

# NURSING, CERTIFICATE IN (POST-MASTER'S CERTIFICATE) WITH A CONCENTRATION IN PSYCHIATRIC-MENTAL HEALTH NURSE PRACTITIONER

The psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioner concentration prepares graduates for advanced practice registered nurse roles by developing the knowledge and skills in areas of mental health promotion, as well as mental illness prevention, assessment, diagnosis, treatment and patient education in the care of individuals across the lifespan. Students are exposed to a unique balance of neuroscience, psychological theory and evidence-based practice. Students crystalize their understanding of this content through the use of simulation, interactive case study, discussion board activity, individual and group-based projects, writing assignments, testing and supervised practicum experiences. Informed by a balanced approach to care, students receive focused instruction in both psychotherapy and psychopharmacotherapy.

The PMHNP is prepared to assess, diagnose, treat and educate individuals, families and groups with complex psychiatric-mental health problems and do so with an interprofessional lens of quality and safety. PMHNPs work in clinical settings that include private, state or Veterans Affairs in-patient or outpatient psychiatric facilities, private psychiatric practices, and community mental health centers. PMHNPs also provide services in settings such as correctional facilities, domestic violence shelters, residential substance abuse facilities and schools.

Graduates of the PMHNP concentration are eligible to apply for the Psychiatric and Mental Health Nurse Practitioner certification exam administered by the American Nurses Credentialing Center.

## Program goals

Graduates will achieve advanced nursing practice competencies by demonstrating:

1. Systems and organizational leadership
2. Implementation of advanced nursing practice interventions
3. Effective use of research and technology
4. Systematic evaluation of interventions and outcomes

## Student learning outcomes

Graduates will be able to:

1. Demonstrate core competencies in their advanced practice specialties
2. Integrate nursing and related sciences into the delivery of advanced nursing care to diverse populations and systems of health care delivery
3. Apply ethical analysis and clinical reasoning to assess, intervene and evaluate advanced nursing care delivery
4. Understand the implications of social, cultural, economic, policy and organizational systems that impact practice and outcomes
5. Synthesize evidence for practice to determine appropriate application of interventions across diverse populations and settings

6. Use quality processes and improvement science to evaluate care and ensure patient safety for individuals, populations and systems
7. Integrate organizational science and technology to make changes in the care environment to improve health outcomes and practice efficiency

## VCU Graduate Bulletin, VCU Graduate School and general academic policies and regulations for all graduate students in all graduate programs

The VCU Graduate Bulletin website documents the official admission and academic rules and regulations that govern graduate education for all graduate programs at the university. These policies are established by the graduate faculty of the university through their elected representatives to the University Graduate Council.

It is the responsibility of all graduate students, both on- and off-campus, to be familiar with the VCU Graduate Bulletin as well as the Graduate School website (<http://www.graduate.vcu.edu>) and academic regulations in individual school and department publications and on program websites. However, in all cases, the official policies and procedures of the University Graduate Council, as published on the VCU Graduate Bulletin and Graduate School websites, take precedence over individual program policies and guidelines.

**Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on academic regulations for graduate students.** (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs>)

## Degree candidacy requirements

A graduate student admitted to a program or concentration requiring a final research project, work of art, thesis or dissertation, must qualify for continuing master's or doctoral status according to the degree candidacy requirements of the student's graduate program. Admission to degree candidacy, if applicable, is a formal statement by the graduate student's faculty regarding the student's academic achievements and the student's readiness to proceed to the final research phase of the degree program.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following degree candidacy policy as published in the VCU Graduate Bulletin for complete information and instructions.

**Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on degree candidacy requirements.** (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/candidacy>)

## Graduation requirements

As graduate students approach the end of their academic programs and the final semester of matriculation, they must make formal application to graduate. No degrees will be conferred until the application to graduate has been finalized.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following graduation requirements as published in the Graduate Bulletin for a complete list of instructions and a graduation checklist.

**Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on graduation requirements.** (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info>)

## Other information

VCU School of Nursing Student Policy and Information handbooks (<http://nursing.vcu.edu/about-us/resources>) are located on the school's website.

Our international and non-native English-speaking students bring different perspectives and new thinking to our nursing programs. To ensure that all incoming student are prepared for the school's academic rigor, all international applicants and non-native English speaking applicants without a degree from a U.S. high school, college or university must provide additional information with their applications according to the English language proficiency guidelines on the program admission tab.

Visit the **School of Nursing website for program-specific application instructions** (<http://nursing.vcu.edu/admission/application-instructions/post-masters-certificate>).

## Admission requirements

Degree:	Semester(s) of entry:	Deadline dates:	Test requirements:
Certificate	Spring	Jan 15 (Nov 1 early action deadline; after Jan 15 consideration is given on a space-available basis)	

To be considered for admission to the School of Nursing, applicants must:

1. Be eligible for readmission or in good standing at the last college or university attended
2. Meet the **general admission requirements of the VCU Graduate School**
3. Submit a completed application with all required materials to the School of Nursing
4. Have an earned master's or doctoral degree in nursing as an advanced practice registered nurse (NP or CNS) from an accredited nursing school (e.g. ACEN, CCNE, CNEA)
5. Have a current, unrestricted R.N. license from a U.S. state or territory at the time admissions application is submitted (Applicants without a R.N. license in the U.S. should consult with the **Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools** (<http://www.cgfn.org>) and the **Virginia Board of Nursing** (<https://www.dhp.virginia.gov/nursing>) for the steps needed to obtain a Virginia R.N. license.)
6. Provide additional information with the application according to the English language proficiency guidelines for applicants who are international or non-native English speakers without a degree from a U.S. high school, college or university (Additional information can be found on the 'Required materials' tab of the **VCU International Admissions website** (<https://www.vcu.edu/admissions/apply/international/undergraduate-applicants>).

## Degree requirements

Twenty-three graduate credit hours are required for the Post-master's Certificate in Nursing with a concentration in psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioner.

In addition to general VCU Graduate School graduation requirements (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info>), a candidate for the degree of Certificate in Nursing must be recommended by the faculty and must:

1. Meet academic requirements of the Graduate School
2. Complete all requirements for the prescribed curriculum within six calendar years of the first registration for work to be credited toward the degree
3. Earn a minimum grade of B or pass grade in all nursing courses
4. Earn a minimum cumulative grade-point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale in all work presented for graduation
5. Conform to School of Nursing policies in respect to pass/fail grading for course work or thesis study

The degree will be granted only after all requirements have been fulfilled and all fees to the university have been paid. Degrees are not granted in absentia unless written request is made to the dean and permission is granted.

## Curriculum requirements

Students in nurse practitioner certification concentrations are required to have completed advanced health assessment, pharmacotherapeutics and pathophysiology courses. A gap analysis is required to determine specific plan of study.

Course	Title	Hours
NURS 635	Advanced Practice Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing Practicum I	6
NURS 636	Advanced Practice Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing Seminar	3
NURS 637	Advanced Practice Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing Practicum II	6
NURS 656	Diagnosis and Management of Psychiatric Disorders Across the Lifespan	4
NURS 657	Advanced Practice Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing: Theory and Practice Across the Lifespan	4
Total Hours		23

**The minimum total of graduate credit hours required for this certificate is 23.**

### Graduate program director

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### Additional contact

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**Program website:** [nursing.vcu.edu/programs/post-masters-certificate](http://nursing.vcu.edu/programs/post-masters-certificate) (<http://nursing.vcu.edu/programs/post-masters-certificate>)