What is a Clinical Nurse Leader?

The Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL) is a leader in the health care delivery system in all settings in which health care is delivered. The CNL assumes accountability for patient care outcomes through the application of evidence-based practice to design, implement, and evaluate care delivery at the micro systems level. The CNL is a provider and manager of care at the point of care to patients and cohorts of patients to ensure quality and safe care outcomes through collaboration with interprofessional teams. This advanced nursing role works with nurses and interprofessional teams for the coordination of care, accountable process of patient care and outcomes and the mitigation of the triple threats of cost, quality and access. The role includes the design, implementation, and evaluation of patient care outcomes. CNL Master's graduates are eligible to sit for a national board certification through the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN).

Who employs Clinical Nurse Leaders?

Clinical Nurse Leaders are employed in both acute, post-acute, outpatient and community based settings.

Can I specialize further as a Clinical Nurse Leader?

Clinical Nurse Leaders are Advanced Generalist Nurses. You may take electives within your program of study to develop additional expertise.

What specific specialty requirements do I need prior to entering the Clinical Nurse Leader Specialty Track?

There are no requirements for clinical experience prior to admission.

What are the admission criteria?

- A nursing degree (BSN or higher) from a regionally accredited institution, equivalent to the one offered by UAB School of Nursing
- An undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale either cumulatively or on the last 60 semester credit hours
- Possess an unencumbered nursing license to practice nursing in the state where you plan to conduct your clinical practicum
- (3) Letters of professional reference attesting to the applicant’s potential for graduate study
- Standardized test score (MAT, GRE, GMAT)* A minimum score of 410 on the MAT; or a minimum score of 480 on the GMAT; or a combined score of 297 on the verbal and quantitative sections of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE)


Approval for the GRE/GMAT/MAT Waiver does not imply or guarantee admission to the MSN program. When all of your transcripts are evaluated, if you do not meet the requirements, you will be notified that you need to take the GRE/GMAT/MAT. Candidates not approved for the GRE/GMAT/MAT waiver will be required to take the GRE/GMAT/MAT before final action on their application for master's study. The School of Nursing at UAB must receive the official score by the posted materials deadline. Applicants for the GRE/GMAT/MAT waiver must meet the same requirements for admission to the MSN program as all other applicants.

***The following individuals are not eligible for the GRE waiver process:

- International applicants
- Non-Native English speaking applicants
- Dual degree seeking program applicants MSN/MPH

For International Students: International students must meet the following additional criteria.

- This program is distance-accessible and therefore not eligible for applicants who plan to enter the US in F-1 or J-1 student status.
- If you plan to enroll in the MSN program in an immigration status other than F or J, please email International Student & Scholar Services at isss@uab.edu for confirmation of your eligibility for the program.
- Evaluation of all foreign transcripts by the Educational Credential Evaluators, Inc [www.ece.org](http://www.ece.org) OR the World Education Services [www.wes.org](http://www.wes.org), and sent directly to the School of Nursing
- A degree equivalent to a bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited educational institution in the United States
- A score of 500 or higher on the Test of English as a Foreign Language, TOEFL
- Standardized test score: A minimum combined score of 297 on the verbal and quantitative sections of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE).
- Possess an unencumbered license to practice nursing in the state where the student's clinical practicum will be conducted

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

You will be notified of your acceptance or denial within 60 days after the application submission deadline.
What are the classroom and clinical requirements:
Total credit hours: 37; Didactic hours: 26; Clinical hours: 11; Total clinical contact hours: 540

**Descriptive narrative:** You must be on-campus for orientation and 1-2 times during the MSN Program for 2-3 days during each visit. During these times, you will be tested in a simulation laboratory for your history-taking and physical examination skills. Should problems arise, an additional on-campus visit may be required.

**Who will serve as my preceptor in the clinical courses?**
A preceptor may be a nurse or other health care professional approved by the School of Nursing faculty. Students may make suggestions about the selection of a preceptor or the clinical faculty may secure a preceptor for the student. Students are given information about selecting preceptors and guidelines for working with them. Faculty are always available to students during their clinical preceptorship.

**How many semesters of study are required?**
Students who start course work in the summer semester will take seven semesters to complete the program. The program of study is listed below.

**Distance Accessibility**
Applicants to any of our distance-accessible programs should become familiar with the regulations governing distance accessible programs in their state. Prospective students residing in states other than Alabama should contact their state’s Board of Nursing and Department of Education for specific rules and regulations pertaining to completion of clinical learning experiences in that state when enrolled in a distance accessible program. The ability to conduct course work is only guaranteed for students in Alabama and in states with an established agreement. For up-to-date information on current state authorization statuses go to [http://www.uab.edu/online/state-authorization](http://www.uab.edu/online/state-authorization).

**Will I be able to take a national certification examination when I complete the program of study?**
Once you successfully complete the program, you will be awarded a Master of Science in Nursing degree and be able to take the Commission on Nursing Certification – CNL Certification Examination.

**How do I become eligible to practice as a Clinical Nurse Leader in my state of residence?**
The CNL is certified by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing. Only those nurses that have graduated from a Master’s program with a CNL track and have passed the national CNL certification exam can use the credential of CNL. Additionally, the CNL is licensed by the state in which practice occurs and is subject to the rules and regulations of that State’s Practice Act. You will need to contact your State’s Board of Nursing to learn their particular requirements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coursework</th>
<th>Program of Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NHSL 604</td>
<td>Health Care System Overview for Nurse Leaders.....3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHSL 606</td>
<td>Evidence-Based Practice and Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHSL 610</td>
<td>Descriptive Statistics ................................3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUR 612</td>
<td>Health Care System Overview for Nurse Leaders.....3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUR 613</td>
<td>Advanced Pathophysiology ................................3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUR 614</td>
<td>Pharmacology and Therapeutics .............................3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUR 614</td>
<td>Assessment and Diagnostic Reasoning for Advanced Nursing Practice ........................3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCL 618L</td>
<td>Focus on Adv. Nursing Practice Specialization ..........2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCL 620</td>
<td>Systems in Population-based Care I ......................4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCL 685L</td>
<td>Clinical Nurse Leader Practicum I ........................2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCL 692L</td>
<td>Clinical Nurse Leader Capstone Practicum .............5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHSA 616</td>
<td>Nursing Financial Management ............................4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHSA 617L</td>
<td>Nursing Financial Management Practicum ................2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total ............................................................37 credits</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Where can I get more information?**
Internet website: [https://www.uab.edu/nursing/home/](https://www.uab.edu/nursing/home/)

**General information about the application process**
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MSN Program Manager
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