

Post-Graduate Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Certificate Program

Cohort: PMHNPC 23



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Program Description

The Post-Master’s Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) Certificate program is completely online. It is designed for the registered nurse with a master’s degree or higher, wishing to expand into advanced practice in the specialty of psychiatric-mental health. Students complete 39 credit hours and 540 supervised clinical hours (over 4 semesters). The program accepts students to begin the program in Winter, Summer, and Fall terms.

Our program develops clinicians who manage the care of patients and who participate in system change. This is accomplished by identifying best practices for the psychiatric and mental healthcare of the individual across the lifespan. Graduates will increase their contribution to healthcare by applying the knowledge and skills developed in this program.

The program of study includes the Nurse Practitioner (NP) Core (separate courses in advanced practice roles, advanced pathophysiology, advanced health assessment and advanced pharmacology). The PMHNP specialty courses include content in advanced psychopharmacology and the theory and practice of psychotherapeutic modalities. The PMHNP Certificate program also contains content in health promotion, differential diagnosis, and disease management/prevention across the lifespan.

Applicants who are currently practicing in the NP role may submit transcripts and/or syllabi from the original NP program. Upon review, the university may waive NUR 635, NUR 654, NUR 656, and/or NUR 740. Contact us for more information.

PMHNPC graduates will be eligible to sit for the Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner certification exam offered by the American Nurses Credentialing Center. This program does not lead to a Doctor of Nursing Practice Degree.

As with the other nursing programs within the University, applicants must have a minimum GPA of 3.0 and hold a current unencumbered RN license in his/her state of residence. At least one year of clinical experience is required.

The *Population-Focused Nurse Practitioner Competencies* (National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF), 2013), the *Criteria for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs, 5th edition* (National Task Force on Quality Nurse Practitioner Education, 2016), and *The Essentials of Master's Education in Nursing* (AACN, 2011) were used to frame the requirements of the PMHNP Certificate Program. The program of study includes courses in advanced psychopharmacology, and theory and practice of psychotherapeutic modalities. The PMHNPC program also contains content in health promotion, differential diagnosis, and disease management and prevention across the lifespan, as well as in selected settings and populations. Students complete 39 credit hours that include 540 clinical hours.

The PMHNP Certificate Program is committed to the development of the nursing professional who can:

- Assume a psychiatric/mental health nurse practitioner role in a variety of health care settings;
- Assess, diagnose and manage common acute and chronic psychiatric and mental health care problems of individuals and families across the lifespan;
- Identify the epidemiologic roots of mental health problems affecting family/community systems;
- Evaluate the impact of environmental stressors on individual, family, and community mental health;
- Design and implement mental health promotion and psychiatric illness prevention strategies based on clinical evidence and best practice literature;
- Demonstrate analytical methodologies for the evaluation of clinical practice and the application of scientific evidence;
- Collaborate with interprofessional teams necessary to improve clinical care for select populations of clients and those in settings unique to mental health care.

Program Outline

Course Code & Title	Credits
Nurse Practitioner Core Courses (4 courses, 12 credits required):	
NUR 635 Advanced Pharmacology	3
NUR 656 Advanced Pathophysiology	3
NUR 654 Advanced Health Assessment	3
NUR 740 Roles, Leadership, & Ethics	3
Nurse Practitioner Core Required Credits:	12
Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) Courses (9 courses, 27 credits/540 clinical clock hours required):	
PMH 650 Assessment & Diagnosis of Psychiatric Disorders Across the Lifespan	3
PMH 660 Psychotherapy Across the Lifespan	3
PMH 682 Psychopharmacology	3
PMH 708 PMHNP Practicum I: Adults & Older Adults (Clinical) (180 clinical clock hours)	3
PMH 709 PMHNP Focus I: Adults & Older Adults (Didactic)	3
PMH 718 PMHNP Practicum II: Children, Adolescents, Families (Clinical) (180 clinical clock hours)	3
PMH 719 PMHNP Focus II: Children, Adolescents, Families (Didactic)	3
PMH 728 PMHNP Practicum III: Setting & Population Based Care (Clinical) (180 clinical clock hours)	3
PMH 729 PMHNP Focus III: Setting & Population Based Care (Didactic)	3
PMHNP Required Credits:	27
Total Program Required Credits:	39

Program Calendar

Semester	Course	Credits
Semester 1 Winter 2026	NUR 656 Advanced Pathophysiology	3
	NUR 740 Roles, Leadership, & Ethics	3
	PMH 650 Assessment & Diagnosis of Psychiatric Disorders Across the Lifespan	3
	PMH 682 Psychopharmacology	3
	Semester Totals:	12
Semester 2 Summer 2026	NUR 654 Advanced Health Assessment	3
	PMH 660 Psychotherapy Across the Lifespan	3
	PMH 708 PMHNP Practicum I: Adults & Older Adults (Clinical) (180 clinical clock hours)*	3
	PMH 709 PMHNP Focus I: Adults & Older Adults (Didactic)	3
	Semester Totals:	12
Semester 3 Fall 2026	NUR 635 Advanced Pharmacology	3
	PMH 718 PMHNP Practicum II: Children, Adolescents, Families (Clinical) (180 clinical clock hours)*	3
	PMH 719 PMHNP Focus II: Children, Adolescents, Families (Didactic)	3
	Semester Totals:	9
Semester 4 Winter 2027	PMH 728 PMHNP Practicum III: Setting & Population Based Care (Clinical) (180 clinical clock hours)*	3
	PMH 729 PMHNP Focus III: Setting & Population Based Care (Didactic)	3
	Semester Totals:	6
Total Program Required Credits:		39
<i>Four-year deadline for program completion from start of program.</i>		

* Course includes pre-requisite and/or co-requisite requirement(s). Refer to course description below.

Course Descriptions

Nurse Practitioner Core Courses

NUR 635 Advanced Pharmacology (3 credits; Online)

This course is designed to provide the advanced practice nurse with evidence-based knowledge for the safe and appropriate pharmacotherapy in various settings and for diverse populations across the lifespan. Basic and advanced pharmacology principles will be applied to the prescribing and monitoring of agents/drugs utilized in health promotion and the treatment of conditions commonly encountered, including client education and legal and ethical considerations.

NUR 654 Advanced Health Assessment (3 credits; Online)

The course will focus on advanced physical assessment, communication, and diagnostic reasoning skills for the advanced practice nurse to care for individuals and families across the lifespan. Skills obtained in this course will be used to analyze health and alterations in health for individuals and families and prepare the student for independent practice.

NUR 656 Advanced Pathophysiology (3 credits; Online)

This course is a system-focused pathophysiology course that includes advanced concepts of functioning as it relates the family nurse practitioner's ability to manage illness across the lifespan. Special attention will be given to advanced concepts that correlate with clinical decisions related to diagnosis and therapeutic management. Genetic, environmental and lifestyle factors will also be included as they relate to the epidemiology of disease.

NUR 740 Roles, Leadership, & Ethics (3 credits; Online)

This course examines principles of leadership and role development of the advanced practice nurse and incorporates ethical decision-making, interprofessional collaboration, and navigating evidence-based system changes. The exploration of leadership models, styles, strategies, and roles will provide a foundation for establishing professional leadership goals. Examining practice regulations; professionalism and ethical practices; and interprofessional collaborations will provide a multi-dimensional view of the role and contributions of the advanced practice nurse to safe, high-quality, and cost-effective healthcare.

PMHNP Courses

PMH 650 Assessment & Diagnosis of Psychiatric Disorders (3 credits; Online)
Across the Lifespan

This course explores the psychiatric assessment and diagnosis of psychiatric disorders. Learning focuses on advanced psychiatric assessment including the history of present illness, psychiatric review of systems, psychiatric history, and mental status exam. Students will also learn about diagnosis, case formulation, and treatment planning. The course explores the diagnostic criteria and codes of psychiatric disorders in the DSM-V.

PMH 660 Psychotherapy Across the Lifespan (3 credits; Online)

This course explores the theoretical foundations of psychotherapy and strategies to implement evidence-based therapeutic modalities in advanced mental health nursing practice. Learning focuses on a variety of psychotherapeutic modalities including and covers the lifespan.

PMH 682 Psychopharmacology (3 credits; Online)

In this course, students focus on prescribing and monitoring psychopharmaceutical and alternative therapeutic agents in conditions commonly encountered by the psychiatric / mental health advanced practice nurse. This course focuses on advanced concepts in neuroscience, pharmacogenomics, pharmacodynamics, pharmacokinetics in the integration of evidence-based prescribing, as well as ethical and legal aspects of pharmacotherapeutics.

PMH 708 PMHNP Practicum I: Adults & Older Adults (Clinical) (3 credits; Online)

This course is the clinical companion to PMH 709 (didactic). In clinical settings, students will apply knowledge of advanced health assessment, psychopathophysiology, psychopharmacotherapeutics, and psychotherapy/therapeutic modalities in the recognition and management of acute and serious mental illness. The population of interest for this course is adult women and men and the older adult (65 plus years of age). Genetic, age, gender, and cultural influences will be considered as differential diagnosis and treatment plans are proposed and implemented. Laboratory findings, diagnostic studies will be integrated into the plan of care. The physical, ethical, and social aspects of providing mental health care to adults and aging adults will be incorporated into the plan of care. (180 clinical clock hours) *Prerequisites: PMH 650, PMH 682*

PMH 709 PMHNP Focus I: Adults & Older Adults (Didactic) (3 credits; Online)

This course is the didactic companion to PMH 708 (clinical). Students will transfer knowledge of advanced health assessment, psychopathophysiology, psychopharmacotherapeutics, and psychotherapy/therapeutic modalities to the recognition and management of acute and serious mental illness. The population of interest for this course is adult women and men and the older adult (65 plus years of age). Topics will include the genetic, age, gender, and cultural influences on psychiatric and mental health of older adults, as well as laboratory findings and diagnostic studies. The physical, ethical, and social aspects of providing mental health care to adults and aging adults will be explored.

PMH 718 PMHNP Practicum II: Children, Adolescents, & Families (Clinical) (3 credits; Online)

This course is the clinical companion to PMH 719 (didactic). In clinical settings, students will continue to apply knowledge of advanced health assessment, psychopathophysiology, psychopharmacotherapeutics, and psychotherapy/therapeutic modalities in recognition and management of acute and serious mental illness, and mental health, most often seen in the pediatric and adolescent population aged 0-18 years of age. Differential diagnoses and treatment plans will include genetic, age, gender, cultural influences and developmental

milestones, as well as laboratory findings, and diagnostic studies. Strategies and interventions in education, family support, and facilitated family and group communication specific to mental health will be incorporated into the plan of care. (180 clinical clock hours)
Prerequisites: PMH 650, PMH 682, PMH 708

PMH 719 PMHNP Focus II: Children, Adolescents, & Families (Didactic) (3 credits; Online)

This course is the didactic companion to PMH 718 (clinical). Students will continue to apply knowledge of advanced health assessment, psychopathophysiology, psychopharmacotherapeutics, and psychotherapy/therapeutic modalities in recognition and management of acute and serious mental illness, and mental health, most often seen in the pediatric and adolescent population aged 0-18 years of age. Topics will include genetic, age, gender, cultural influences and developmental milestones, as well as laboratory findings, and diagnostic studies. Strategies and interventions in education, family support, and facilitated family and group communication specific to mental health will be included.
Prerequisites: PMH 709

PMH 728 PMHNP Practicum III: Setting & Population Based Care (Clinical) (3 credits; Online)

This course is the clinical companion to PMH 729 (didactic). In clinical settings, students will develop and apply knowledge in the recognition & management of acute and serious mental illness to individuals, families, and groups in specific settings and populations. Settings include but are not limited to prisons, addiction and pain clinics, homes, and student health clinics. Populations include but are not limited to the marginalized or underserved, e.g., homeless, immigrant, refugee, and veteran populations. These settings and populations are unique to those experienced in previous clinical courses, giving the students exceptional patient-care experience in interprofessional communication and resource procurement, and a broad range of application of evidence-based practice in the most current and critical of acute and serious mental illness management. (180 clinical clock hours) *Prerequisites: PMH 650, PMH 682, PMH 708, PMH 718*

PMH 729 PMHNP Focus III: Setting & Population Based Care (3 credits; Online)

This course is the didactic companion to PMH 728 (clinical). Students will develop and apply knowledge in the recognition & management of acute and serious mental illness to individuals, families, and groups in specific settings and populations. Settings include but are not limited to prisons, addiction and pain clinics, homes, and student health clinics. Populations include but are not limited to the marginalized or underserved, e.g., homeless, immigrant, refugee, and veteran populations. These settings and populations are unique to those experienced in previous courses, and focus on a broad range of application of evidence-based practice in the most current and critical of acute and serious mental illness management. *Prerequisites: PMH 709*