

PSYCHIATRIC MENTAL HEALTH NURSE PRACTITIONER, CERTIFICATE IN (POST-PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE)

The 21-credit Certificate in Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner is designed to prepare master's- or doctorate-prepared nurses already established in advanced practice to obtain the education and experience to certify in an enhanced scope of practice. Students will incorporate new skills and knowledge to care for individuals across the lifespan with common acute and chronic mental health illnesses. The program will educate students in the concepts of the maintenance of mental health across the lifespan. Students will develop knowledge in the diagnosis and management of mental health illnesses and will learn to provide advanced nursing care to patients from infancy to geriatrics. Graduates will be prepared to obtain a health history, conduct physical examinations, order and interpret diagnostic studies (e.g., lab tests), make differential diagnoses, prepare a case management plan, prescribe medications and treatments, provide psychotherapy, collaborate with physicians and other health professionals, and counsel patients on health behaviors and treatment options.

Upon completion of the certificate program, graduates will be able to sit for the psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner certification, which is a prerequisite for Virginia state licensure application. Certification is offered by the American Nurses Certification Center.

Student learning outcomes

Graduates will be able to:

1. Synthesize knowledge and theories from nursing and related sciences to improve health outcomes for individuals, populations and systems
2. Integrate prevention and population health concepts into models of care
3. Demonstrate leadership to foster interprofessional collaboration that advances health care practices and influences health policies
4. Integrate evidence and organizational science into practice to enhance outcomes
5. Enhance patient care and safety using quality processes and improvement science
6. Incorporate current and emerging health care technologies and informatics into practice
7. Demonstrate core competencies in their advanced practice concentration

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/>)

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/>)

Admission requirements

Degree:	Semester(s) of entry:	Deadline dates:	Test requirements:
Certificate	Spring or fall	Rolling admissions	

Note: There are no specific test requirements for this certificate.

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

1. Be eligible for readmission or be in good standing at the last college or university attended
2. Meet the **general admission requirements of the VCU Graduate School**
3. Submit a complete application with all required materials to the School of Nursing
4. Have an earned master's or doctoral degree in nursing 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 an R.N. license in the U.S. should consult with the [Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools](http://www.cgfns.org/) (<http://www.cgfns.org/>) and the [Virginia Board of Nursing](https://www.dhp.virginia.gov/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/) (<https://www.vcu.edu/admissions/apply/international/undergraduate-applicants/>.)
7. Submit transcripts and/or syllabi for gap analysis to determine individual plan of study and semester of entry

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8. Submit all official college transcripts from each college attended, including concurrent college enrollment transcripts
9. Have completed three separate comprehensive nursing graduate-level lifespan courses in advanced pathophysiology, advanced health assessment and advanced pharmacology

NURS 659	Psychiatric Mental Health Practicum III	4
Total Hours		21

The minimum total of graduate credit hours required for this certificate is 21.

For international students, the following is required:

1. Submit an official transcript evaluation from a recognized foreign educational credentials evaluation service accredited by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (<https://www.naces.org/>) or the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (<https://www.aacrao.org/>)
2. Receive a minimum composite score of 100 for the Internet Based Test or 600 for the paper-based score; or an International English Language Testing System score minimum of 6.5 on the academic exam
3. Receive a passing score on the VCU English Language Program Compression test

Contact

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Additional contact

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Degree requirements

Twenty-one graduate credit hours are required for the post-professional Certificate 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 post-professional certificate 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 eight 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 certificate programs 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 521	Psychiatric Disorders Across the Lifespan	4
NURS 522	Psychopharmacology for Advanced Practice	3
NURS 597	Psychiatric Mental Health Practicum I	2
NURS 598	Managing Psychiatric Disorders in Special and Vulnerable Populations	2
NURS 602	Psychotherapy: Theory and Practice	2
NURS 641	Psychiatric Mental Health Practicum II	4