



MASTER OF NURSING SCIENCE

Overview

The Master of Nursing Science is an academic program designed to provide opportunities for nurses to develop advanced skills in clinical inquiry, practice and leadership in professional nursing. To be eligible for entry into the Master of Nursing Science candidates must have completed Stage 1, the Graduate Diploma in Nursing Science, or an equivalent degree, and have at least two years post registration nursing experience.

Stage 2 of the Master of Nursing Science provides graduates with a rigorous grounding in research methods, critical analysis, clinical management and leadership and theoretical perspectives that inform nursing.

Students will graduate with a sound knowledge of a broad range of research methodologies and methods; the ability to design and conduct a research project in a rigorous and ethical manner; the skills to critically evaluate research and make informed decisions for practice change when appropriate; the ability to work as an effective member of a research team; and be a critical and informed thinker regarding issues related to nursing and health.

Stage 2

Students enrolled in this academic program will be required to complete a total of 24 units of study including:

- Two compulsory research methods of study (3 units each)

The remainder of the program would be comprised of one of the following options:

- **Option 1** - major research component
- **Option 2** - 12 unit research dissertation and two 3 unit courses from the following: Systematic and Critical Reviews of Research (3 units), Clinical Management (3 units), International Issues in Nursing Service Delivery (3 units), Emergence of A Theoretical Base for Nursing (3 units), Advanced Health Assessment (3 units) or Applied Pharmacology in Nursing (3 units)
- **Option 3** - 6 unit Critical Review Project and four 3 unit courses from the following: Systematic and Critical Reviews of Research (3 units), Clinical Management (3 units), International Issues in Nursing Service Delivery (3 units), Emergence of A Theoretical Base for Nursing (3 units) Advanced Health Assessment (3 units) or Applied Pharmacology in Nursing (3 units).

Stage 2 is undertaken over one year of full time study or two years of part time study.

Teaching Methods

The Master of Nursing Science is an external program that utilises flexible delivery methods of teaching including distance learning packages in print form, electronic methods based around the Internet, and in particular, mixed mode approaches to teaching and supervision that incorporate face to face tutorials, workshops and didactic lectures, with on-line and email discussion.

Program Coordinator



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Compulsory Research Courses

Empirical/Analytical Research in Nursing

Units: 3
Teaching period: Semester 1 or 2
Contact Hours: Off-campus, by flexible mode and optional on-campus tutorials in semester 1 only
Content: This course will focus on empirical/analytical paradigm and research design from this perspective. Topics will include descriptive, experimental and quasi-experimental design; developing hypotheses; sampling; approaches to data collection; reliability and validity. Students will be introduced to basic statistical analysis. They will be required to critique published nursing research reports, which utilise this approach.
Assessment: 3000 word research proposal (50%)
3000 word portfolio (50%)

Interpretive and Critical Research in Nursing

Units: 3
Teaching period: Semester 1 or 2
Contact Hours: Off-campus, by flexible mode and optional on-campus tutorials in semester 1 only
Content: This course will outline the interpretive and critical paradigms and focus on research design from this perspective. Topics will include the critique of positivism and an introduction to interpretive methodologies, such as grounded theory, ethnography and phenomenology and critical methodologies, such as feminist research and action research. Practical research activities such as literature searching, conducting interviews and coding qualitative data will also be provided.
Assessment: 2400 word essay (40%)
3600 word research proposal (60%)

Option 1 - Major research component

Research Dissertation B

Teaching period: There is no teaching for this course
Contact Hours: Individual supervision (commencing in either semester 1 or 2)
Content: This component of the program requires the student to identify a research question or problem; obtain appropriate ethical approval for the study; to carry out a substantial research study based on this question; and to submit a fully developed report.
Assessment: Two stages of assessment; the first stage being submission, peer review and ethical approval of the research and a 6000 word literature review. The final assessment is a 30,000-35,000 word research dissertation.

Option 2 - 12 unit research dissertation and two 3-unit courses (see below for possible course options)

Research Dissertation A

Units: 12
Teaching period: There is no teaching for this course
Contact Hours: Individual supervision (commencing in either semester 1 or 2)
Content: This component of the program requires the student to identify a research question or problem; obtain appropriate ethical approval for the study; to carry out a small research study based on this question; and to submit a fully developed report.

Assessment: 20,000 – 25,000 word research dissertation

Option 3 - 6-unit critical review project and four 3-unit courses

Critical Review Project

Units: 6
Teaching Period: Semester 1 or 2
Contact Hours: There is no formal teaching for this course
Content: This course will provide students with the opportunity to review the research literature on a topic of interest. This course will build on student's previous learning in the course, Systematic and Critical Reviews of the Research. Students will undertake a critical review of the literature, and based on this review, produce an article for publication in a peer reviewed journal.

Assessment: 6000 word essay (60%)
4000 –5000 word article for publication (40%)

Systematic and Critical Reviews of Research

Units: 3
Teaching Period: Semester 1 or 2
Contact Hours: Off-campus, by flexible mode with optional on-campus tutorials
Content: This course introduces the students to reviews of research, the need for these reviews and the different types of research reviews. Through a program of reading, students will have the opportunity to explore systematic and critical reviews. Students will gain an understanding of the role and components of a review protocol and the principles of undertaking a systematic search of the literature. In addition, critical appraisal of research and approaches to summarising and synthesising the findings of research will also be explored. This course must be completed prior to undertaking the Critical Review project.

Assessment: 2400 word essay (40%)
3600 word review protocol (60%)

Clinical Management

Units: 3
Teaching period: Semester 1 or 2
Contact Hours: Off-campus, by flexible mode
Content: This course will explore contemporary issues in relation to health management in clinical nursing practice. Topics will include: health service organisation, strategic planning, financial planning, human resource management and clinical leadership.

Assessment: 3000 word strategic plan (50%)
3000 word portfolio of activities (50%)

International Issues in Nursing Service Delivery

Units: 3
Teaching period: Semester 1 or 2
Contact Hours: Off-campus, by flexible mode
Content: This course is designed to introduce students to a variety of topical issues related to the health care system and the nurses' roles within it, both at a national and international level. Topics will include health and the environment, the epidemiology of disease, epidemiological tools, poverty, global conflict, the economics of health care, political awareness, leadership and spheres of nursing.

Assessment: 3000 word essay (50%)
3000 word essay (50%)

The Emergence of a Theoretical Base for Nursing

Units: 3
Teaching period: Semester 1 or 2
Contact Hours: Off-campus, by flexible mode
Content: This course will build on student's previous learning on nursing theory and will critique current discourses in nursing on theory development. Students will critically analyse nursing and locate and discuss the origins of dominant theories in nursing. They will apply and subsequent transform theory from other disciplines which inform nursing, develop theoretical understands of nursing, and advance the discipline of nursing through theorising nursing in practice.

Assessment: 3000 word portfolio (50%)
3000 word essay (50%)

Advanced Health Assessment

Units: 3
Teaching period: Semester 1 or 2
Contact Hours: Off-campus, by flexible mode
Content: This course builds upon the student's previous assessment skills offering more advanced health assessment content to provide a foundation for advanced practice nursing. The focus will be on three main assessment aspects: older persons, children and adults. There will be an emphasis on focused assessment of the chief complaint, risks to health, functional assessment, and diverse populations and how they vary according ethnicity, culture, gender and age. An overview of health screening examination will occur together with some information on the ordering, performing, and interpreting of laboratory and radiographic tests. Students will be expected to critically analyse these tests and other physical examination techniques for their validity and reliability in order to make a judgement about their usefulness. Throughout the course effective communication, client teaching and counselling will be stressed as important tools necessary to discover the client's interpretation of their health or illness. Documentation and the written description summarising the health assessment are important skills that will be addressed in each part of the course.

Assessment: Videotaped health assessment of a child or adult (40%)
Videotaped health assessment of a person with a chronic illness
2000 word report (60%)

Applied Pharmacology in Nursing

Units: 3
Teaching period: Semester 1 or 2
Contact Hours: Off-campus, by flexible mode
Content: This course will build on nurses understanding of drug use, prescribing and administration. Discussion will include the South Australian and Australian legal requirements for the prescription and administration of drugs, ethical issues involved in the cost, prescription and clinical trials of drugs, and the process of collating a patient's medication history. Drugs will be discussed according to their classes of action. Students will learn how drugs are chosen for particular effects. The pharmacological principles of: pharmacokinetics, pharmacodynamics, adverse effects, contraindications and precautions will be described using examples from different drug classes. The complexities of polypharmacy and the quality use of medicines will also be presented. While this course will not prepare students for a role as a prescriber, they will be taught the concepts of safe prescribing and administration.

Assessment: 2000 word applied drug monograph 35%
Online examination (1000 word equivalent) 15%
3000 word essay 50%