



Kirkhof College of Nursing Graduate FAQs

GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

What graduate programs are offered in the Kirkhof College of Nursing?

The Kirkhof College of Nursing (KCON) offers both a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) and a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree.

The MSN is an Advanced Generalist program designed to provide the clinical leadership skills essential for evidence-based practice and coordination of care delivery processes at the patient-provider interface. MSN graduates will be eligible to sit for Clinical Nurse Leader certification, providing them the opportunity to advance their credentials to AG/CNL.

The DNP is designed for nurses seeking a terminal degree in nursing practice and offers an alternative to research-focused doctoral programs. Two emphasis areas are offered: Advanced Practice Nursing (child/adolescent or adult/older adult) or Nursing Administration and Health Care Systems.

How does an Advanced Generalist/Clinical Nurse Leader (AG/CNL) function?

GVSU's MSN program prepares nurses for the leadership role of AG/CNL, which is designed for nurses who want to make a difference in the clinical setting. At the point of care, the AG/CNL acts as the care coordinator for a group of clients, while providing direct care in complex cases. The AG/CNL evaluates client outcomes, assesses client risks, and promotes client and family advocacy. The AG/CNL role is not limited to the acute care settings; AG/CNL prepared nurses focus on delivering effective and efficient care in a fiscally responsible manner across the health continuum.

How does the AG/CNL prepared through GVSU's MSN program differ from a Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) or Advanced Practice Nurse (APRN) prepared through GVSU's DNP program?

While AG/CNLs complete additional education in generalist nursing, they are not prepared as advanced practice nurses (APRNs). Advanced practice nurses (or clinical nurse specialists) and nurse practitioners are prepared with specialist education in a defined area of practice. The AG/CNL may call on the CNS to provide consultation when a specialist area of concern arises (i.e. when a patient does not respond to nursing care or therapeutics as expected).

Why is GVSU's KCON changing advanced practice education from the MSN to the DNP?

The Kirkhof College of Nursing has a reputation for excellence and vision in nursing education. KCON's efforts to develop the DNP program are evidence of our responsiveness to the changing dynamic of health care and our commitment to preparing the most sophisticated and skilled nursing professionals for today and the future. The DNP program is consistent with the American Association of Colleges of Nursing's call to produce advanced clinicians who are able to address the complex care needs of this environment. In addition, the DNP is supported by the National Academy of Science, which has advocated for the development of professional practice doctorates as a route to advanced clinical work in nursing. Employers are quickly recognizing the unique contributions these expert nurses are making in the practice arena, and the demand for DNP-prepared nurses continues to grow.

What is the focus of the DNP program?

The DNP program will prepare nurses to function at the highest level, evaluating research-based evidence for useful application in advanced clinical practice or administration. Graduates of the program will be able to influence policy and practice standards; becoming leaders in designing systems and delivering care to meet the needs of diverse populations.

How long are the graduate programs?

For the MSN program, post-BSN students should expect to study for seven full time semesters. The MSN degree requires 41 credits and 400 clinical hours. Graduates will be eligible to sit for Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL) certification. If a KCON MSN student should decide to continue on for a DNP degree, seven of the courses taken for the MSN will apply to the DNP degree, contingent on acceptance to the DNP program.

For a DNP degree, students who are post-BSN should expect to study for approximately four years full time. Please remember that this program bypasses the MSN and heads straight to a terminal doctorate – hence the four-year time frame. The post-BSN programs require 79-93 credits and 1000 clinical hours (depending on specialty track chosen).

Students who are post-MSN will have their transcripts evaluated for credit and a customized plan for degree completion created. Program length and requirements are dependent on previous coursework and selected area of emphasis. Post-MSN students may attend either full time or part time.

Once I start the program can I go at my own pace?

Once admitted, all students are expected to follow the program plan designed for them without interruption.

How much time each week will I be in class?

The program is being offered in a web-enhanced format. Generally, the nursing courses will meet five times per semester in a classroom setting, with classes clustered on Thursdays and Fridays. Courses will entail extensive use of the internet and other electronic software (PowerPoint, Skype, Blackboard, etc). Access to a computer with a high speed connection will be needed.

Some required courses, such as statistics, may not lend themselves to an on-line format and will require attendance one evening per week.

Can I continue to work while attending graduate school?

Each student will need to evaluate this for his/her own particular situation. Although classroom attendance may be minimal, weekly assignments, on-line discussions, and electronic submission of course work will be required, as well as time spent in clinical settings.

How do I apply to the graduate programs?

If you are a graduate of an accredited nursing program and possess either a BSN or MSN, you may qualify to apply. Admissions into the graduate programs are competitive. Applications are accepted until February 1 of every year with a new cohort of MNS and DNP students will start every fall semester. Please visit the following link for application and admission details.

http://www.gvsu.edu/cms3/assets/CBE4B0EA-C321-C9E8-3EFD80A9FFF07D91/graduate_admissions_pdf.pdf

Please contact Linda Buck, MSN, RN at (616) 331-7160 for more information or visit www.gvsu.edu/kcon/loss.

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