

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing?

- Psychiatric mental health nursing is an area of nursing that cares for people of all ages with mental health problems and disorders.
- An advanced practice psychiatric mental health nurse is prepared to critically analyze complex clinical situations and health care systems within the scope of practice of advanced practice psychiatric mental health nursing care.

How is the DNP different from the PhD, DNS, or DNSc?

- The DNP is a practice doctorate degree for nurses seeking preparation in advanced practice roles.
- The DNP program at the UTHSC Center College of Nursing requires a scholarly capstone project (no dissertation).
- The PhD is primarily a researched-focused degree program, and a dissertation is required.
- The DNS and DNSc are usually designed for nurse scholars who wish to pursue careers as leaders in health policy, healthcare delivery, nursing education and/or research.

Why is a DNP in Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing important?

- One in five persons in the United States experiences mental illness in a given year, and 15% of these persons have a co-existing substance abuse disorder.
- Mental health and substance-use problems and illnesses are the leading cause of combined disability and death among women of all age, and men aged 15-44, and the second highest among all men, behind heart disease.
- Twenty percent of the U.S. population is affected by mental illness during a given year.
- An individual who holds a DNP in Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing best serves the needs of the mental health system with clinical practice knowledge that integrates both physical and mental health illnesses.

What types of students are admitted into the Psychiatric Mental Health DNP option?

- Students admitted into the program have completed an entry level degree (MSN, BSN) into the profession of nursing, with all nursing backgrounds eligible for the Psychiatric Mental Health DNP option.

What are the application requirements?

- Submit application online and on time (check College of Nursing website: <http://www.utm.edu/nursing>)
- Official transcripts must be sent directly from each college and/or university attended
- Only applicants with cumulative GPA >3.0 based on all collegiate work or cumulative GPA > 3.2 earned during applicant's most recently completed degree program will be considered for admission.
- GPA calculation for most recently completed degree will be based only on grades earned at degree-granting institution.
- Applicants may submit additional documents to demonstrate professional scholarship and leadership abilities that could make them more competitive.
- Copy of currently-held, unencumbered Tennessee RN license, or currently-held, unencumbered authority-to-practice as RN via multi-state licensure compact, or RN license from another state, if all clinical work during academic program will take place in that state
- Three recommendations must be submitted online. Forms can be found in online application.
- Current Basic Life Support certification prior to enrollment and maintained throughout enrollment
- Ready access to a web-connected personal computer and good computer literacy and skills
- Submit a 3-page essay describing professional goals, future roles, etc.
- If native language not English, must provide evidence of English proficiency
- Official minimum score on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) within 2 years prior to application (550 on paper-based test or 213 on computer-based test)
- On-campus interviews scheduled for those applicants meeting minimum admission requirements and passing

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initial screening

How are courses delivered online?

- Blackboard™ Academic Suite is utilized for the Internet delivery and management of courses. Faculty design course sites that include all components found in a traditional classroom and more. The system offers the ability for synchronous and asynchronous communication and interaction through a discussion board and virtual classroom respectively.
- Students have classes during their stay on campus to orient them to the Blackboard™ system and increase the computer skills necessary for success in an online program.

Are there clinical requirements?

- Yes, clinical experience hours must meet the requirements to sit for certification by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC).
- Clinical experiences across the lifespan are obtained in each student's community in various clinical sites with a preceptor.
- Clinical experience hours are obtained in the student's current setting and in the state he or she resides.

When should I apply?

- Before February 1st

How do I apply?

- *All applications must be submitted online* at <http://www.utmem.edu/nursing>
- \$75 application fee

What happens after I apply?

- Interviews are held in March of each year.
- Applicants are notified of their acceptance/rejection within one month of interview.
- The program begins in July/August of each year.
- Students desiring to transfer courses prior to application should contact the Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing Option Coordinator to ensure compatibility of courses.

Can I work and go to school?

- Yes! Most of our students work and are enrolled full-time.

Will I be eligible for certification?

- Yes, the necessary hours for clinical and educational experiences need for certification are integrated within the curriculum.
- Students who have APN backgrounds not in Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing will take the course work leading to eligibility for national certification as a Psychiatric Family Nurse Practitioner. (two-year program)
- Students without *any* advanced practice nursing certification in any population or role focus will have additional hours in the DNP program for the Psychiatric Mental Health Advanced Practice certification as well as the Family Nurse Practitioner certification. (three-year program)
- Students already certified as a Psychiatric Mental Health APN will have clinical and educational experiences that build on their psychiatric expertise. (two-year program)
- The clinical and educational experiences necessary to obtain certifications is built in to the two and three year curriculum plans.

When will I be eligible for certification?

- Students are eligible for all certifications upon graduation and submission of appropriate forms and fees to ANCC.

What will the program cost?

- In-State Tuition - \$4,060 per term

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- Out-of-State Tuition - \$9,780 per term
- There are two terms per year. Tuition is based on terms, not hours.
- The college has a number of scholarships that students are eligible to apply for after admission. Some student's employers may also provide financial assistance.
- (The Academic Common Market is a consortium of states who have banded together to waive out-of-state fees for students when a specialization is not offered in the home state of the applicant (e.g., DNP in Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing). Please visit <http://www.sreb.org/programs/acm/acmindex.aspx>)

What is the program length?

- Duration of the program is approximately two-years (Post-MSN) or approximately three-years (Post-BSN)
- Last two terms consist primarily of a resident practicum and a residency project
- Includes resident work arranged by the student in conjunction with a faculty member, which means that students typically complete the residency in the area where they currently live

Are there any courses I can take in advance and if so, what is the procedure?

- Yes, students can take a few courses prior to enrollment; however, students should contact the Psychiatric Mental Health Option Coordinator or the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs to make sure the course is the appropriate level *prior to taking the course*.

What are my career options?

- Research
 - Design, implement, disseminate research studies
- Clinical Practice
 - Provide direct care within a group practice or independent practice
 - Assess and manage patients with mental health problems
 - Consult with primary care providers
 - Medication management
 - Generate outcomes data to improve health status of individuals, families, & aggregates
- Administration
 - Direct institutions or departments of nursing/research
- Faculty
 - Teach in a variety of institutions preparing nurses and other health care providers
- Policy
 - Provide leadership for influencing political environment related to nursing and health care delivery

What kinds of positions/roles are offered to DNP Psychiatric Mental Health graduates?

- Psychotherapist
- Consultant
- Advanced Case Manager
- Group Practice Partner or Associate
- Private Practice
- University Educator
- Executive/CEO/President
- Chief Nursing Officer/Director of Nursing
- Hospital Administrator

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- Clinical Preceptor
- Agency Administrator
- Forensic Psychiatrist
- Child, Adolescent or Geriatric Psychiatrist
- Legal Consultant
- Parish Nurse
- Patient Care Auditor
- Risk Manager
- Conductor of Research & Clinical Trials
- Informatics Nurse
- Government/Political Nursing Roles
- Various Roles in Mental Health Centers

What is a DNP's salary for different types of career options?

- In its 2007 salary survey, the journal *ADVANCE for Nurse Practitioners* found that the average annual salary of full-time nurse practitioners in the specialty of mental health was \$86,256. Nurse practitioners with their own practices earn more at \$89,634, and these nurse practitioners are not prepared at the doctoral level.
- Nurse executives/CEOs can make from \$100,000 and upwards.
- Some nurses become partners or associates in a group practice and generate annual salaries in excess of \$100,000.

Where can I find additional information?

- The UTHSC Psychiatric Mental Health DNP program information can be found at <http://www.utm.edu/nursing/psych>. The curriculum, including clinical and didactic hours, can be found here.
- The UTHSC College of Nursing's website <http://www.utm.edu/nursing>
- See what previous Psychiatric Mental Health DNP students have to say about the program on YouTube! <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1XZwaAGL8fk>
- Complete the Interest Form for Prospective students located at <https://oracle.utm.edu/pls/htmldb/prd/f?p=112601:1:3909662861030404>