



Andy and Barbara Gessner
College of Nursing

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK 2026-2028

NURSING. EXCELLENCE. PERIOD.



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PHD, MSN, RN CMSRN

Associate Dean / Clinical Associate
Professor

Hi! I am Dr. Patricia Schrader, Associate Dean and Clinical Associate Professor.

Welcome to the University of Houston **Andy and Barbara Gessner College of Nursing (CON)** where we educate a diverse student population that builds professional leaders and clinical experts. The Gessner College of Nursing has been offering educational, informational, and cultural opportunities to students from many South Texas counties since 2006. Located at campuses in Houston, Sugar Land, and Katy, the Gessner College of Nursing establishes educational partnerships with both rural and urban health care facilities. The nursing faculty utilize many learning modalities to provide exemplary education across a continuum of cultural, educational, and generational learning concepts. Approved graduate programs include the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Administration, Education and Family Nurse Practitioner tracks, the Education and Administration Certificate Programs, and the Post Master's Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Family Nurse Practitioner or Administration tracks.

Students will see and experience many innovative changes when joining the Gessner College of Nursing this fall. More change will be upcoming throughout the year. Nursing faculty are committed to guiding students' learning and to providing challenging experiences which will serve our graduates well as they enter the richly rewarding, dynamic, and rapidly-evolving healthcare environment.

Nursing faculty view Gessner College of Nursing students as future professional colleagues and expect students to conduct themselves in a professional manner on campus and in the clinical area. The Gessner College of Nursing policies inform students of expectations of graduate students. The graduate nursing student handbook contains policies specific to the Gessner College of Nursing programs that supplement those found in course syllabi, the [UH Catalog](#) and the [UH Student Handbook](#). Students are responsible for using the Handbook as a resource when questions arise and as a guide to academic and nonacademic policies and procedures.

The information in this handbook is updated every two years or as needed; however, changes may also be made throughout the academic year. If a change occurs, an announcement will be posted on the [Gessner College of Nursing website](#) and in the Gessner College of Nursing's learning management system.



***GESSNER COLLEGE OF NURSING
PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION***

Click to View

Mission and Vision
Statement

Philosophy and
Conceptual
Framework

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING

The Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program is designed to build upon the BSN degree. Students in the MSN program are prepared to function at advanced levels with an expanded knowledge of theory, research, population health, and clinical application. Graduates are prepared to provide evidence-based health care and to work in interdisciplinary teams. Each graduate will be prepared to function in their chosen advanced practice role. Family Nurse Practitioner students are educationally prepared to sit for national certification through the [American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Board \(AANPCB\)](#) or the [American Nurses Credentialing Center \(ANCC\)](#).



MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The Master of Science in Nursing program prepares professional nurses for leadership roles in nursing. Graduate study in nursing requires the acquisition and systematic application of knowledge and skills in nursing practice, evidence-based practice, and a nursing role. Innovative educational delivery and part-time study is available for the Nurse Administration, Nurse Education, and Family Nurse Practitioner tracks.

Post Master's Certificates in Nursing Education and Nursing Administration are available.

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING PROGRAM GOALS (OUTCOMES)

1. Synthesize knowledge, theories, and concepts from the biological, social and behavioral sciences, humanities, and nursing to integrate clinical judgment for nursing practice.
2. Apply advanced comprehensive assessment and reasoning while developing and fostering holistic therapeutic person-centered care using caring relationships, communication skills, care coordination, and accountability.
3. Integrate population health knowledge to advocate, prioritize, and manage care of communities, populations, local, regional, national, and global through effective partnerships while advancing resource management.
4. Critically evaluate and synthesize research to integrate evidence into improving health and transforming health care.
5. Support quality improvement principles, safety standards, benchmarks, and system performances to enhance a culture of patient, provider, and work environment safety.
6. Develop effective and respectful communication, intentional engagement, collaboration, and delegation with interprofessionals to optimize care.
7. Analyze and promote policy that impacts nursing practice, social drivers of health, health outcomes, and defends access to cost-effective care and system-wide delivery.
8. Integrate and apply information and communication technologies to gather and document data, drive decision making, manage and improve the delivery of safe, high-quality, and efficient nursing care to populations in diverse settings.
9. Foster accountability to professional values, advocacy, ethical moral, and legal aspects of compassionate nursing care in healthcare systems and settings.
10. Support a commitment to personal health, well-being, and lifelong learning while exhibiting a growth mindset, and capacity for leadership and clinical expertise.

POST MASTER'S DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE (DNP)

The Post Master's Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program is designed to build upon the existing MSN program at UH. The Gessner College of Nursing DNP is a practice focused post master's program educating in evidence-based practice, quality improvement, and systems leadership.

The DNP program is offered in a hybrid model utilizing both online and face-to-face modalities two days per term at the University of Houston campus. Additionally, clinical experiences are available face-to-face in the community setting.



DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The DNP program is a part-time post master's program designed for working nurses. Students may choose to enroll in one of two tracks: (1) the [Post-Master's Administration](#), or (2) the [Post-Master's Family Nurse Practitioner Track](#).

DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE PROGRAM GOALS (OUTCOMES)

1. Translate knowledge using theories and concepts from the biological, social and behavioral sciences, humanities, and nursing to ameliorate nursing practice.
2. Critically analyze and integrate data from multiple contexts to develop, implement, and evaluate culturally sensitive, person-centered care strategies that promote accountability for holistic well-being.
3. Leverage complex population health data to design, implement, and continuously refine system-level interventions and collaborative models that drive equitable health outcomes across the continuum of care.
4. Lead, translate, and disseminate evidence-based scholarship. Drive transformative nursing practices that reshape health care delivery and optimize health outcomes.
5. Sustain quality improvement principles, safety standards, benchmarks, and system performances to establish a culture of patient, provider, and work environment safety.
6. Integrate effective and respectful communication, intentional engagement, collaboration, and delegation with interprofessionals.
7. Design, support, and disseminate policies that impact nursing practice, social drivers of health, health outcomes, and advocates access to cost-effective quality care and system-wide delivery.
8. Design, implement, and evaluate information and communication technologies to gather and document data, drive decision making, manage and improve the delivery of safe, high-quality, and adept nursing care to populations in diverse settings.
9. Model and advocate accountability to professional values, advocacy, ethical, moral, and legal aspects of compassionate nursing care in healthcare systems and settings.
10. Develop and lead activities that foster personal health, well-being, and lifelong learning, while demonstrating a growth mindset and capacity for leadership, mentorship, and nursing expertise.

GRADUATE DEGREE PLANS

MSN DEGREE PLANS

CORE COURSES (24 Credit Hours)

Course Number	Title	Credit Hrs.	Lab/Practicum Hrs.
NURS 6301	Advanced Nursing Research & Integrated Evidence-Based Practice	3	
NURS 6306	Role, Policy & Economics with Advanced Practice Nursing	3	
NURS 6320	Healthcare Informatics	3	
NURS 6330	Advanced Physical Assessment	3	45
NURS 6331	Advanced Pharmacotherapeutics	3	
NURS 6332	Biostatistics	3	
NURS 6333	Population Health	3	
NURS 6338	Advanced Pathophysiology	3	
CORE TOTAL		24	

NURSING ADMINISTRATION CONCENTRATION COURSES (18 Credit Hours)

Course Number	Title	Credit Hrs.	Lab/Practicum Hrs.
NURS 6309	Advanced Leadership and Management	3	
NURS 6317	Human Resource Management in Healthcare	3	
NURS 6319	Health Care Finance	3	
NURS 6321	Leadership Practicum	3	135
NURS 6322	Organizational Behavior and Healthcare Delivery Systems	3	
NURS 6351	Evidence-Based Practice Project	3	
CONCENTRATION TOTAL		18	135
TOTAL ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM		42	135

EDUCATION CONCENTRATION COURSES (18 Credit Hours)

Course Number	Title	Credit Hrs.	Lab/Practicum Hrs.
NURS 6312	Measurement and Evaluation in Nursing Education	3	45
NURS 6313	Theories and Methods of Teaching in Nursing	3	45
NURS 6314	Nursing Curriculum Development	3	
NURS 6335	Management of Health Disorders in Adults	3	
NURS 6336	Management of Health Disorders in Adults Clinical	3	135
NURS 6351	Evidence-Based Practice Project	3	
CONCENTRATION TOTAL		18	225
TOTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM		42	225

FAMILY NURSE PRACTITIONER CONCENTRATION COURSES (23 Credit Hours)

Course Number	Title	Credit Hrs.	Lab/Practicum Hrs.
NURS 6230	Diagnostic Tests & Procedures	2	45
NURS 6335	Management of Health Disorders in Adults	3	
NURS 6336	Management of Health Disorders in Adults Clinical	3	135
NURS 6345	Management of Health Disorders in Women and Children	3	
NURS 6346	Management of Health Disorders in Women & Children Clinical	3	180
NURS 6355	Management of Health Disorders Across the Lifespan in Diverse Settings	3	
NURS 6356	Management of Health Disorders Across the Lifespan in Diverse Settings Clinical	3	180
NURS 6366	FNP Capstone Clinical	3	180
CONCENTRATION TOTAL		23	765 PRACTICUM
TOTAL FNP PROGRAM		47	765

*POST MASTER'S CERTIFICATE IN NURSING EDUCATION (9 Credit Hours)

Course Number	Title	Credit Hrs.	Lab/Practicum Hrs.
NURS 6312	Measurement & Evaluation in Nursing Education	3	45
NURS 6313	Theories and Methods of Teaching in Nursing	3	
NURS 6314	Nursing Curriculum Development	3	45
CONCENTRATION TOTAL		9	90
TOTAL POST MSN CERTIFICATE		9	90

*POST MASTER'S CERTIFICATE IN NURSING ADMINISTRATION (9 Credit Hours)

Course Number	Title	Credit Hrs.	Lab/Practicum Hrs.
NURS 6309	Advanced Leadership and Management	3	
NURS 6317	Human Resource Management in Health Care	3	
NURS 6319	Healthcare Finance	3	
CONCENTRATION TOTAL		9	0
TOTAL POST MSN CERTIFICATE		9	0

**Post Master's certificate candidates are required to achieve a grade of B or higher in all post MSN certificate courses to be eligible to earn the certificate.*

DNP DEGREE PLAN

The following courses are required for earning the Post Master's Doctor of Nursing Practice Degree. Students also have the opportunity to complete a Post Master's Certificate in Nursing Education while earning the DNP. Students should refer to individual degree plans and course descriptions for additional information on course prerequisites.

Course Number	Title	Credit Hrs.	Lab/Practicum Hrs.
Semester 1			
NURS 8301	Healthcare Project Design, Methods, & Analysis	3	
NURS 8302	Advanced Practice Finance and Economics	3	
Semester 2			
NURS 8336	Advanced Synthesis Practicum	3-6	135-270
NURS 8208	DNP Seminar I	2	
Semester 3			
NURS 8207	Writing for Publication	2	

DNP DEGREE PLAN

Course Number	Title	Credit Hrs.	Lab/Practicum Hrs.
Semester 4			
NURS 8215	Advanced Leadership and Management Seminar	2	
NURS 8316	Advanced Leadership Practicum	3	135
OR			
NURS 8225	Complex Health Deviations Seminar	2	
NURS 8326	Complex Health Deviations Practicum	3	135
Semester 5			
NURS 8205	Interdisciplinary Care Seminar	2	
NURS 8306	Interdisciplinary Focus Clinical	3	135
Semester 6			
NURS 8304	Systems Management of Vulnerable Populations	3	

DNP DEGREE PLAN

Course Number	Title	Credit Hrs.	Lab/Practicum Hrs.
Semester 7			
NURS 8303	Complex Systems and Leadership	3	
NURS 8356	Scholarly Project Development/Implementation	3-6	135-270
Semester 8			
NURS 8209	DNP Seminar II	2	
NURS 8357	Scholarly Project Dissemination	3	
TOTAL		37-42	540-810

DNP PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS



Graduates of a DNP program must achieve 1000 clinical hours from a combination of clinical hours in a master's program and the DNP program. Each student will achieve a minimum of 500 clinical hours in the Gessner College of Nursing DNP program. To ensure students meet the required minimum 1000 clinical hours, students with an MSN degree that did not include 500 clinical hours must have a portfolio review to determine an action plan for achieving the required clinical hours. A plan will be developed to achieve any additional hours required. The portfolio may include a written description of the individual's practice experience, participation in academic and specialized programs in the specialty area, national certification in specialty area, and/or additional activities and experiences that exemplify expert practice in nursing and healthcare leadership. The clinical hours accepted to meet the 500-hour requirement at the master's level must be outside the individual's normal scope of paid employment.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATE PROGRAM ADMISSION

Applicants to the graduate nursing programs must meet all requirements for graduate admission as described in the [UH Catalog](#), on the Gessner College of Nursing [MSN website Requirements Page](#) and on the Gessner College of Nursing [DNP website Requirements Page](#).

The number of MSN and DNP students admitted each year is determined by availability of appropriate qualified faculty and/or clinical resources. Applicants are reviewed on an individual basis.



STUDENT POLICIES

POLICIES

(FOR ALL NURSING STUDENTS)

[S100 Academic Progression](#)

[S101 Student Clinical Readiness](#)

[S104 Classroom, Lab, and Clinical Attendance](#)

[S106 Evaluation of Faculty and Course](#)

[S108 Financial Aid and Scholarship Information](#)

[S112 Inactive Status](#)

[S113 Minimal Technology Requirements](#)

[S117 Student Involvement in Curriculum and Evaluation](#)

[S122 Blood, Body Fluid, and Hazardous Exposure Policy and Protocol](#)

[S123 Clinical Agency Policy and Procedure](#)

[S126 Classroom Expectations](#)

[S127 Student Testing](#)

[S133 Non-Student Formal Complaints](#)

[S134 Preceptor Responsibilities](#)

[S135 ADA Policy](#)

[S136 Student Professional Conduct and Demeanor](#)

[S137 Academic Jeopardy Notification](#)

[S138 Dress Code Policy](#)

[S139 Core Performance Standards \(CPS\) for the College of Nursing](#)

[S140 Medication Administration](#)

[S142 Student Grading Policy](#)

[S143 Student Library Services](#)

ADDITIONAL POLICIES FOR ALL GRADUATE STUDENTS

[G305 MSN Degree Plan](#)

[G308 Transfer of Graduate Credit](#)

[G310 Graduate Student Advanced Practice](#)

[G311 Graduate Student Professional Behavior](#)

[G312 Graduate Time Limit](#)

ADDITIONAL POLICIES FOR DNP STUDENTS

[D600 Student Admission](#)

[D601 Attendance Policy](#)

[D603 Clinical Practice Hours](#)

[D604 DNP Degree Plans](#)

[D605 DNP Academic and Portfolio Advisement](#)

[D608 Security Screening](#)

[D609 DNP Time Limit](#)

[D610 Student Status Change](#)

[D612 Eligibility for Graduation](#)

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The policy of the University of Houston (UH) is to ensure equal opportunity in all its educational programs and activities, and all terms and conditions of employment without regard to age, race, color, disability, religion, national origin, ethnicity, military status, genetic information, sex (including gender and pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity or status, or gender expression, except where such a distinction is required by law. Employees, students, and visitors to campus with questions and/or complaints regarding discrimination, or sexual misconduct (such as sexual violence) under Title IX, may contact the Title IX Coordinator for University of Houston or the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights. The Title IX Coordinator as well as the ADA and Section 504 Coordinator for UH and can be contacted at:

Rebecca Lake, J.D.

[Title IX Coordinator,](#)

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FACULTY INFORMATION

Click above to visit the Gessner College of Nursing website faculty page and learn more about graduate faculty, including their qualifications, professional expertise, clinical and research interests, publications, and contact information.



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