PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

Nursing is built on a solid foundation in health and behavioral sciences and is informed by ethical principles. The ability to think critically and communicate well is just as essential to the profession as competence in the science of nursing. Gonzaga’s Nursing Program incorporates a liberal arts foundation and professional study to help students become highly adaptive and effective caregivers.

Grounded in Jesuit and nursing traditions, the pre-licensure Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) offered at Gonzaga University focuses on the values of servant leadership, social justice, community, and reflective practice. Students learn to promote health, care for patients with acute and chronic illnesses, and support patients and their families at the end of life. The concept of Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) serves as the organizing framework for the curriculum. One application of this concept is that students initially care for individuals with more predictable health care needs. As they progress in the program, they learn to care for individuals, families, and populations with increasingly more complex needs. They also gradually work in increasingly complex organizational settings.

Upon completion of the program, graduates are able to assume a generalist role in nursing with their practice grounded in the key principles and processes of nursing:

- safe, competent, and ethical care
- effective communication
- leadership
- professionalism

prerequisites (excluding Biology 105 and Chemistry 101 and their respective labs—a C- is accepted in those courses). In addition, students may only repeat one prerequisite course in which a grade of C- or below was earned and still progress to the upper-division nursing courses.

Students in upper-division coursework rotate through a series of clinical experiences that introduce them to professional nursing practice in a variety of health care settings. Due to the availability of quality clinical placements, not all students can begin practicum (clinical) experiences in the fall of their junior year. Half of the students begin their practicum experiences in the fall and half will wait until the spring of their junior year to do so. Freshman nursing students can request to begin their upper-division courses in either the fall or spring semester. If more students request the fall semester over spring, the final determination is based on earned cumulative GPA from prerequisite courses.

Students who start the upper-division nursing courses in the spring of their junior year will have the following options:

- Spreading their coursework over nine semesters
- Taking a leave of absence for a semester (if prerequisites are completed within the first four semesters)
- Applying to study abroad in the fall semester of their junior year

This 9-semester option also allows these students an opportunity to complete a minor, study a foreign language, or repeat a course if necessary.
NURSING PREREQUISITE COURSES

The following courses are a combination of the Gonzaga University Core Curriculum and the prerequisites required to begin upper-division nursing coursework:

- English 101 - English Composition
- English 102 - Literary Genres
- Philosophy 101 - Critical Thinking
- Philosophy 201 - Philosophy of Human Nature
- Philosophy 301 - Ethics
- Religious Studies 100-level elective
- Religious Studies 200-level elective
- Religious Studies 300-level elective
- Speech 101 - Speech Communication
- Biology 105/L - Information Flow in Biological Systems and Lab
- Biology 170/L - Microbiology and Lab
- Chemistry 101/L - General Chemistry and Lab
- Human Physiology 241/L - Anatomy/Physiology I and Lab
- Human Physiology 242/L - Anatomy/Physiology II and Lab
- Human Physiology 244 - Nutrition
- Psychology 101 - General Psychology
- Sociology 101 - Introduction to Sociology
- Math 121 - Statistics
- Nursing 200 - Professional Nursing in a Complex Adaptive System
- Nursing 210 - Growth & Development

GRADUATE PROGRAMS

Students with an associate degree in nursing and an RN license may apply for the accelerated RN to Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program and complete the ten “bridge” courses (30 credits) that prepare them for master’s level courses. There are two options available for students pursuing the accelerated RN to MSN degree:

- Nurse Educator
- Health Systems Leader

The Department also offers an MSN degree and a Second Master’s degree for individuals with a current RN license and a baccalaureate degree. The Second Master’s degree in Nursing program is designed for the registered nurse who already possesses a master’s degree with a major in nursing, but desires preparation to function in a new role or specialty area. Students pursuing either the MSN or the Second Master’s degree may choose from four different degree options:

- Family Nurse Practitioner
- Psychiatric/Mental Health Nurse Practitioner
- Nurse Educator
- Health Systems Leader

The Department of Nursing also offers two options for earning a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree. Nurses with a baccalaureate degree and a RN license can apply for admission to the post-baccalaureate Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program. At completion of the program, they are eligible to take the certification/licensure exam as a Family Nurse Practitioner (75 credits), Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (75 credits), or an Adult/Gerontology Nurse Practitioner (76 credits) depending on the course of study completed.

Nurses with a master’s degree in nursing who are nurse practitioners or health system leaders/nurse administrators are can apply for admission to the post-master’s DNP program (minimum of 31 credits). A DNP degree prepares nurses to be leaders and change agents in today’s complex health
care system and to use the knowledge and skills gained in the DNP program to initiate improvements in nursing practice and the health care system. Gonzaga also offers the CRNA (Nurse Anesthetist) program through the School of Education and will begin offering the Doctor of Nurse Anesthesia Practice (DNAP) beginning in fall 2015. Please contact the Department of Nursing for more information about graduate nursing programs.

OUTCOMES

Upon graduation, students are well prepared to sit for the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX), a requirement for licensure as a registered nurse (RN). The Department traditionally boasts exam pass rates well above the national mean scores.

As our country faces a shortage of nursing professionals, the demand for Gonzaga nursing graduates continually increases. A wide variety of career opportunities await Gonzaga BSN graduates in hospitals, public health departments, community clinics, home health care agencies, and private medical practices. Many students choose to continue their education and pursue MSN, DNP, or DNAP degrees at Gonzaga or other institutions across the nation.

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