



**Graduate School of Nursing (GSN)
Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences
Bethesda, Maryland**

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP)

TITLE OF SOP: GSN Admissions Process

ORIGINAL APPROVAL DATE: 07-29-2011

LAST REVIEW/REVISION DATE: n/a

REFERENCES: Rescinded P&P 96-04 (amended 09-18-01)
GSN Bylaws passed on 28 February 2011

A. Purpose: This SOP issues and sets forth the authority, functions, and processes to ensure that applications for admission to the Graduate School of Nursing's programs are reviewed in order to select the best qualified applicants based on evidence of intellectual ability and potential for successful study.

B. Applicability: This SOP applies to applicants, faculty, and staff of the GSN.

C. Authority: There are two Admissions Advisory Groups in the GSN. One Admissions Advisory Group will review Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) and Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) applications; and a separate Admissions Advisory Group will review Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing Science (PhD) applications. Admission Advisory Group duties are carried out in coordination with the activities of the Curriculum Committee (Bylaws Article-3).

D. MSN and DNP Admissions Advisory Group:

1. The MSN and DNP Admissions Advisory Group shall consist of a chair, who is a member of the Curriculum Committee and three MSN or DNP program faculty who are appointed by the Leadership Council. The chair of the Admissions Advisory Group provides feedback to the Curriculum Committee regarding group procedures, processes, and requested policy changes.

2. The MSN and DNP Admissions Advisory Group reviews Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) and Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) applications recommended by the Program Directors for full or conditional acceptance. Those not recommended by the Program Directors will not be forwarded for consideration. Instead, those applications will be returned to the registrar, and a letter of non-acceptance will be prepared and forwarded for signature.

3. The following admission record review occurs prior to the review by the MSN and DNP Admission Advisory Group:

a. The Registrar collects, prepares, and ensures completeness of the applicant's file prior to the deadline as set by the GSN and forwards the files to the applicable Program Director NLT 10 days following the GSN deadline.

b. The Program Directors review all applicant packages to select the best-qualified applicants for their programs based on supporting evidence of intellectual ability and preparation to successfully pursue studies in advanced practice nursing.

c. The Program Directors consult with the appointed four (4) Federal Nursing Service (FNS) education representatives to determine service preferences/concerns regarding the applicants and the service requirements for the upcoming academic year.

d. The Program Directors compile a list of accepted and conditionally accepted applicants for admission to the GSN. The list is then forwarded to the Admissions Advisory Group NLT 30 days following the application deadline.

4. MSN and DNP Admission Advisory Group Duties:

a. Review compiled list of accepted and conditionally accepted applicants recommended for admission to the GSN, by the program director.

b. Recommend selected applicants to the Dean who has final authority for selection for admission to the GSN.

c. Authorize notification of applicants and appropriate organizations/agencies of the decisions made regarding the applicants.

d. Review petitions submitted by applicants denied admission.

e. Make recommendations for admission status based upon review of petition.

f. Monitor and evaluate the screening and selection process in terms of its efficiency, effectiveness, and quality.

5. Admissions to the MSN and DNP Programs:

- a. Admission into the USU Graduate School of Nursing is competitive. Each applicant must meet the general School requirements as well as the requirements for the individual program options they wish to pursue.
- b. Students must be enrolled full time for the traditional MSN and DNP Program Options.
- c. Applicants must be United States citizens and receive approval and sponsorship of the Service organization. It is to be understood that acceptance and participation in the MSN or DNP programs will incur an obligation for additional service on the part of the applicant in accordance with the sponsoring organization's regulations, which govern graduate education.
- d. The admissions process takes into consideration all application materials when an applicant is evaluated. Additional materials may be required. Students who do not meet the minimum recommended requirements in all areas may be considered on an individual basis.
- e. Completion and submission of the application materials by the designated date is required.
- f. Applicants must have earned a Baccalaureate of Science in Nursing or a Baccalaureate of Science with a major in Nursing degree from an accredited school and/or an agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education.
- g. Competitive applicants will have undergraduate **AND** science GPA of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale and competitive scores on the GRE taken within the last five years (e.g. 525 Quantitative, 500 Verbal, 4 Analytic or equivalent scores in the new ETS scoring system). Applicants that do not meet these targets may be considered on an individual basis.
- h. Three Letters of Reference, using the GSN Advanced Practice Nurse Recommendation Form (enclosure 1), are required. One letter is required from each of the following:
 - (1). Immediate supervisor,
 - (2). Another person in the applicant's chain of command, and an
 - (3). Advanced practice nurse working in the specialty area for which the applicant is applying.
- i. A writing requirement is required as part of the application package. The applicant will select **ONE** of the two topics identified below and develop a 750 word response using American Psychological Association (APA) format to cite all references.
 - (1). Describe a clinical situation with ethical implications that you think has relevance to your future area of practice. Provide recommendations for responding to the situation based on your review of the literature.

(2). Describe a clinical or organizational problem that you have encountered in your practice setting. Provide recommendations for responding to the problem based on your review of the literature.

j. After a preliminary review of academic credentials and application materials, applicants may be asked to appear for an interview at the discretion of the Program Directors.

k. A curriculum vitae is required as part of the application (the following sections should be included):

(1). Education

(2). Work experience and deployment history (include brief description of all positions held)

(3). Organizational activities (e.g. quality improvement projects)

(4). Leadership, educational, and professional activities

(5). Scholarly activities (e.g. publications, presentations, research, honors and awards)

l. Must be a commissioned officer or service sponsored civilian in the U.S. Army, Air Force, Navy or Public Health Service with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

m. Acceptance is contingent upon approval of the sponsoring agency or service.

n. Original transcripts.

o. Current nursing license.

p. Current Basic Life Support certification (BLS).

6. Specific Clinical Program Option Requirements are as follows:

a. **Nurse Anesthesia Program:**

- Prerequisites (grade of B higher):
 - Undergraduate or graduate level biochemistry course within 5 years of application
 - Undergraduate or graduate level statistics course
- At least one year of experience as an RN in an acute care setting defined as work experience during which an RN has developed as an independent decision maker capable of using and interpreting advanced monitoring

techniques based on knowledge of physiological and pharmacological principles.

- Current BLS, ACLS and PALS certification.
- Competitive applicants will have GRE quantitative scores greater than 525, verbal scores greater than 500 and analytical scores of 4 or higher or equivalent scores in the new ETS scoring system.
- Specialty certification (such as CCRN, CEN, or CPAN) is strongly recommended

b. **Perioperative CNS Program:**

- At least two years of experience as a Perioperative nurse required.
- Current CNOR and ACLS certifications.

c. **Psychiatric NP Program:**

- Two years of experience in a psychiatric setting desired
- All applicants will be **required** to complete an in person, Skype or DCO (online) interview with program director and clinical faculty prior to 1 October.

d. **Family NP Program:**

- Two years of experience in an ambulatory/outpatient setting desired

e. **Admission Requirements for the MSN Post Master's Certificate:**

All of the admission criteria stated for the MSN Program options above applies with the following exceptions:

- Applicant must have earned a Master of Science in Nursing from an accredited school and/or agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education.
- The requirement for the GRE is waived.

E. PhD Admissions Advisory Group:

1. The PhD Admissions Advisory Group shall consist of a chair, who is a member of the Curriculum Committee and PhD program faculty. The chair of the Admissions Advisory Group provides feedback to the Curriculum Committee regarding group procedures, processes, and requested policy changes.

2. Admission Requirements for the PhD

a. **Initial Eligibility** – Applicants are eligible for enrollment in the USU GSN residence or alternate location PhD program if they are a member of the Federal/Military service.

Nurses from the uniformed services have priority for admission. Nurses employed in federal agencies, nominated and supported by their agency, are also eligible for admission into the PhD program option on a space available basis. The following are the criteria for eligibility:

(1) Active duty member of a United States armed service (USA, USN, and USAF), Veterans Administration, U.S. Public Health Service, or other federal agency with at least five (5) years of service remaining before their mandatory separation date (MDS) or federal retirement.

(2) Member of the selected reserves of a United States armed service (USA, USN, and USAF) with at least five (5) years remaining before mandatory separation/retirement.

(3) Currently employed by the Federal Government as a full-time civilian employee. Part-time, temporary, seasonal, and contract employees are not eligible.

b. Ongoing Eligibility – Students must maintain continuous Federal employment/service as defined above while enrolled in the program. The following guidelines will be applied to all students regarding maintaining eligibility for enrollment:

(1) Students who voluntarily leave federal employment/service may be disenrolled, regardless of their point of progression in the program. This includes those electing non-mandatory retirement without matriculation to employment into federal/military sector.

(2) Students who involuntarily leave federal employment/service before successfully defending their dissertation research proposal may be disenrolled.

(3) Students who involuntarily leave Federal employment/service after successfully defending their dissertation research proposal may be allowed to complete the program.

(4) Students whose license to practice as a Registered Nurse is revoked or suspended in any state or territory, or who do not maintain a current license to practice as a Registered Nurse in at least one state or territory, will be disenrolled from the program.

3. Admission Application Procedures - PhD

a. The student is required to provide the following application materials:

- (1) A completed USU-GSN admissions application indicating selection of the residence or alternative location option.
- (2) Evidence of successful completion of a baccalaureate degree or a Master's degree in nursing is preferred from an accredited school with a minimum GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. Applicants who do not have a baccalaureate degree in nursing or a master's degree in nursing as the first professional degree will be considered individually.
- (3) Evidence of current licensure as a Registered Nurse in any of the 50 states or territories.
- (4) A current curriculum vitae (CV)
- (5) Official evidence of scores on the GRE (Graduate Record Exam) or another approved standardized test (e.g., LSAT, GMAT, or MCAT) taken within five (5) years of application.
- (6) A clear and succinct statement of the applicant's purpose for pursuing doctoral study and its application toward clearly defined career goals and research interest as it relates to the signature curriculum at the GSN.
- (7) A sample of written work that indicates the writing skills and logic of the applicant. Original scholarly work such as a master's thesis or its equivalent, published article, or professional report.
- (8) At least two PhD faculty (chosen on the basis of the research interest of the applicant), will interview the applicant to assess his/her commitment and motivation for successful completion of the PhD program of study.
- (9) Three (3) letters of reference from professors or other professionals who can adequately evaluate the applicant's potential for success in an intensive doctoral program. At least one reference is requested from an academic source and one from a recent employer.

4. Admissions Process – PhD

a. Access the GSN application information and forms posted online at: <http://www.usuhs.mil/gsn/applying/applyingtothegsn.html>. Applications may be submitted at any time throughout the year however new cohorts begin classes in August for the Fall Quarter.

b. Applications are reviewed by the PhD Program Director. If needed, additional information will be solicited at that time.

c. Eligible applicants will be interviewed by faculty members whose research programs most closely fit with the interest area of the applicant.. The interview of the candidate will be conducted in person unless there are extenuating or unusual circumstances (e.g. deployment).

5. PhD Program Faculty

a. Reviews all applicant packages to select the best qualified applicants based on supporting evidence of intellectual ability and preparation to successfully pursue doctoral studies

b. Recommend selected applicants to the Dean, who has final authority for selection for admission to the GSN.

c. Authorize notification of applicants and appropriate organizations/ agencies of the decisions made regarding the applicants.

F. **Effective Date.** This SOP is effective immediately and will be reviewed annually.



Ada Sue Hinshaw, Ph.D, RN, FAAN
Professor and Dean
Graduate School of Nursing

7-29-2011

Approved by GSN All Faculty: 07/29/2011



GSN ADVANCED PRACTICE RECOMMENDATION FORM

Please type or print in black ink your full name, program you are applying for and complete and sign “the right to access” statement of this form, and forward to your recommender.

Applicants' Name: _____
Last First Middle

Program applying for: MSN: ____ DNP: ____ Both: ____

Program option:
Family Nurse Practitioner ____ Perioperative Clinical Nurse Specialist ____
Psych Nurse Practitioner ____ Registered Nurse Anesthetist ____

Right to Access Statement:
In accordance with federal regulations, materials in student files, such as recommendation forms, are open to inspection upon request, unless the student has waived the right of access in advance. Please indicate your wish by completing and signing the statement below. Your right to review this form is considered waved if you do not circle a response.

I _____ DO __ DO NOT __ waive access to this recommendation.

Signature: _____

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE RECOMMENDER

This form should be returned directly to the GSN Registrar:

Graduate School of Nursing **Or Email to:** tmalavakis@usuhs.mil
ATTN: GSN Registrar
4301 Jones Bridge Rd
Bldg E, Rm 1045
Bethesda, MD 20814

We are aware of the time and care necessary to prepare this evaluation and gratefully acknowledge your assistance.

Name of individual completing this form: _____

Position/title: _____

Please note your relationship to the applicant:

- Immediate supervisor
- Another person in the applicants' chain of command
- Advanced practice nurse in the specialty area to which the applicant is applying.
- Other (relationship to student: _____)

Please compare the applicant with others you have known during your professional career. For each of the categories below, check the appropriate box.

	Outstanding (top 2%)	Excellent (top 10%)	Good (top 25%)	Average (25% - 75%)	Below Average (bottom 25%)	Unable to Assess
Analytical ability						
Quantitative ability						
Written English						
Oral English						
Interpersonal skills						
Maturity						
Self - confidence						
Motivation						
Initiative						
Recognition of situations that are outside applicant's area of competence						
Capacity to accept and respond to constructive criticism						
Overall assessment for academic study in the chosen field						

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Please complete the following questions in the spaces provided or in a separate letter.

1. How long have you known the applicant and under what circumstances?

2. What do you consider the applicants' most outstanding talents or characteristics?

3. What are the applicants' weaknesses and/or areas for growth?

4. Please describe other qualities that distinguishes this applicant from other students or health care professionals with whom you are familiar.

5. Discuss the applicants' clinical experiences.

6. Please check as appropriate:
 I strongly recommend this applicant
 I recommend this applicant
 I recommend this applicant, with reservation
 I do not recommend this applicant

Comments:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Daytime telephone number: _____

Fax number: _____

Email address: _____