

SECTION 2: GRADUATE ADMISSION POLICIES

ADMISSION POLICIES FOR THE DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE PROGRAM

Application for Admission: An official Application for Admission must be submitted to the Nursing Division prior to enrollment. Additionally, students who have not previously attended Northwestern must apply for university admission through the Admissions Office. A \$15 application fee is required of first-time students applying for university admission. The University application form and information about the DNP Program can be found on the Division of Nursing webpage (www.nwsu.edu/school-of-professional-studies/nursing) or the Graduate Studies webpage (www.nwsu.edu/graduate-studies). Official transcripts from all colleges/universities attended (undergraduate and graduate) must accompany the application. Applicants must submit a current copy of their Registered Nurse license with the application.

Applications are processed by the DNP Administrative Assistant and the DNP Program Director. Once the application has been processed by the Division of Nursing, applicants may be required to participate in an interview process.

Admission Requirements for the BSN-to-DNP Program: Admission to the BSN-to-DNP program is competitive. Only completed applications will be reviewed. Admission is contingent upon meeting all of the program admission requirements. The program admits a limited number of students due to available clinical resources. Applicants must:

1. hold a baccalaureate degree with a major in nursing from an ACEN (NLNAC), CCNE, or CNEA accredited nursing program.
2. have an overall grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for the last 60 hours for the courses required in the undergraduate nursing degree (BSN).
3. Application may be made for conditional admission by students having an overall undergraduate GPA of at least 2.5 with five years having passed since the date of completion of the BSN degree.
4. have a current unrestricted license to practice as a Registered Nurse.
5. have completed an undergraduate or graduate course in descriptive and inferential statistics with a grade of C or better.
6. have submitted three (3) letters of recommendation attesting to academic ability, professional competency, and personal character.
7. submit the program application with a personal essay and curriculum vitae.
8. submit written verification of the number of hours of direct or indirect patient care experience within the last 3 years as a registered nurse or family nurse practitioner, which can be either volunteer work or employment.
9. Students with a native language other than English must submit evidence of English language proficiency. Evidence may include (a) completing a four-year bachelor's degree in Nursing from a U.S institution, (b) meeting the English language requirements of an official TOEFL score (520 for paper based test, 190 for computer-based test, or 68 for internet based test), or IELTS score (6/5 or higher) is required for all students for whom English is a second language. The TOEFL must have been taken within the past 2 years.

Advanced Placement Option (MSN to DNP Option): Registered Nurses who have completed an accredited (AACN, NLNAC, CCNE or CNEA) graduate level (Masters of Science in Nursing) advanced practice registered nursing program as a Family Nurse Practitioner, and are currently certified in an advanced practice specialty consistent with educational preparation, are eligible to apply to complete the DNP at Northwestern. Advanced practice licensure as a Family Nurse Practitioner as prescribed by the applicant's state of residency is required. Advanced Placement Option applicants must meet the same admission requirements as the BSN-to-DNP applicants.

Retention Standards:

1. Student must file a plan of study, signed by both the student and academic advisor prior to beginning program orientation.
2. Student must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher. No grade lower than a B will be credited towards the DNP degree. Students earning a grade of "C" or below in a DNP course may repeat ONE course ONE TIME to raise the grade to the passing grade of "B" or higher. Failure to attain a passing grade after the second attempt will result in dismissal from the program.
3. Students whose cumulative GPA falls between 2.7 and 3.0 at any time will receive a letter of academic warning and will meet with their academic advisor to develop a personal plan for improvement.
4. Student must be enrolled in a minimum of one course per semester and is normally expected to complete all degree requirements within six years after admission to the program.
5. Any student enrolled in the DNP program must register for fall, spring, and summer semesters until all degree requirements are completed unless the student has been granted a leave of absence by the Division of Nursing Chairperson.
6. Student must pass a federal criminal background check prior to starting and annually during progression in the DNP program.
7. Student must pass the drug screen test prior to starting clinical courses and annually during progression in the DNP program. Graduate Nursing Students may be subjected to random drug screenings per the Division of Nursing Drug Screening Policy.
8. Student must submit a copy of a photo ID upon admission to the program before courses start.
9. Evidence of unprofessional conduct or unsafe behavior may constitute ground for dismissal from the DNP program. Evidence of plagiarism, falsification of documentation of activities or assignments, breaking patient/client confidentiality, or pertinent legal issues including arrests or positive drug screen may result in dismissal from the DNP program.

ADMISSION POLICIES FOR MASTER DEGREE PROGRAMS

Application for Admission. An official application for admission to graduate study must be submitted to the graduate office prior to enrollment in graduate courses. Additionally, students who have not previously attended Northwestern must apply for university admission through the Registry Office. A \$15 application fee is required of first-time students applying for university admission. These application forms can be found under the "General Forms" tab on the Graduate Studies webpage (www.nwosu.edu/graduate-studies). Official transcripts (not photocopies) from all colleges/universities previously attended (undergraduate and graduate) must accompany applications. Applicants holding teaching certificates or licenses must submit copies of their current teaching certification; until such copies are received, the student will be limited to a maximum enrollment of nine hours of graduate courses.

Applications are processed by the Coordinator of Graduate Studies. Unusual cases will be reviewed by the Graduate Committee.

Unconditional Admission. Admission to the graduate program will be granted to students who hold a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution and who meet any ONE of the following standards:

1. A minimum cumulative undergraduate grade-point average of 2.75 (on a 4.0 point scale).*
2. A minimum grade-point average of 3.0 in the last sixty semester hours of undergraduate work (both undergraduate and graduate hours may be used in calculating the GPA to meet admission standards; however, any graduate hours used for admission purposes cannot be counted toward a master's degree).*
3. A score that places the individual at the 25th percentile on two of the three areas (verbal, quantitative, and analytical writing) of the *GRE* or at the 25th percentile on the *MAT*.* *GRE* or *MAT* scores used to meet admission criteria are valid only if the test was taken within five years of the date of application.
4. If a student has already completed a master's degree from another accredited institution, the student may be unconditionally admitted to the program at Northwestern upon providing an official copy of a transcript stating the degree.

*Students with prior graduate work (transfer students or NWOSU students applying for readmission) must have a minimum GPA of 3.0 in all graduate courses in order to be admitted unconditionally.

Conditional Admission. Conditional admission may be granted to applicants who do not meet the requirements for unconditional admission to the graduate program but who satisfy the following standards:

1. *First-time graduate students (with no prior graduate work):* Possess a minimum cumulative undergraduate grade-point average of 2.3 (on a 4.0 scale) **OR** a grade-point average of 2.5 in the last sixty hours attempted;
2. *Transfer graduate students or NWOSU graduate students applying for readmission:* Possess a minimum cumulative undergraduate grade-point average of 2.3 (on a 4.0 scale) **OR** a grade-point average of 2.5 in the last sixty hours of undergraduate or graduate work attempted (both undergraduate and graduate hours may be used in calculating the GPA to meet admission standards; however, any graduate hours used for admission purposes cannot be applied toward a master's degree).

All students who are admitted conditionally must have a minimum cumulative grade-point average of 3.0 (B) after the first sixteen hours of graduate work following their admission to the graduate program. If the GPA requirement is not met, the student shall be removed from the degree program.

Graduate students who are admitted conditionally are not eligible to receive Federal Financial Aid. Questions about financial aid should be directed to the Office of Financial Aid.

Restrictions. The Graduate Studies Office requires students enrolled in the M.A. in American Studies program and in the M.Ed. in Adult Education Management and Administration work to have taken twelve credit hours of undergraduate work in a discipline related to their area of specialization. For those who do not, extra coursework may be required to provide an appropriate background for their graduate content area.

Senior Undergraduate Students: Senior undergraduate students may be admitted to a master's degree program by meeting the following standards:

1. Be enrolled in the final hours required to complete a baccalaureate degree.
2. Submit an application for graduate study.
3. Possess a minimum cumulative grade-point average of 2.75 (on a 4.0 scale) [Unconditional Admission Standard 1].
4. Be enrolled in a maximum of sixteen semester hours of combined undergraduate and graduate course work during the fall or spring semester, or a maximum of nine hours in a summer term (including interim courses).

There is a one-semester limit for seniors to enroll in graduate courses; they must complete all requirements for the undergraduate degree and be fully admitted to the graduate program in order to continue work towards a master's degree.

Non-Degree Seeking Student. Students who wish to take courses for graduate credit at the 5000-level but who do not wish to work toward a master's degree must meet the following standards:

1. Hold a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution.
2. Possess a minimum cumulative undergraduate grade-point average of 2.3 (on a 4.0 scale) **OR** a grade-point average of 2.5 in the last sixty hours of undergraduate work attempted (both undergraduate and graduate hours may be used in calculating the GPA to meet admission standards).

If a student admitted as prescribed should decide to pursue a master's degree, all admission standards established for the degree program must be met before the student will be allowed enrollment beyond nine hours. Any graduate hours used for admission purposes cannot be applied toward a master's degree.

Note: Students seeking certification are not considered "non-degree seeking students." For more details on the certification process, see section 10.

Admission to Candidacy. Admission to a master's degree program does not carry with it admission to candidacy for a degree. Students must use the online Admission to Degree Candidacy Form and the appropriate Plan of Study form in order to apply for candidacy.

Students enrolled in all master-degree programs must apply for admission to candidacy after completing sixteen semester hours and before completing twenty hours of acceptable work toward the master's degree. At this time, students are also required to submit a completed plan of study form accompanied with the appropriate signatures.

A minimum grade-point average of 3.0 (B) is required for admission to candidacy. An approved plan of study must be on file in the graduate office before admission to candidacy can be granted.

Retention and Academic Probation for Master Degree Programs:

A student in good standing shall maintain a cumulative grade-point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale in the graduate program. A grade-point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale is required for graduation; no grade lower than C will be credited toward a master's degree. Students whose grade-point average drops below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation and must have the deficiency corrected by the completion of the next nine hours of coursework. Students who do not achieve the grade-point average at the completion of those nine hours will be dismissed from the graduate program.

Fee Waivers. Non-resident students wishing to apply for waiver of out-of-state fees must meet the criteria for unconditional admission to the graduate program. Application for the fee waiver eligibility must be processed each semester in the registrar's office.