

MSN Frequently Asked Questions

I want to obtain my MSN. What are the different options available for the UMSL MSN program?

The College of Nursing at UMSL offers five different emphasis areas in the MSN program, which includes four Nurse Practitioner tracks - Family, Women's, Adult-Geriatrics and Pediatrics, as well as a Nurse Educator option.

The Nurse Practitioner emphasis areas each prepare the student to take certification exams in their area of specialty to serve as a health care provider in urban, suburban, and rural settings. Nurse Practitioners are prepared to diagnose, prescribe appropriate therapies and otherwise treat acute and stable chronic illnesses. Our competencies emphasize disease prevention and health promotion strategies that include pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic therapies, counseling, and case management.

Nurse Practitioners provide high quality health care services in an advanced practice role in a variety of settings, including clinics, urgent care, emergency rooms, with physician groups and in private practice, in nursing homes and assisted living facilities, colleges, public health departments, business and employee health settings, and sub-specialty areas such as infertility, cardiovascular health, oncology, geriatrics, endocrinology, urogynecology, bone health, high-risk pregnancy, oncology, sports medicine, and more. Your population focus will guide your practice throughout your career, which is why it is important to carefully consider which emphasis area you choose for your educational program. The following provides a brief snapshot of the four NP population focused emphasis areas, and the Nurse Educator option. If you would like more information to help you decide which option might be the best fit for your career goals, you are encouraged to [contact one of our emphasis area coordinators](#) for a more personalized answer to your questions.

Why choose the **Adult/Geriatric Nurse Practitioner emphasis area?**

Adult-Geriatric Nurse Practitioners (A-GNP) are experts in adult and geriatrics' health promotion and disease prevention, as well as managing chronic health conditions. They are well-qualified to provide a unique blend of nursing and medical care to adult and geriatric patients and their families. The A-GNP meets the health care needs of a growing older adult population and other underserved groups.

Why choose the **Family Nurse Practitioner emphasis area?**

The Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) meets the health care needs of individuals and families across the lifespan. The FNP provides health promotion and disease prevention for individuals and families, as well as assessment, diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic health conditions. The FNP role includes providing health assessments, direct care, and guidance, teaching, or counseling as appropriate. FNPs are committed to family-centered care that understands and addresses the physical, emotional, psychological and sociocultural needs of the individual and family.

Why choose the **Pediatric Nurse Practitioner emphasis area?**

Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (PNPs) are pediatric specialists dedicated to the health and wellness of infants, children, adolescents and young adults. PNP education elevates experienced pediatric nurses and educates them to provide primary healthcare from birth through age 21, and in some instances to provide care to adults receiving treatment for congenital conditions. PNPs are passionate about children and families and have demonstrated efficacy at improving the long term health of pediatric patients.

PNP education is ideal for students who have a passion for pediatrics and who know they only want to work with children. PNPs are specialist and their ability to manage complex patients and less common issues is very different than a generalist. As a result, most pediatric practices do not hire generalist NPs when PNPs are available. Students who want to care for the parent's health issues and the child's health issues may not be suited to PNP education. However, students who are not interested in caring for adults from young adulthood through older adulthood, and who truly want to work with infants, children or teens and young adults exclusively will find better career goal matching by enrolling in a PNP program.

Why choose the **Women's Health Nurse Practitioner emphasis area?**

Women's Health Nurse Practitioners (WHNP) provided care in partnership with the woman, from a woman focused perspective, and with attention to woman- specific assessment and intervention strategies.

Women's Health Nurse Practitioners (WHNPs) are experts in woman-focused health promotion and disease prevention, as well as managing chronic health conditions affecting women throughout the lifespan, from adolescence through menopause and maturity with an emphasis on reproductive and gynecologic health needs, as well as care to men who have selected reproductive health needs. They are well-qualified to provide primary women's health care, which includes such services as pre-conception health care, prenatal and postpartum care, family planning services, management of sexually transmitted diseases, care during perimenopause and menopause, general well woman care, and care for women experiencing episodic acute or chronic illnesses .. WHNPs also work collaboratively with physicians in providing specialty care to women. Examples of specialty practices where WHNPs are part of the team include maternal fetal medicine, infertility, gynecology, urogynecology, vulvar dermatology, and other related reproductive and gynecologic specialties.

Women's health is affected by all of the factors that touch a woman's life - her family, relationships, work environment, spiritual values, and community. Research over the last three decades has supported the fact that women respond differently to wellness and disease than do men, and that gender-focused health assessment, education, and interventions are necessary for women to be as healthy as possible. WHNP care blends health recommendations with the realities of women's lives, in order to ensure optimal health, while avoiding unnecessary health care costs.

Why choose the **Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Option?**

The Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMH-NP) ensures the promotion, protection, and restoration of mental health in individuals, couples, families, and populations across the lifespan. This specialty addresses the challenges in psychological adaptation related to physiological, developmental, interpersonal, environmental, and spiritual stressors. PMH-NPs assess, diagnosis, and manage a range of mental health issues from episodic adjustment and crisis through acute and chronic psychiatric disorders. Interventions include individual and group psychotherapies, psychoeducation, systems consultation, medication, and other physiological treatments.”

Why choose the **Nurse Educator emphasis area?**

In addition to the four NP population focused options, UMSL College of Nursing offers a Nurse Educator option.

The Nurse Educator Role prepares nurses to teach in basic nursing programs, staff development or community education. The program focus is preparing individuals for a nurse educator role which include course work in curriculum design and development, teaching methodologies, educational needs assessment, and learner-centered theories and methods.

When is the deadline to apply?

February 15 for the following Fall admission. Post MSN students may be able to take a course in the Summer semester.

Is the GRE required for admission?

No, it is not for our MSN program. <http://www.umsl.edu/divisions/graduate/files/pdfs/nursing-msn-profile.pdf>

Is admission to this program competitive?

Yes, admission to the MSN program is very competitive. There is an average of 3 or more applications per spots available. It is important to complete the application with your GPA, years of work experience and attention to the essay questions.

Do you have a wait list?

We create a wait list for Fall admission in the event that anyone cannot accept their admission for the upcoming year. In this instance we will pull the next student from the waitlist. We do not carry over a waitlist over to the following year.

Can I apply to multiple tracks (emphasis areas)?

No, you must select your admission emphasis areas during the application process, as the program is very competitive. It is important that you carefully consider which of the emphasis areas described above is right for you. Following admission, transferring to another area may require re-applying the following year. Post MSN certificate course work toward achieving a certificate in a second emphasis area may be started prior to completion of the first MSN and is reviewed on an individual bases.

How long is the MSN program?

This Nurse Practitioner program is a three year program, beginning in Fall semester. and concluding upon graduation in August three years later. The Nurse Educator emphasis area is slightly shorter, with classes beginning in the Fall semester, and concluding with graduation in May of the third year. All emphasis areas are part time program. We currently do not run a shorter program for our MSN emphasis areas.

Is the MSN program on line?

Some courses are online but many courses are face to face, usually on Wednesdays.

Is Graduate school education similar to undergraduate education?

In Graduate school you will have much more personal responsibility for your learning. You are an adult learner. You know how you learn best and must take full responsibility for your learning. The Graduate student must be self-directed and they have a reservoir of experiences that can be used as a basis on which to further build learning. You must balance work, school, and family and friends. You must know how to balance the tasks so you can best perform in each area and be ready to learn in your graduate courses. Some of you can work full time throughout; some will have to cut back depending on your other responsibilities. Many have to make allowances during the last semester(s) of the internship at the end of your program.

Are there clinical hours required?

Yes, the NP emphasis areas require 600 clinical hours, 100 during the Diagnosis and management clinicals and at least 500 precepted hours between the two internship courses at the final two semesters of the program.

What is considered clinical experience for application purposes?

Your RN experience in practice comprises your clinical experience for the purpose of your application. Once admitted to the program your clinical experience in Graduate school will be a supervised activity designed to the program objectives and graduation criteria.

How much will the program cost?

Information about fee rates, payment programs, and other information can be found online through the campus cashiers office at http://www.umsl.edu/services/finance/fee_sch.htm. Fees are subject to change according to University policy as described at this web site.

How can I apply for financial aid?

Information about financial aid can be found online through the campus financial aid office at <http://www.umsl.edu/services/finaid/>