MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING: COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING SPECIALIZATION

Program Coordinator: Dr. Stephanie Chalupka
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Admission Requirements
See www.worcester.edu/graduate

Traditional Entry; Bridge Program; RN-to-MS Fast Track Program

Program Description
The Master of Science program in Nursing prepares nurses for leadership as advanced public health nurses in management, education, clinical practice, leadership, research, policy development, and advocacy. The program offers three routes of entry for Registered Nurses seeking a Master of Science in Nursing degree. The pathways to the Master of Science Degree are:

• Traditional Entry: For students with a BS degree in Nursing.
• Bridge Program: For Registered Nurses with a Non-Nursing BA or BS degree.
• RN-to-MS Fast Track: For associate-degree or diploma-prepared Registered Nurses seeking to proceed directly to the Master of Science in Nursing Degree.

The program consists of both coursework and a practicum. This specialty offers leadership preparation for nurses desiring expertise in population-based, community/public health nursing practice. Students ground their studies in the science of nursing intervention, public health, and nursing research. They then focus on courses that examine the basis of assessment and intervention of populations, integrating the study of health determinants and health disparities. Practicum experiences are arranged to meet the individual needs of students while also meeting accreditation and certification requirements.

In addition to completing core studies in the specialty, students gain skills in evidence-based practice, program evaluation, informatics, teaching/learning, health economics, health care policy, environmental health, and epidemiology. A final project that is a systematic investigation of a practice problem is planned, implemented, and completed during the program.

Completion of the required coursework and practice hours provides eligibility to apply for certification as an Advanced Public Health Nurse by the American Nurses Credentialing Center after satisfying the experiential requirement.

The clinical component of the program allows for students to develop concentrations in one of the following areas:

• Public Health
• Population Health
• Home Health Care
• Ambulatory Care
• Case Management
• Occupational and Environmental Health

• School Nursing
• Emergency Preparedness
• Nursing Education

Specialty Area Information
The Advanced Public Health Nurse is actively engaged in education (e.g. community, staff, students, and colleagues), case management, expert clinical practice, consultation, research, and administration.

The Advanced Public Health Nurse is a leader in population-based health care practice, and the implementation of this role is based on the American Nurses Association Public Health Nursing: Scope and Standards for Practice competencies and will vary across settings.

Professional Opportunities
With increasing demand for health professionals who have expertise in promoting the health of population groups, graduates of the nursing degree are well positioned to assume leadership roles in the evolving health care field. The Nursing degree provides a foundation of knowledge and practical experiences in the following areas:

• public health sciences including biostatistics, environmental health, epidemiology systems thinking, leadership, informatics, health policy and management
• advanced population-focused assessment, program planning, and intervention
• advanced development and evaluation of health promotion programs
• approaches to work with culturally diverse and high-risk populations
• population health, and
• emergency preparedness

Where do graduates work?
Graduates of the Nursing program hold a variety of positions in education (e.g. community, staff, students, and colleagues), case management, clinical practice, consultation, research, and administration.

Examples of advanced public health nursing positions are:

• health promotion specialist for a managed care organization,
• consultant with a state health department,
• nursing and public health faculty at universities and colleges,
• public health nursing advisor at a state department of public health,
• emergency preparedness coordinator,
• population health director at health insurance organization,
• supervisor of clinical services for a community health center,
• director of clinical services in ambulatory care division of an acute care hospital,
• director of local public health department,
• planner of patient education for a large outpatient service,
• program director in an international non-governmental organization,
• occupational and environmental health settings,
• school nurse/school nurse leadership positions,
• staff development specialist for a home healthcare agency
• executive director home healthcare agency

Admission Process
The RN student applying to Worcester State University as a transfer student can receive up to 72 credits transferable from associate degree colleges and a maximum of 90 credits from four year colleges or universities. Twenty-nine college credits are awarded for the RN license.

Students interested in applying to the RN-to-MS program are advised to contact the RN-to-BS Coordinator, at 508 929-8129.

Traditional Entry
Admissions Requirements
For students with a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing
• Baccalaureate degree in Nursing
• Introductory or undergraduate courses in statistics and research.
• Unencumbered license to practice as a Registered Nurse in Massachusetts
• GRE scores are not required for admission

Requirements of the Program
The Master of Science in Nursing requires the completion of thirty-six (36) credit hours of graduate courses. Most Nursing courses are offered in the blended-learning format, combining the best of face-to-face and online learning.

Required Courses for the Master of Science Degree in Nursing Traditional Entry

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<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Core (12 credits)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NU-910</td>
<td>Professional Role Development 1</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>NU-920</td>
<td>Conceptual Foundations in Nursing 1</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>NU-925</td>
<td>Research for Evidence-Based Practice 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>NU-951</td>
<td>Nursing Leadership &amp; Administration 1</td>
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<td>Interdisciplinary Courses (12 credits)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NU-936</td>
<td>Epidemiology 1</td>
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<td>NU-941</td>
<td>Program Planning &amp; Evaluation</td>
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<td>Biostatistics</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Specialty Courses in Community/Public Health Nursing (12 credits)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NU-961</td>
<td>Nursing Science I: Community/ Public Health Leadership Theory and Practicum I</td>
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<tr>
<td>NU-966</td>
<td>Nursing Science II: Community/ Public Health Leadership Theory and Practicum II</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Total Credits 36

1 Courses offered in the blended-learning format.

Note: The Traditional Entry Program is usually completed in 3 years of part-time study or two years of full-time study.

Bridge Program
Admissions Requirements
For Registered Nurses with a Non-Nursing BA or BS degree. The seven (7) credit Bridge Program option which enables students to enter directly into the Master of Science in Nursing program.
• B.A. or B.S. degree in non-nursing discipline
• Introductory or undergraduate courses in statistics and research.
• Unencumbered license to practice as a Registered Nurse in Massachusetts
• GRE scores are not required for admission

Requirements of the Program
The Master of Science in Nursing requires the completion of thirty-six (36) credit hours of graduate courses. Most Nursing courses are offered in the blended-learning format, combining the best of face-to-face and online learning.

Required Courses for the Master of Science Degree in Nursing Bridge Program

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<tr>
<td>NU-900</td>
<td>Individual Assessment 2</td>
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<td>NU-901</td>
<td>Community Health and Health Policy 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>NU-902</td>
<td>Transition to Advanced Nursing 2</td>
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Total Credits 43
These courses do not have to be completed before enrolling in Professional Core or Interdisciplinary courses.

Courses offered in the blended-learning format.

**Bridge students must:**
- Complete the self-evaluation assessment of prior learning tool at the time of entry into the program.
- Meet with their assigned graduate program advisor to plan a course of study that bridges BS expectations and entry into graduate nursing studies.
- Compile a portfolio of their professional activities according to the guidelines and submit it to the Graduate Program Coordinator. The portfolio will be evaluated by the Graduate Program Coordinator and an individualized educational plan will be developed to support the student in the achievement of all baccalaureate level competencies.

Note: The Traditional Entry Program is usually completed in 3 years of part-time study or two years of full-time study.

**RN-to-MS Fast Track Admissions Requirements**

For Registered Nurses seeking to proceed directly to the Master of Science in Nursing Degree upon earning the BSN degree

- Associate of Science Degree in Nursing or Diploma in Nursing
- Unencumbered license to practice as a Registered Nurse in Massachusetts
- GRE scores are not required for admission

This program is fully accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 530, Washington, DC 20036

**Requirements of the Program**

The Master of Science in Nursing requires the completion of thirty-six (36) credit hours of graduate courses. Most Nursing courses are offered in the blended-learning format, combining the best of face-to-face and online learning.

**Required Courses for the Master of Science Degree in Nursing RN-to-MS Fast Track Program**

The RN-to-MS Fast Track Program provides an opportunity for associate degree and diploma-prepared nurses to obtain the Master of Science in Nursing Degree. The RN-to-MS Fast Track Program curriculum is characterized by flexibility and recognition of the diversity of the students who enroll.

The RN-to-MS Fast Track Program allows students to work toward their Bachelor of Science Nursing and Master of Science in Nursing degrees in one integrated program. The Graduate Record Exam (GRE), generally required for admission to master’s degree programs, is NOT required for admission to the RN-to-MS Fast Track Program.

Six (6) graduate credits (500 Level) taken while completing the undergraduate senior year count toward both degrees only when the RN meets the criteria for the Fast Track program, completes an application to the Graduate Nursing Program through the Graduate School, and is accepted into the RN-to-MS Fast Track Program during the first semester as a student in the RN-to-BS Program.

Students can typically complete the RN-to-MS Fast Track Program in nine part-time semesters.

Only course grades of B- or above can be counted toward the Master of Science in Nursing degree.

Fast track students must take courses in the M.S. program the semester after completing the requirements for the B.S. degree. Otherwise 500 Level courses taken in the senior year will count only towards the RN-to-BS degree unless they are in excess of the credits required for the B.S. degree.

All requirements for the undergraduate degree in nursing must be completed in addition to the requirements for the Master’s program, except for NU-930 and NU-951.

**RN-to-MS Specialty Courses**

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**Total Credits**

36

¹ Courses offered in the blended-learning format.

Please note that all requirements for the BS in Nursing degree must be satisfied in the RN-to-MS Fast Track program.

**Graduate Nursing Courses**

**NU-900 Individual Assessment**

Bridge Program students only The RN with a B.S. or B.A. degree in a discipline other than nursing identifies individual learning outcomes in their Master’s program of study.

1 Credit

**NU-901 Community Health and Health Policy**

Bridge Program students only This course analyzes the development of policy and its impact on the health of populations. Students apply epidemiology and public health science to population-based nursing practice.

3 Credits
NU-902 Transition to Advanced Nursing
Bridge Program students only
Designed for registered nurses with bachelor’s degrees in areas other than nursing, provides a common knowledge base including the community perspective as a foundation for graduate study in nursing. The realities of modern nursing practice are examined. 3 Credits

NU-910 Professional Role Development
The role of the advanced public health nurse is analyzed in terms of professional scope of practice, standards of practice and components of the role. This course provides a framework for advanced nursing practice. 3 Credits

NU-920 Conceptual Foundations in Nursing
This course concentrates on the philosophical basis of theory development and application. Students are introduced to the levels of theory building, concept formation and the elements of a model while considering the values and goals of nursing actions. 3 Credits

NU-925 Research for Evidence-Based Practice
Prerequisites: NU-946
Students build upon previous learning of research design, methods and process. The critical relationship of research to nursing as a science, as well as its development as a professional discipline is emphasized. 3 Credits

NU-930 Social Policy and the Economics of the Health Care Delivery System
This course provides the student with the knowledge necessary to comprehend the political, economic and social elements that affect health and health services. The student develops an understanding of the regulatory environment and its impact on the delivery of nursing care. 3 Credits

NU-936 Epidemiology
Evaluation of epidemiological principles and techniques of investigation; measures of incidence and prevalence applied to health risk, morbidity and mortality in specific populations. 3 Credits

NU-937 Advanced Health Assessment
This course provides the nurse educator student with the theoretical and clinical knowledge required to teach health assessment to students enrolled in basic nursing education programs. Includes principles of health assessment throughout the lifespan with an emphasis on problem-based and student-centered learning. 3 Credits

NU-938 Advance Concepts in Physiology and Pathophysiology
This course is designed to present an orientation to disease as disordered physiology. Course focus is on pathological conditions encountered in clinical practice across the life span. Emphasis is placed on regulatory and compensatory mechanisms as they relate to commonly occurring diseases. The influence of environmental and genetic factors on the development of disease will be examined. 3 Credits

NU-939 Advanced Concepts in Pharmacology
This course focuses on the pharmacologic principals important to nursing practice including: pharmacokinetics, pharmacodynamics, and pharmacogenomics, and major drug classifications from the perspective of the Nurse Educator. This course will explore strategies for teaching pharmacological concepts to pre-licensure nursing students. Emphasis is placed on the utilization and application of the nursing process in the teaching of pharmacology and safe administration of medications. Other or on demand and every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

NU-951 Nursing Leadership & Administration
Provides the student with the necessary skills to integrate appropriate business, economic, financial, leadership and management concepts into effective strategies to effect change in community/public health agencies and healthcare organizations. 3 Credits

NU-961 Nursing Science I: Community/ Public Health Leadership Theory and Practicum I
This course provides the community/ public health nurse graduate student with opportunities to synthesize their clinical knowledge and expertise with theory to improve health outcomes of all populations. By addressing current public health issues through the application of systematic-level approaches, students will develop a mastery of population assessment, prevention strategies, health policy & advocacy, and interprofessional collaboration. 6 Credits

NU-966 Nursing Science II: Community/Public Health Leadership Theory and Practicum II
This course provides the community health graduate nursing student with the opportunity to evaluate the various processes which are utilized to address multiple determinants of health and participate in the in the challenges of attaining and maintaining population health. Selected clinical practices encourage the student to utilize theory, research, and information technology to manage and evaluate program effectiveness and provide leadership for emerging advances in population health and health care. Students will be prepared to lead the delivery and evaluation of high quality, evidence-based, and population-centered care. 6 Credits

NU-999 Clinical Nursing Education
3 Credits