverse Settings (LeaDS) program is a master's level curriculum created to address the need for nurses to take on leadership

roles in various healthcare environments. The aim of the LeaDS program is to equip graduates with a comprehensive set of skills to lead in patient-centered healthcare, community, and educational settings. Graduates of the LeaDS program will be prepared to drive change in complex and dynamic environments.

Those preparing for advanced practice choose either the clinical nurse specialist track, with a concentration in adult-gerontology nursing, or the nurse practitioner track, with a concentration in family, primary care pediatrics, acute care pediatrics, or psychiatric mental health.

Note: The MSN advanced practice tracks will transition to a DNP advanced practice program beginning fall 2026.

The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) includes programs for those: 1) who hold a Master of Science in Nursing or equivalent degree; or 2) who are seeking to complete an advanced practice registered nurse program.

The DNP for those with a master's degree emphasizes leadership in clinical and educational systems through the application of evidence-based practice and knowledge to solve problems and create a culture of change. Graduates of the DNP program typically enter clinical leadership positions in health care institutions and faculty positions in schools of nursing.

The DNP for those seeking to complete an advanced practice registered nurse program prepares students for the highest level of advanced nursing practice blending theoretical knowledge with the clinical application. The DNP is a terminal degree that prepares graduates to meet the needs of complex and changing healthcare systems. The program prepares nurse leaders who will improve patient outcomes and translate research into practice.

Those preparing for advanced practice should choose either the clinical nurse specialist track, with a concentration in adult-gerontology nursing, or the nurse practitioner track with a concentration in family, primary care pediatric, acute care pediatric, or psychiatric mental health.

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) program emphasizes the acquisition of a sound foundation in nursing science and research methods as a basis for developing new nursing knowledge. Graduates of the PhD program typically enter positions in academic nursing, research, or executive leadership in health care agencies. Some prepare to make contributions to the development of nursing theory or health policy.

The Advanced Practice Registered Nurse certificate program is a post-master's nursing program for students wishing to complete coursework necessary to sit for national certification as an Adult-Gerontology Clinical Nurse Specialist, Family Nurse Practitioner, Primary Care Pediatric Nurse Practitioner, Acute Care Pediatric Nurse Practitioner, or Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner.

The Teaching Nursing stackable certificate program is designed for nurses who are seeking to enhance their teaching pedagogy and skills in preparation for teaching nursing in academic programs and clinical settings.

## Graduate Studies Committee

The following faculty members served on the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) in the spring 2025 semester.

Heather A Becker  
Jane Dimmitt Champion  
Angela P Clark  
Heather E Cuevas  
Alexandra A Garcia  
Elizabeth M Heitkemper  
Ashley M Henneghan  
Sharon D Horner  
Karen Johnson  
Melessa Kelley  
Shelli Kesler  
Jung Kwak  
Yang Li  
John Ronald Lowe  
Laura E Murphy

Carolyn Phillips  
Kavita Radhakrishnan  
Donna L Rew  
Hyekyun Rhee  
Alexa M Stuijbergen  
Megan Christine Thomas Hebdon  
Whitney A Thurman  
Gayle M Timmerman  
Lorraine O Walker  
Veronica G Walker  
Bo Xie  
Linda H Yoder  
Cara Young  
Julie A Zuniga

## Admission Requirements

### Master of Science in Nursing

The Master of Science degree in Nursing Leadership in Diverse Settings (LeaDS) is designed for registered nurses who want to become nursing leaders. The entering student usually holds a bachelor's degree in nursing from a program accredited by the National League for Nursing or the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education and holds a registered nurse license that allows the student to practice as a registered nurse in Texas. Registered nurses with a non-nursing baccalaureate degree and an associate's degree in nursing may also apply to the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program. Applicants who wish to pursue the Primary Care Pediatric Nurse Practitioner track must have one year of clinical practice experience as a registered nurse within the last five years by the program start date to be considered for admission.

Factors considered in the admission decision include a grade point average of at least 3.00 in upper-division undergraduate and graduate coursework; information derived from academic and professional references; professional background and goals; and proficiency in the English language. An interview may also be required. The composite picture presented by these factors is an important part of the holistic admission review and decision.

### Master of Science in Nursing: Alternate Entry

All students are required to complete seven approved prerequisite courses (anatomy, physiology, microbiology, pharmacology, life span development, nutrition, and statistics) prior to the first semester of enrollment.

The alternate entry Leadership in Diverse Settings (LeaDS) program is designed for the student who has no previous degrees in nursing, who desires a career in nursing leadership and practice, and who holds at least a bachelor's degree in a discipline other than nursing. The program is fully approved by the Texas Board of Nursing and is nationally accredited.

Factors considered in the admissions decision include a grade point average of at least 3.00 in upper-division undergraduate and graduate coursework; information derived from academic and professional references; personal and professional goals compatible with the purpose of the program; and proficiency in the English language. An interview may also be required. The composite picture presented by these factors is an important part of the holistic admission review and decision.

## Doctor of Nursing Practice: Advanced Practice Registered Nurse\*

The Doctor of Nursing Practice- Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (DNP-APRN) program prepares students for the highest level of advanced nursing practice blending the theoretical knowledge with clinical application. The entering student must be a registered nurse who holds at minimum a bachelor's degree in nursing from a program accredited by the National League for Nursing, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, or a non-nursing bachelor's degree and an associate degree in nursing or a recognized degree from a foreign academic institution.

Factors considered in the admission decision include a grade point average of at least 3.00 in upper-division and graduate coursework; current Texas RN licensure or Texas Board of Nursing eligible; information derived from academic and professional references; professional background; and proficiency in the English language. An interview may also be required. The composite picture presented by these factors is an important part of the holistic admission review and decision.

### Doctor of Nursing Practice: Advanced Practice Alternate Entry (AE-DNP-APRN)

All students are required to complete seven approved prerequisite courses (anatomy, physiology, microbiology, pharmacology, life span development, nutrition, and statistics) prior to the first semester of enrollment.

The Alternate Entry Doctor of Nursing Practice (AE-DNP-APRN) program is designed for the student who has no previous degrees in nursing, who desires a career in nursing practice, and who holds at minimum a bachelor's degree in a discipline other than nursing. The program prepares students for the highest level of advanced nursing practice blending theoretical knowledge with clinical application. The program is fully approved by the Texas Board of Nursing and is nationally accredited.

Factors considered in the admission decision include a grade point average of at least 3.00 in upper-division undergraduate and graduate coursework; information derived from academic and professional references; professional background and goals; and proficiency in the English language. An interview may also be required. The composite picture presented by these factors is an important part of the holistic admission review and decision.

### Doctor of Nursing Practice: Post Master's

The Doctor of Nursing Practice degree prepares nurses to practice and provide leadership at the highest levels in healthcare and clinical nursing education. The entering student must be a registered nurse who holds either a bachelor's and a master's degree in nursing from a program accredited by the National League for Nursing, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, or a bachelor's degree in nursing and a master's in a related field or a recognized degree from a foreign academic institution. Factors considered in the admission decision include a grade point average of at least 3.00 in upper-division and graduate coursework; eighteen months of professional nursing work experience; current Texas RN licensure or Texas Board of Nursing eligible; information derived from academic and professional references; professional background; the applicant interview; and proficiency in the English language. The composite picture presented by these factors is an important part of the holistic admission review and decision.

## Doctor of Philosophy

The Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing is designed for the student who desires a career as a nurse scientist. The entering student must be a registered nurse who holds either a bachelor's or a master's degree in nursing from a program accredited by the National League for Nursing, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, or a recognized degree from a foreign academic institution. The student who holds no master's degree or a master's degree in another discipline will be required to complete prescribed graduate bridge courses in nursing as a condition of admission. Bridge courses are not counted toward degree requirements. These students may also choose to complete a Master of Science in Nursing degree *en route* to the Ph.D.

Factors considered in the admission decision include a grade point average of at least 3.00 in upper-division undergraduate and graduate coursework; information derived from academic and professional references; the applicant's interview; professional background; congruence of the student's research goals with the expertise of the nursing faculty; and proficiency in the English language. The composite picture presented by these factors is an important part of the holistic admission review and decision.

## Doctor of Philosophy: Alternate Entry

The alternate entry program is designed for the student who has no previous degrees in nursing, who desires a career as a nurse scientist, and who holds a bachelor's degree in a discipline other than nursing. The program is fully approved by the Texas Board of Nursing. Alternate-entry Ph.D. students may choose to complete a Master of Science in Nursing degree *en route* to the Ph.D.

Factors considered in the admission decision include a grade point average of at least 3.00 in upper-division and graduate coursework; information derived from academic and professional references; the applicant interview; professional background; congruence of the student's research goals with the expertise of the nursing faculty; and proficiency in the English language. The composite picture presented by these factors is an important part of the holistic admission review and decision.

## Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Certificate

The Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Certificate program is designed for nurses who already hold a master's degree in nursing and desire to be eligible to sit for the national certification examination for advanced practice nursing. The entering student holds a master's degree from a program accredited by the National League for Nursing or the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education and holds a registered nurse license that allows the student to practice as a registered nurse in Texas.

Factors considered in the admission decision include a grade point average of at least 3.00 in upper-division undergraduate and graduate coursework; information derived from academic and professional references; professional background and goals; and proficiency in the English language. An interview may also be required. The composite picture presented by these factors is an important part of the holistic admission review and decision.

## Nursing: Teaching Certification

The Teaching Nursing stackable certificate program is designed for nurses who are seeking to enhance their teaching pedagogy and skills in preparation for teaching nursing in academic Programs and clinical settings. A BSN degree or an associate degree in nursing and

a baccalaureate degree outside of nursing is the minimum degree requirements for this certificate program.

Factors considered in the admission decision include a grade point average of at least 3.00 in upper-division undergraduate and graduate coursework; information derived from academic and professional references; professional background and goals; and proficiency in the English language. The composite picture presented by these factors is an important part of the holistic admission review and decision.

\* Pending THECB approval at time of publication.