

ACUTE AND CONTINUING CARE ADULT NURSE PRACTITIONER

What is an Acute and Continuing Care Nurse Practitioner?

An Acute and Continuing Care Nurse Practitioner (ACNP) is a nurse who is prepared in a master's program to practice in an advanced nursing role in a variety of acute or critical care settings. ACNPs are clinical experts who provide care to acutely or critically ill patients, many of whom may have chronic health problems. ACNPs provide continuous and comprehensive care to patients who are acutely or critically ill. At times ACNPs may function independently, but most often they function collaboratively with patients, their families, and other members of the health care team. The goals of the ACNP are to stabilize the patient, minimize complications, provide physical and psychological care, restore maximal health, and evaluate health risk factors. To achieve these goals ACNPs provide direct patient care management; admit and discharge patients from the hospital; perform histories and physicals; analyze clinical data; order and/or perform necessary diagnostic tests or procedures; develop, implement, and evaluate the therapeutic regimen; teach and provide support for patients and their families; minimize fragmentation by providing coordination of care; manage transition of the patient to step-down units or to out-patient settings; and serve as patient advocates.

How does an ACNP differ from the traditional primary care nurse practitioner?

Although there are many similarities among the various types of nurse practitioners, there are some distinct differences, too. The primary care nurse practitioner is academically prepared to manage common episodic and chronic health problems of adults or children in primary care settings. Their clinical experiences are in out-patient clinics or health departments. Acute care nurse practitioners are prepared to manage health problems that require secondary or tertiary interventions by health care providers. Often those interventions are of a nature that hospitalization is required or they are best provided by specialists in a particular field of health care.

Who employs ACNPs?

The ACNP may be employed by hospitals to work in intensive care units, step-down units, and general units. They also may be employed by physicians to help manage the care of hospitalized patients, help patients make the transition to out-patient settings, and manage patients in clinic settings. They may be employed by specialty clinics or home health agencies to manage the health care of acutely ill or chronically critically ill patients in those settings. Graduates of the program have taken positions with nursing service departments, anesthesiologists, cardiologists, cardiovascular surgeons, internists, nephrologists, neurologists, oncologists, and pulmonologists.

Can I specialize as an ACNP?

Students in the ACNP program of study may further their knowledge base through elective course(s). UAB School of Nursing offers specialty courses in cardiovascular nursing, advanced diabetes management and others that required advanced generalist curriculum that prepares students to manage a variety of health problems. In addition, clinical experiences may be set up in these specialty areas.

What are the classroom content and clinical requirements for the Acute Care Nurse Practitioner student?

The distance accessible didactic graduate core courses provide students with a strong advanced generalist base for managing the care of patients with common health problems and with complex problems that may require intensive collaborative management. As a part of the clinical courses you will be in clinical conferences with other ACNP students. During these conferences students and faculty discuss the continuum of care for the client whose illness becomes more severe or complex and requires hospitalization. Clinical experiences will be in clinics or doctors' offices, where you will manage common episodic and chronic health problems of patients and in acute and critical care settings where you will learn to manage the care of acutely or critically ill patients. Students complete a minimum of 675 preceptor hours of clinical practice.

Who will serve as my preceptor in the clinical courses?

A preceptor may be either an acute care nurse practitioner or a physician. It should be someone who has an active clinical practice and is willing to let you participate in the management of patients in the practice setting. This may be someone you know or with whom you have worked in the past, and it can be someone from your local area if you live outside of Birmingham. If you do not know anyone who could serve as your preceptor, your advisor can help you identify an appropriate preceptor. A preceptorship orientation session will be held during the semester before you begin the clinical courses to help you with the process of securing a preceptor.

How long is the program of study?

The ACNP program of study requires a minimum of 18 months (5 semesters) of full-time study. However, many students choose to complete the program in 24 to 36 months (6-7 semesters) of part-time study.

How do I become eligible to practice as an ACNP in my state of residence?

Individual states have different requirements regarding licensure for advanced practice nurses. You will need to contact your state's board of nursing to learn their particular requirements.

Will I be eligible to take a nurse practitioner certification examination if I complete this program?

Once you complete the program, you will be eligible to sit for the national certification examination for Acute Care Nurse Practitioners offered by either the American Nurses Credentialing Center or the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses. Our graduates have been very successful in writing this examination.

What kind of nursing experience do I need prior to entering the program?

The acute and continuing care faculty highly recommend that students admitted to the ACNP study option have at least one year, and preferably two years, of professional nursing experience in the field of critical care nursing prior to enrolling in the advanced nursing clinical courses. Additionally, ACLS certification is highly recommended. Graduates of this program and employers of our graduates comment about the value of this prior clinical experience. Your program of study can be arranged so that you can gain the required experience while you are taking prerequisite courses.

What are the admission criteria?

- BSN degree from a regionally accredited institution, equivalent to the one offered by the School of Nursing at UAB
- A grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale either cumulative or on the last 60 semester credit hours
- Letters of professional reference attesting to the applicant's potential for graduate study
- A minimum of 410 on the MAT, or a minimum of 480 on the GMAT or a combined score of 1000 on the verbal and quantitative sections of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE)*

*An interview may be required based on the student's means of entry into the program. All students need to be prepared to schedule an interview.

***GRE, MAT, GMAT is waived for students with a 3.2 or better GPA.** For complete details, please visit http://www.uab.edu/images/sonimg/PDF/GREMAT_waiver.pdf

If I do not meet the requirements, can I be admitted on probation?

No, probationary admission is not available to students who do not meet these requirements.

When will I receive confirmation that I have been accepted into the program?

You will be notified by Email of your acceptance or denial within 30 days after the application submission deadline.

For International Students: If your Visa status is F1 or J1, make an appointment with your course faculty by week 2 of each semester to plan how you will meet Federal Regulations

What is a typical Program of Study like?

Fall – Year I		Fall – Year II	
NUR 614	Assessment and Diagnostic Reasoning for Advanced Practice Nursing..... 4	*NCA 623*	Advanced Adult Acute Care Nursing III..... 3
NUR 600	Research and Statistics for Advanced Practice 3	NCA 686	Practicum II: Adult Acute Care Nurse Practitioner..... 3
NUR 612	Advanced Pathophysiology 3	*NCV 631*	Electrocardiography for Advanced Practice ... 3
		NUR 602	Issues Affecting Advanced Nursing Practice..... 3
Spring – Year I		Spring – Year II	
NCA 616	Diagnostic and Therapeutic Procedures I 1	*NCA 692*	Residency: Adult Acute Care Nurse Practitioner..... 6
NCA 621	Advanced Adult Acute Care Nursing I 4		
NUR 601	Role Development for Advanced Nursing Practice 3		
NUR 613	Pharmacology and Therapeutics..... 3		
Summer – Year I			
NCA 617	Diagnostic and Therapeutic Procedures II 1		
NCA 622	Advanced Adult Acute Care Nursing II 3		
NCA 685	Practicum I: Adult Acute Care Nurse Practitioner 3		
			Total46 credits

(*) Online courses which may also meet on campus several hours per semester; and/or require students to be online as specific times.

Note: Electives NUR 611 and NUR 630 are offered online during the summer term.

Where can I get more information?

Internet website: <http://www.uab.edu/son>

General Information Regarding MSN Study

Peter Tofani, MS, LTC(R)
Director, Student Affairs
(205) 975-5302
Email: tofani@uab.edu

OR

Celia Ohman, MSN, RN
Student Nurse Recruiter
(205) 996-5491
Email: caohman@uab.edu

Information about Acute and Continuing Care Adult Nurse Practitioner

Susan Appel, PhD, ACNP-BC & FNP-BC, CCRN
(205) 996-2027
Email: sappel@uab.edu