



||| | NORTHWESTERN STATE

**Master of Science in Nursing  
Post Master's Certificate**  
Handbook

ACADEMIC YEAR 2025

## MSN/PMC PROGRAM HANDBOOK

This program handbook is intended to provide students with information regarding Northwestern State University College of Nursing's Master of Science in Nursing and Post Master's Certificate programs overall structure, policies, guidelines, and expectations. Students are encouraged to review the handbook carefully and seek clarification from faculty and advisors as needed. This handbook is not a contract between Northwestern State University and the student, and the University reserves the right to amend or change the handbook without notice. If policies and procedures in the MSN/PMC program handbook are different from those posted in university publications, the program handbook supersedes those in other publications (University Catalog and Student Handbook).

Additional sources of information are published in the most current edition of the University Catalog at <https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/> and Student Handbook at <http://www.nsula.edu/studenthandbook/>. Students are expected to be knowledgeable about these policies.

### NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

It has been, and will continue to be, the policy of Northwestern State University to be an equal opportunity employer. All employment decisions are based on job-related standards and must comply with the principles of equal employment opportunity.

In keeping with this policy, the University will continue to recruit, hire, train, and promote into all job levels the most qualified persons without regard to race, color, gender identity or expression, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, genetic information, age, pregnancy or parenting status, veteran status, or retirement status. All personnel actions, such as compensation, benefits, transfers, layoffs, training, and education are administered without regard to race, color, gender identity or expression, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, genetic information, age, veteran status, or retirement status.

The University is committed to equal opportunity for student success by providing access to educational programs, tuition assistance, and social and recreational activities for all students without regard to race, color, gender identity or expression, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, genetic information, pregnancy or parenting status, age, veteran status, or retirement status.

Northwestern State University does not condone or authorize any kind of retaliation against any student or employee who makes a good faith report of conduct which they believe may constitute harassment, discrimination, or retaliation, opposed any prohibited discriminatory practice in any manner in an investigative, or other proceeding about a prohibited discriminatory practice (NSU, Student Handbook, p.2).

Further information can be obtained from personnel in the following offices:

MSN/PMC Program

Northwestern State University

College of Nursing and School of Allied Health

1800 Line Avenue

Shreveport, LA 71101 318-677-3000

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# NORTHWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA

## UNIVERSITY OVERVIEW

Northwestern State University of Louisiana (NSU), formerly called the *Louisiana State Normal School*, was established in 1884 in Natchitoches, Louisiana. In 1921, the *Louisiana State Normal School* began offering baccalaureate programs and was renamed *Louisiana Normal College* by the State Constitution. In 1944, further expansion of degree offerings and statewide recognition as a quality institution of higher education led the state Legislature to change the school's name to *Northwestern State College*. In 1970, after the college began offering master's degrees and achieved University status, the Governor changed the name from *Northwestern State College* to its current name: *Northwestern State University of Louisiana*.

Since 1995, NSU has been a member institution of the University of Louisiana System (ULS) and is governed at the state level by two boards: the Louisiana Board of Regents and the Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana System.

Today, 136 years after the *Louisiana State Normal School* began offering courses in higher education, Northwestern State University: (a) is a Carnegie Master's L university, (b) is regionally accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), (c) offers over 69 degree programs and 34 certificate programs, (d) employs 32 full-time faculty and over 233 part-time/adjunct faculty, (e) enrolled almost 10,000 students in Fall 2022, and (f) awarded over 2,120 degrees and certificates in the 2020-2021 academic year.

NSU's exponential program growth led to an expansion of the original campus footprint from a single building, located in Natchitoches, Louisiana, the oldest permanent settlement in the Louisiana purchase, to today's 900-acre Natchitoches campus and three off-campus learning sites. The three off campus learning sites are located 80 miles North of Natchitoches in Shreveport, Louisiana; 55 miles south of Natchitoches in Alexandria, Louisiana; and 50 miles southwest of Natchitoches in Leesville, Louisiana. The main campus, which is in Natchitoches, is the oldest continually functioning higher education campus in Louisiana.

## UNIVERSITY MISSION

Northwestern State University is a responsive, student-oriented institution committed to acquiring, creating, and disseminating knowledge through innovative teaching, research, and service. With its certificate, undergraduate, and graduate programs, Northwestern State University prepares its increasingly diverse student population to contribute to an inclusive global community with a steadfast dedication to improving our region, state, and nation.

## COLLEGE OF NURSING OVERVIEW

In the mid 1940's, the visionary nursing community in Shreveport, Louisiana recognized the need for a collegiate-based nursing program. Following the recommendations of a national consultant, five hospitals in the Shreveport region agreed to phase-out their diploma nursing programs in preparation for nursing being offered at the collegiate level. This opened the door

for NSU to create a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program. In 1949, the first baccalaureate nursing students were admitted to NSU, making it the oldest state supported baccalaureate nursing program in Louisiana. In 2019, the College of Nursing (CON) celebrated 70 years of nursing education and the creation of more than ten-thousand registered nurses!

During the early years NSU's CON students were given two program options. They could exit the program at the end of three years of study with a diploma or complete a fourth year and earn a baccalaureate degree. Both options allowed graduates to sit for the national registry examination. The diploma option was phased out in the late 1950's. Today, the CON has expanded from two to four-degree programs and 3 post master's certificate concentrations. These five programs have various routes which facilitate students seamlessly entering the desired program and obtaining their degree.

- The Associate of Science in Nursing (ASN) program was initiated in 1972. The program is offered on the Shreveport, Alexandria, and Leesville off-campus learning sites and is accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN), 3390 Peachtree Road NE, Suite 1400, Atlanta, Georgia 30326, phone number 404.975.5000, <https://www.acenursing.org/>. The ASN program has three routes to the degree: traditional, LPN to ASN, and Paramedic/Military Medic to ASN. A large portion of the ASN program is offered via a compressed video distance learning system.
- The Baccalaureate of Science in Nursing (BSN) program was initiated in 1949 and is offered through three pre-licensure routes and one post-licensure route. Two pre-licensure routes (traditional, LPN to BSN) are offered to students on the university's main campus in Natchitoches and the Alexandria off-campus learning site, and three pre-licensure routes are offered: LPN to BSN in Shreveport; traditional, and accelerated BSN in Shreveport and Alexandria. A large portion of the BSN didactic courses are offered via a compressed video distance learning system, and/or on-line. The post-licensure baccalaureate nursing route, RN to BSN, is offered entirely online.
- The Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program was implemented in 1972 and has numerous roles from which students choose (Educator, Administrator, or APRN-Nurse Practitioner). Each Educator/Administrator student must choose a population focus of either Adult-Gerontology or Maternal-Child/Family. Each APRN-NP student also chooses a population focus in Adult Gerontology Acute Care (AGACNP), Adult Gerontology Primary Care (AGPCNP), Family (FNP), Primary Care Pediatric (PCPNP), Psychiatric Mental Health Across the Lifespan (PMHNP), or Women's Health (WHNP). The FNP concentration was initiated in 1982. The WHNP and PCPNP concentrations were initiated in 1997. The AGACNP concentration began in 1998, and the AGPCNP concentration began in 2013. The PMHNP concentration began in 2017. All roles and concentrations of the MSN program are offered online.
- The Post-master's Certificate in Nursing (PMC) program has been offered by NSU since the onset of the MSN NP programs in 1972. However, in 2014 CCNE (Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education) began accrediting PMC programs and the Louisiana Board of Regents and ULS Board both began requiring program approval prior to provision of specific PMC degree codes. These changes prompted NSU to evaluate which PMC programs enrolled enough students to meet PMC program criteria and to seek PMC

program approval from the BOR and the ULS board in addition to CCNE accreditation. The PMC program was accredited in 2020. The PMC program is composed of a single APRN role: Nurse Practitioner. Students must choose from Adult Gerontology Acute Care, Family, or Psychiatric Mental Health Across the Lifespan Concentrations/Populations. All role and concentration courses of the PMC program are offered online.

- The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program began in 2014 and received initial CCNE accreditation status in 2015. The DNP program offers two routes for DNP degree obtainment: Nurse Anesthesia (NA) and Master of Science in Nursing to DNP (OSL).

## PROGRAM ACCREDITATION

The BSN, MSN, PMC, and DNP programs at Northwestern State University of Louisiana is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (<http://www.ccneaccreditation.org>). All nursing programs and program concentrations are approved by the Louisiana State Board of Nursing (LSBN).

## CONSAH MISSION, VISION AND CORE VALUES

### CONSAH Mission

Northwestern State University's College of Nursing and School of Allied Health advances the mission of the University through innovative teaching, experiential service learning, and scholarship. The College of Nursing and School of Allied Health offers quality healthcare education to a diverse student population to achieve their goal of becoming responsible healthcare providers who improve the health of our region, state, and nation.

### CONSAH Vision

Northwestern State University will become the nation's premier regional university through the innovative delivery of transformative student learning experiences that prepare graduates for life and career success.

### CONSAH Core Values

**Respect.** We embrace free expression, treat people fairly and value diversity while promoting inclusion.

**Caring.** We empathize with those we encounter by exhibiting openness and expression sensitivity.

**Innovation.** We are committed to continuous quality improvement. We are passionate about providing transformational learning environments and experiences for our students that will advance the mission of the University and College.

**Excellence.** We adhere to the highest standards for healthcare education to ensure the quality of our academic programs.

**Professionalism.** We are healthcare professionals who educate future healthcare professionals. Therefore, we maintain professional expertise, demonstrate integrity in our professional behaviors and act ethically. We persevere when faced with challenges, and display accountability for our actions.

**Teamwork.** We are members of an interprofessional healthcare education team. We involve team members in decision-making. We communicate effectively and challenge ideas with respect.

## **MSN/PMC PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

The Master of Science in Nursing Program at Northwestern State University's College of Nursing and School of Allied Health (CONSAH) provides learning opportunities for registered nurses to build upon baccalaureate nursing education, as well as experiential professional knowledge, attitudes, and skills. The MSN program prepares registered nurses to function and excel in various advanced nursing roles such as nurse educator, nurse administrator or nurse practitioner. The PMC program prepares advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) to sit for national certification for FNP, AGACNP or PMHNP. Graduates of the MSN program are educationally prepared to make significant contributions to the improvement of healthcare and to the advancement of nursing knowledge and practice. The MSN program gives the student with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing the opportunity to develop advanced knowledge, intellectual skills, and clinical competence necessary for the advanced practice nurse.

The clinical concentrations of study (with major codes) include:

### **Nurse Practitioner (NP)**

Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (AGACNP) (546N)

Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner (AGPCNP) (546P)

Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) (546C)

Primary Care Pediatric Nurse Practitioner (PCPNP) (546M)

Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner cross the Lifespan (PMHNP) (546R)

Women's Health Nurse Practitioner (WHNP) (546H)

### **Education**

Adult Gerontology Nursing (546K) (546U)

Maternal, Child, and Family Nursing (546D) (546W)

### **Administration**

Adult-Gerontology Nursing (546K) (546T)

Maternal, Child, and Family Nursing (546D) (546V)

### **Post Master's Certificates (PMC)**

Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (AGACNP) (054)

Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) (051)

Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner cross the Lifespan (PMHNP) (053)

The MSN program is only offered online with expectation of clinical performance in Louisiana.

## **MSN PROGRAM Purpose and GOALS**

The purpose of the MSN program is to provide a Master of Science degree for baccalaureate prepared registered nurses who desire to practice in an advanced nursing practice specialty (administration, education) or for an advanced nursing practice role (nurse practitioner).

The master's prepared nurse is one whose expert practice demonstrates advanced skills and knowledge in the provision of health care through direct and indirect client care activities and in the scientific endeavors concerned with nursing. The MSN Program fosters the growth and development of the nurse's clinical skills and knowledge specific to his or her advanced practice concentration and role. By providing a societal, historical, and ethical perspective of professional nursing, the graduate level nurse is prepared to assume influential roles in the profession and the healthcare system.

The Goals of the MSN program are to:

- I. Prepare graduates with knowledge, skills, and attitudes for advanced nursing practice as an educator, administrator, or nurse practitioner.
- II. Prepare graduates to function and excel in various advanced nursing roles.
- III. Prepare graduates to make significant contributions to improving healthcare and to advancing nursing knowledge and practice.
- IV. Provide a foundation for doctoral study.

## **PMC Program Goals**

The goals of the PMC program are to:

- i. Prepare graduates with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes for advanced nursing practice as a nurse practitioner
- ii. Prepare graduates to function and excel in the advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) role of nurse practitioner (NP)
- iii. Prepare graduates to make significant contributions to the improvement of healthcare and to the advancement of nursing knowledge and practice
- iv. Provide a foundation for doctoral study.

## **Student Learning Objectives of the MSN and PMC Programs**

Upon completion of the MSN and/or PMC program, students will be able to:

- i. Integrate, translate, and apply nursing knowledge and associated knowledge from other disciplines into practice.
- ii. Focus on the individual within multiple complicated contexts, including family and/or important others, providing person-centered care.
- iii. Coordinate disease prevention and management of populations through collaborative activities with stakeholders for the improvement of equitable population health outcomes.
- iv. Generate, synthesize, translate, apply, and disseminate nursing knowledge to improve health and transform health care.
- v. Enhance quality and minimize risk of harm to patients and providers through effective system and individual performance.
- vi. Collaborate across professions to optimize care, enhance the healthcare experience, and strengthen outcomes.

- vii. Lead within complex systems of health care and coordinate resources to provide safe, quality, equitable care to diverse populations.
- viii. Provide safe, high quality care using informatics and healthcare technologies to support professionals as they expand knowledge for nursing practice.
- ix. Cultivate sustainable nursing identity, perspective, and accountability as a professional that reflects nursing's characteristics and values.
- x. Engage in professional leadership that fosters personal health, well-being, lifelong learning, and supports the acquisition of nursing expertise and assertion of leadership.

## **MSN PROGRAM CURRICULA AND PROGRAM DESIGN**

The MSN program offers three functional roles concentrations: nurse practitioner, nurse educator, and nurse administrator. New MSN students are admitted as a cohort once a year in the fall semester. Returning students and transfer students are admitted into the appropriate semester.

### **MSN/Nurse Practitioner**

The MSN/nurse practitioner's curriculum pattern is eight consecutive semesters (32 months) with a minimum of 43-45 credit hours. Courses are offered in sequence during the semester indicated on the curriculum pattern. The exception is the first fall/spring semesters in which courses are interchangeable. The first 3 semesters of the program focus on core education (Theory, Research, Pharmacotherapeutics, Pathophysiology, and Social Forces). The remaining 5 semesters focus on clinical courses, role courses, and the paper in lieu of thesis (PILT). Specific concentration tracts have additional learning to accomplish focused goals of each major (i.e. the PMHNP students take an additional psychopharmacology and neurobiology course). See **Appendix A** for NP curriculum patterns.

### **Descriptions of NP Concentrations**

#### **Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (AGACNP)**

Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner graduates will be eligible to apply for the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Acute Care Nurse Practitioner certification examination, the American Association of Critical Care Nurses (AACN) certification exam, and for other examinations as deemed appropriate by certifying bodies. This clinical sequence will prepare advanced practice nurses who can function in acute care settings to care for adults of all ages.

#### **Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner (AGPCNP)**

Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner graduates will be eligible to apply for the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner certification examination, the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners' (AANP) certification exam, and for other examinations as deemed appropriate by certifying bodies. This clinical sequence will prepare advanced practice nurses who can function in primary care settings to care for adults of all ages.

### **Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP)**

Family Nurse Practitioner graduates will be eligible to apply for the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Family Nurse Practitioner certification examination, the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners' Family Nurse Practitioner certification examination, and for other examinations as deemed appropriate by certifying bodies. This clinical sequence will prepare advanced practice nurses in family nursing practice who can function in primary care settings with people of all ages.

### **Primary Care Pediatric Nurse Practitioner (PCPNP)**

Primary Care Pediatric Nurse Practitioner graduates will be eligible to apply for the Pediatric Nursing Certification Board Pediatric Nurse Practitioner certification examination. This clinical sequence will prepare advanced practice nurses in pediatric nursing practice who can function in primary care settings to care for children of all ages.

### **Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Across the Lifespan (PMHNP)**

Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Across the Lifespan graduates will be eligible to apply for the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (Across the Lifespan) National Certification exam, and for other examinations as deemed appropriate by certifying bodies. This clinical sequence will prepare advanced practice nurses in psychiatric mental health practice who can function in various settings with people of all ages.

### **Women's Health Nurse Practitioner (WHNP)**

Women's Health Nurse Practitioner graduates will be eligible to apply for the National Certification Corporation (NCC) Women's Health Nurse Practitioner certification examination and for other examinations as deemed appropriate by certifying bodies. This clinical sequence will prepare advanced practice nurses in women's health who can function in primary care

### **Description of Education and Administration Concentrations**

The curriculum pattern for the nurse educator and administrator consists of 7 consecutive semesters with at least 40 credit hours. Students select a clinical focus on either Adult/Gerontological Nursing or Maternal-Child-Family Nursing. Courses are offered in sequence during the semester indicated on the curriculum pattern. The exception is the first fall/spring semesters in which courses are interchangeable. The first 2 semesters of the program focus on core education (Theory, Research, Pharmacotherapeutics, Pathophysiology). The remaining semesters focus on the administrator/educator courses, Social Forces, the paper in lieu of thesis (PILT). See **Appendix A** for Education and Administration.

### **Descriptions of Clinical Focus**

#### **Adult-Gerontology Nursing**

The clinical sequence in Adult-Gerontology Nursing prepares graduate nurses for the practice of advanced nursing, such as to function as educators in institutions of higher education (*education*) and as leaders in clinical nursing settings in nursing of adults (*administration*).

## **Maternal, Child, and Family Nursing**

The clinical sequence in Maternal-Child Nursing prepares graduate nurses for the practice of advanced nursing, such as to function as teachers in institutions of higher education (*education*) and as leaders in clinical nursing settings for childbearing women and their families (*administration*).

## **Post Master's Certificate Curricula and Program Design**

The Post Master's Certificate (PMC) curriculum provides master's prepared registered nurses the didactic and clinical education necessary to become nurse practitioners.

The curriculum plan for each PMC student is based on the MSN curriculum pattern but will vary depending upon course work already completed during the student's prior graduate program. Each student's formal graduate transcript is reviewed, and a **gap analysis** is completed to compare previous course work and supervised clinical experiences to the requirements of the MSN curriculum pattern. Courses on the MSN curriculum pattern may be waived if the required course or its equivalent has already been completed. The number of semesters required to complete the PMC depends on the course and clinical requirements.

PMC is offered for Family, Adult/Gerontological Acute Care and Psychiatric Mental Health nurse practitioner concentrations.

## **Description of PMC/NP Concentrations**

### **PMC Adult Gerontology Acute Care NP**

The Post Master's Certificate in Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (PMC AGACNP) provides the didactic and clinical education necessary to master's prepared registered nurses (RNs) to become adult gerontology acute care health nurse practitioners. This program prepares the certificate holder to 1) apply advanced practice skills, abilities and knowledge to promote optimal acute care to adults of all ages; 2) apply advanced practice knowledge on differential diagnosis and disease management in adults with acute disease processes or at risk for acute care illnesses, including the use and prescription of pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic interventions; 3) provide culturally competent, population-based treatment modalities, and 4) demonstrate knowledge, skills, and abilities to sit for a ACAGNP National Certification Examination.

### **PMC Family NP**

The Post Master's Certificate in Family Nurse Practitioner (PMC FNP) curriculum provides master's prepared registered nurses the didactic and clinical education necessary to become family nurse practitioners. The objectives of this certificate program are to prepare the certificate holder to 1) apply advanced practice skills, abilities and knowledge to provide holistic family centered primary health care to populations across the lifespan in a variety of ambulatory care settings as an advanced practice nurse specializing in family nursing, 2) provide culturally competent, population-based primary care for minor acute and chronic conditions for the family unit, and 3) demonstrate knowledge, skills, and abilities to sit for an FNP Certification

Examination, to apply for a state licensure as an APRN, practicing as board certified FNP with the ability to attain prescriptive authority.

### **PMC Psychiatric Mental Health NP Across the Lifespan**

The Post Master's Certificate in Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMC PMHNP) provides the didactic and clinical education necessary to master's prepared registered nurses to become psychiatric mental health nurse practitioners. This program prepares the certificate holder to 1) apply advanced practice skills, abilities and knowledge to promote optimal mental health across the lifespan; 2) apply advanced practice knowledge on differential diagnosis and disease management in patients across the lifespan who are at risk for, or have psychiatric/mental health illness, including the use and prescription of pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic interventions; 3) provide culturally competent, population-based psychotherapeutic treatment modalities, and 4) demonstrate knowledge, skills, and abilities to sit for a PMHNP National Certification Examination.

### **STUDENT GOVERNANCE PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP**

CONSAH governance is the shared responsibility of all CONSAH members. To fulfill this responsibility, faculty, staff, and administration have established collaborative bodies known as Councils, Standing Committees, Sub-Committees, and Ad-Hoc Committees which are charged to perform specific governance duties requiring faculty, staff, administrative, student, and community of interest (COI) involvement. MSN student representatives are invited and encouraged to participate in the MSN Program Curriculum Committee (PCC).

#### **Committee, Council and Meeting Participation**

MSN/PMC Program Curriculum Committee- The MSN/PMC PCC chairperson invites a minimum of one representative from each cohort to attend monthly MSN/PMC PCC meetings.

## ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, AND GRADUATION

### ADMISSION PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

Admission to the MSN program begins with admission to NSU's Graduate School. Admission to the Graduate School does not imply admission to the MSN program. The application can be found at Northwestern State University's Graduate School <https://graduateschool.nsula.edu/>.

### GRADUATE SCHOOL ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants seeking admission to the MSN/PMC program must meet minimum requirements for admission to the University's Graduate School. Applicants must apply and submit application materials to the Graduate School as outlined in the graduate school admission process by the specified deadline(s).

Additionally, applicants are required to submit:

1. Official transcripts reflecting a minimum of a baccalaureate degree in nursing from a nationally accredited College or University.
2. Application on File
3. An undergraduate Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale **OR** GPA of 2.75 in last 60 hours pursued. Students who do not meet at least one of these criteria are required to take the GRE and to obtain a minimum combined verbal and quantitative score of 284.
4. Two professional letters of recommendation (1 from a former faculty member and 1 from an immediate supervisor in the clinical setting) sent to the Graduate School via email [grad\\_school@nsula.edu](mailto:grad_school@nsula.edu)
5. Current unencumbered, unrestricted Louisiana RN license or compact license that includes Louisiana.

Non-native speakers of English must demonstrate sufficient English language proficiency per the University English Proficiency and TOEFL Requirement.

### MSN PROGRAM SPECIFIC ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants must also meet the minimum requirements for admission to the MSN program.

Applicants are required to submit:

Graduate School application

Evidence of a minimum of \*1-year full-time experience as a registered nurse (as documented in Graduate School application).

Attestation to the ability to meet and comply with technical performance standards (CONSAH Essential Academic Performance and Technical Standards for Didactic and Clinical Settings)

Current American Heart Association Basic Life Support (BLS). Must be AHA certification, not Red Cross or other organizations. Must have BLS even if ACLS certified.

\*Minimum of 2 years in hospital experience is required for AGACNP students.

## Applications

Priority deadline: Applications are accepted from January 1 through March 31 for admission to the fall cohort. Additional applications are accepted through June 1 to fill available slots.

## Admission

Admission to the MSN program includes acceptance into clinical courses providing the student maintains progression requirements. New MSN students are admitted once a year into the fall cohort.

Students who apply by March 31 will be notified of acceptance by May 1.

Students who apply by June 1 will be notified of acceptance as space allows.

**\* Clinical hours must be obtained in Louisiana unless approved by the clinical coordinator.**

## READMISSION

A student who has withdrawn from the MSN program (withdrawn from all courses) and is in good standing with the University, may apply for readmission to the MSN Program.

Completion of the MSN program – students should expect to complete the MSN program in a timely manner. Most students will complete within 8 semesters. Students who sit out or need to delay completion must communicate with the MSN Director and Program Coordinator so that return to the program is facilitated.

## Admission for Post Master's Certificate Students

Post master's graduate student admission requirements are the same as those for all students, except GRE Requirement. PMC students are not required to take the GRE.

1. Master's degree in nursing from an accredited college or University.
2. Application on file prior to registration.
3. Official transcripts on file prior to registration.
4. A graduate Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale
5. Current unencumbered, unrestricted Louisiana RN license, compact license that includes Louisiana, or LA APRN license.

Post master's certificate students will be admitted at various semesters depending on previous course work and supervised clinical hours completed.

The PMC application cycle opens January 1. The priority deadline is March 31. June 1 is the final deadline to apply for fall admission regardless of when clinical courses begin.

## Advising

Students are encouraged to meet with advisors before applying to the MSN/PMC program and at regular intervals thereafter. Appointments may be made through the Bookings app.

## Registration

Registration deadlines and other information is available prior to each semester at the Student Services Office on the Shreveport campus or Nursing office on the CENLA campus, and on-line on the University website under the Registrar's office at <https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/>

MSN/PCM students will be notified of when to register for courses by email or course announcements.

## MSN TRANSFER OF CREDIT AND ADVANCED STANDING

### TRANSFERRED CREDITS

Semester hours earned at an institution accredited by a regional committee on colleges, or the equivalent, will be accepted at NSU with the following exceptions:

1. At least 2/3 of the credit hours for the degree must be taken in residence during the required time limit.
2. Transfer credit will not be accepted as credit for a course in which a failing grade was received at NSU.
3. The academic dean will determine how transferred credits may be applied to degree requirements.
4. Credits earned at a non-accredited institution will not be accepted at NSU until the student has demonstrated knowledge of the subject through tests or by other suitable means. This determination of acceptability will be made by the Registrar and the academic dean. If a student has earned credit for courses not usually accepted at NSU and feels that the content of the courses might be acceptable to NSU degree requirements, the courses will be reviewed by the Registrar and the academic dean.
5. Any student enrolled at NSU must secure the academic dean's permission **in advance** to take required course work at another institution.
6. The Graduate office will not accept transfer courses for graduate credit if those courses were taken at a college or university that does not grant graduate degrees.
7. A form is to be completed by the student and academic advisor. The form entitled ***Application for Transfer of Graduate Credit*** on the Graduate School website is to be completed in advance of taking the course with approval of the academic dean or advisor, or when requesting academic credit for a course previously completed. An official transcript, documenting successful completion of the course, must be submitted to the Graduate office. **Students must also submit a catalog description of the course and a course syllabus for evaluation** to the MSN/PMC Program Director.

**\*No more than 12 semester hours may be accepted as transfer toward degree requirements.**

### PROGRESSION

To maintain progression status and be in good academic standing with the MSN/PMC program, the student must:

- Maintain a current, unrestricted, unencumbered license to practice as a registered nurse (RN), or APRN if applicable to PMC students.
- Obtain a grade of "B" or better in all clinical, role, pharmacology, neurobiology/pharmacology, pathophysiology, and assessment courses.
- Maintain continuous enrollment in the MSN program.
- Meet the University and CONSAH health requirements
- Meet the *CONSAH Essential Academic Performance and Technical Standards for Didactic and Clinical Settings*; and
- Abide by the *Student Code of Conduct* as published in the University Student Handbook and meet *MSN Program Expectations* as published in the MSN Program Handbook.

-MSN students must pass a comprehensive role exam to graduate. This exam is given in the last semester of studies and may be repeated once in the same semester if necessary.

-PMC students must pass a role exam based on the functional role, scope, and standards of practice of the concentration for which they are receiving the post master's certificate. This exam is given in the last semester of studies and may be repeated once in the same semester if necessary.

If a student earns a "D" in a required course, that course must be repeated at NSU. Such courses may not be taken and transferred from another university.

### **NON-PROGRESSION**

If a student fails to meet one or more of the requirements for progression, the student is in non-progression. Students may return to progression by following the re-entry procedures, provided they have not been dismissed from the nursing program. Students will be in non-progression for:

- Failure to obtain and maintain current, unencumbered licensure to practice as a registered nurse (RN).

- Earning a grade of "C" in clinical, role, pharmacology, neurobiology/pharmacology, pathophysiology, or assessment courses.

- \* A student who earns a "C" in clinical, role, pharmacology, neurobiology/pharmacology, pathophysiology, or assessment courses will be allowed to retake the course one time.

- If the student earns a second "C" in clinical, role, pharmacology, neurobiology/pharmacology, pathophysiology or assessment courses, the student will be dismissed from the program.

- A student who fails a course as indicated by a final grade of "F", will be dismissed from the program.

- Failure to maintain continuous enrollment in the MSN Program.

- Students in good standing may reapply to return to the program

- Failure to meet the University and CONSAH health requirements.

Students who fail to meet/maintain Sentry MD compliance with health requirements will be withdrawn from courses and dismissed from the program. Students will not automatically be re-enrolled after meeting the requirements.

- Failure to abide by the *Student Code of Conduct* as published in the University Student Handbook and/or meet *MSN Program Expectations* published in the MSN Program Handbook.

- Failure to meet the *CONSAH Essential Academic Performance and Technical Standards for Didactic and Clinical Settings*.

Students must meet the *CONSAH Essential Academic Performance and Technical Standards for Didactic and Clinical Settings* for admission and continue to meet these standards throughout program enrollment.

A student will be withdrawn from courses and/or dismissed from the program for failure to meet *CONSAH Essential Academic Performance and Technical Standards for Didactic and Clinical Settings*.

## **PROBATION**

A student whose graduate cumulative grade point average or semester average falls below 3.0 on a 4.0 scale shall be placed on probation. Probation status will be retained until the cumulative grade point average is 3.0 or above. A student on probation who fails to make a minimum average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale during the next semester shall be suspended. The first suspension is for one full academic session and the second is for one calendar year.

The summer semester is not considered a semester, students can take a course in the summer and if the GPA is improved, they will not be on probation in the fall

See the University catalog for more information.

## **SUSPENSION**

Upon suspension from graduate studies, a student may appeal for readmission on probation by submitting to his/her advisor a letter addressed to the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. The advisor, after consulting with the other members of the student's graduate committee, is to append a written recommendation and forward it with the letter to the Dean, who makes the final decision.

## **DISMISSAL**

A student on probation with two previous suspensions who does not make a 3.0 on all hours attempted for the semester will be dismissed. ***Such dismissal is a final action.***

Earning the grade of F in any graduate-level course will result in dismissal from the student's degree program, regardless of the student's overall grade point average. This dismissal is subject to appeal. As outlined in the non-progression policy, a student will be dismissed for failure of didactic, and /or clinical courses, and/or loss of unencumbered Registered Nurse licensure status. Furthermore, a student who violates the Academic Honesty policy is subject to dismissal from the MSN or PMC programs as outlined in the University Catalog and Student Handbook.

## **GRADING SCALE**

The MSN Program's grading scale is a ten-point scale which is constructed as: A (90-100%), B (80-89%), C (70-79%), D (60-69%), and F (0-59%). All graded course work is calculated to the second decimal place (hundredths column). Only the final course grade is rounded to the nearest whole number with only the first decimal place (tenths column) rounded. For example, a final course grade of 79.5 is rounded to 80 whereas a final course grade of 79.49 is not rounded to 80. Syllabi spell out specific requirements of each course and should be adhered to when calculating grade point average (i.e. an average of 80% on all exams are required for progression in clinical courses).

The MSN Program follows procedures for assigning incomplete "I" and in progress "IP" grades as outlined in the University Catalog.

## **GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

MSN students must complete all University requirements for graduation. Additionally, students must successfully pass a role competency exam, complete, and present the paper in lieu of thesis (PILT), and complete all required clinical hours.

Each MSN student is expected to monitor their progress to ensure that degree requirements are met. If a student encounters difficulty satisfying degree requirements, it is the student's responsibility to notify the Director of the MSN/PMC Program. Timely notification is imperative to facilitate change and adjustments to ensure the student can meet degree requirements.

## Appendix A

<b>MSN Program</b> (curricula, etc.)	<a href="https://www.nsula.edu/program/master-of-science-in-nursing/">https://www.nsula.edu/program/master-of-science-in-nursing/</a>
<b>PMC Program</b> (curricula, etc.)	<a href="https://www.nsula.edu/program/post-masters-certificate-in-nursing/">https://www.nsula.edu/program/post-masters-certificate-in-nursing/</a>
<b>Graduate School</b>	<a href="https://www.nsula.edu/graduateschool/">https://www.nsula.edu/graduateschool/</a>
<b>Financial Aid</b>	<a href="https://www.nsula.edu/financialaid/">https://www.nsula.edu/financialaid/</a>
<b>Registrar's Office</b>	<a href="https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/">https://www.nsula.edu/registrar/</a>
<b>MSN Student Info</b> (Moodle Shell)	<a href="https://moodle.nsula.edu/course/view.php?id=42331">https://moodle.nsula.edu/course/view.php?id=42331</a>
<b>Student Help Desk</b>	<a href="https://www.nsula.edu/studenthelpdesk/">https://www.nsula.edu/studenthelpdesk/</a>