

**UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH  
SCHOOL OF NURSING  
ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE  
GRADUATE PROGRAM**

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**TITLE OF POLICY:** ADMISSION, DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE PROGRAMS  
**ORIGINAL DATE:** MARCH 3, 2008  
**LAST REVIEWED/REVISED:** MARCH 2023

**POLICY:** Applications to the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) are screened by the Major/Area of Concentration faculty, who review credentials, interview the applicants, and DNP Admissions Committee makes admission decisions based on established School of Nursing holistic admissions criteria.

The University of Pittsburgh, as an educational institution and as an employer, values equality of opportunity, human dignity, and racial/ethnic and cultural diversity. Accordingly, the University prohibits and will not engage in discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, disability, or status as a veteran. The University also prohibits and will not engage in retaliation against any person who makes a claim of discrimination or harassment or who provides information in such an investigation. Further, the University will continue to take affirmative steps to support and advance these values consistent with the University's mission.

Additional information on the university policy can be found at [CS 07 –Nondiscrimination, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action](#).

Applicants to the Doctor of Nursing Practice should meet all of the following criteria:

1. A competitive GPA: A minimum grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. On most recent degree (Bachelor of Science in Nursing [BSN] or Master's degree).
2. A current license to practice nursing in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or the state or U.S. territory where the student will complete the clinical practice requirements. International applicants should see the section below on Admission of Students from Other Countries and [Policy 201](#).
3. A pre-admission interview. If the applicant resides at a great distance, a telephone interview may be substituted.
4. Evidence of ability to communicate in writing through the required personal essay.
5. Pre-requisite statistics course with a grade of B- or better.
6. Applicants to the BSN-DNP Program must have a BSN or an entry level MSN (that incorporated AACN BSN Essentials from an NLN-, CCNE-, or ACEN-accredited program in nursing).
7. Applicants to the Post-Master DNP Program must have a master's degree in nursing (from an NLN-, CCNE-, or ACEN-accredited program) or a Master's degree in a related field. Applicants who do not have a Master's degree in nursing must have a BSN from an NLN-, CCNE-, or ACEN-accredited program in nursing.
8. Specific Areas of Concentration/Majors may have additional eligibility criteria.
9. A DNP Area of Concentration Coordinator or Program Director may seek consultation from the DNP Admissions Committee when deciding upon a recommendation for admission.

Applicants to the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Dual Program must also meet the admission criteria for the PhD program – see [Policy 231](#).

**PROCEDURE:**

Application may be made online at [DNP Application/Admission Criteria](#).

Each applicant should then submit the following:

1. Completed application form.
2. A non-refundable application fee.
3. Complete official transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate education.
4. Admission test scores if applicable.
5. Three letters of professional recommendation indicating the reviewer's support of the student's ability to successfully complete a demanding graduate level academic and clinical program. At least one recommendation should come from a current or recent direct supervisor. These letters will be submitted by the reviewer through NursingCAS.

6. Personal essay addressing the questions identified on the essay rubric in NursingCAS.
7. Completion of the Experience Survey.
8. Current CV or resume.

All completed applications are to be submitted to Student Affairs and Alumni Relations who will forward them to the Area of Concentration Coordinator or Program Director for review and appropriate action. DNP admission decisions are the responsibility of the DNP Admissions Committee.

DNP Admissions Committee chair presents summary of admission decisions to the DNP Council including number and status of students offered admission.

Student Affairs and Alumni Relations will notify applicants of the admission decision. Applicants who do not qualify for admission to full graduate status may be considered for provisional status except for international applicants.

### **Provisional Admission**

Applicants may be admitted provisionally based upon the evidence obtained from the review of the application materials regarding experiences, attributes, and the identified metrics for admission. If the applicant's admission score indicates provisional admit, the student must meet with the academic advisor to determine courses to take, resources to use, and/or services to access to promote successful progression in the program. The student must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above for the first 12 credits of the program. At completion of 12 credits, Student Affairs and Alumni Relations transfers the student from Provisional to Full Graduate Status and communicates the change to the student and Program Director/Coordinator ([Policy 206](#)). The advisor will develop strategies for academic success for the student to reach Full Graduate Status.

### **Admission of International Students**

Application is made through the Student Affairs and Alumni Relations office, School of Nursing, University of Pittsburgh, 239 Victoria Building, Pittsburgh, PA 15261, USA. Applications from international students are reviewed according to the DNP programs admission criteria stated above and are admitted as stated above. The application must be completed in English and accompanied by official academic credentials with notarized English translations. Applicants to the Post-Master's DNP Program must have a degree comparable to the U.S. master's degree in nursing. Applicants to the BSN to DNP Program must have a degree comparable to the U.S. baccalaureate degree in nursing or entry-level Master's degree in nursing. The official transcripts must show all high school and post-high school work, including grades in each course, examination grades and standing in examinations and classes, and whatever other credentials are available to give a clear description of the student's academic accomplishments. "Applicants to the DNP Programs from other countries should review [Policy 201](#) INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADMISSION, GRADUATE PROGRAM for additional admission criteria for international students."

### **Admissions of RN-DNP Program Students**

Applicants to the RN-DNP program must graduate from a CCNE-, NLN-, or ACEN-accredited associate degree program or diploma school of nursing. A student may be admitted to the DNP program pending satisfactory completion of the 24 graduate bridge credits and completion of the BSN

Approved by MSN Council: 9/2008, 2/2014

Approved by Total Faculty: 11/2008, 1/2009, 2/2009, 3/2014, 08/2022

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