MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING FOR ADULT GERONTOLOGY CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALIST

The Adult-Gerontology Health Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) program at the University of San Diego prepares nurses for an advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) role as an expert in the care of adults across a variety of health care settings such as hospitals and clinics, as well as their own private practice. Advanced practice as a CNS involves practicing nursing within the three spheres of influence (patient, nurse, organization system) in order to operationalize five CNS role components: expert practitioner, educator, consultant, researcher and clinical leader. As expert practitioner, CNSs provide direct and indirect care to specialized populations. As educators, CNSs teach patients, families, staff nurses, students, and communities regarding health. As consultants, CNSs assist with problem solving regarding patient care including facilitating support groups and establishing health care programs. CNSs also assist with research and promote research dissemination and evidence-based practice in the practice arena. As clinical leaders, CNSs are responsible for program development, quality improvement processes, and managerial operation and activities.

Graduates are eligible for certification as Clinical Nurse Specialists in the State of California and for national certification by as Adult Health/Adult-Gerontology Clinical Nurse Specialists by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (https://www.nursingworld.org/certification) and the American Association of Critical Care Nurses (AACN) (http://www.aacn.org/wd/certifications/content/accns-ag-landing.pcms?menu=certification).

Degree Requirements
(Total units: 46)

This curriculum prepares clinical nurse specialists for advanced practice as clinical experts in theory-based and research-based nursing practice within a specialty area. Graduates are eligible for national certification as adult-gerontology clinical nurse specialists in adult health.

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Courses

**ACNS 521 | ADVANCED PHYSICAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE ADULT-GERONTOLOGY CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALIST**
Units: 4 Repeatability: No
Explores theoretical and clinical practice principles of advanced physical assessment and diagnosis of adults 20 years and older. Uses various methods of comprehensive evidence-based data gathering, analysis, and documentation including history taking and physical examination. Differentiates abnormalities from common normal variations characteristic of various developmental, cultural, and ethnic groups. Laboratory-based practicum experiences provide the opportunity for the integration of theory with Adult-Geoc CNS role responsibilities specific to physical assessment. 4 Units (3 units theory-48 hours, 1 unit lab-54 hours).

**ACNS 619 | CNS SPECIALTY ROLE AND PRACTICE FOUNDATIONS**
Units: 3 Repeatability: No
Provides an overview of the role of the Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) with a practice focus on adults and gerontology (wellness to acute care). Explores the spheres of influence and core competencies for CNS practice. Examines theoretical foundations of reflective, evidence-based advanced nursing practice for individuals 20 years of age and older.

**ACNS 632 | ADULT-GERONTOLOGY I: CNS PRACTICE IN INDIVIDUAL PATIENT SPHERE**
Units: 3 Repeatability: No
Corequisites: ACNS 632P
Provides an in depth inquiry into the role of the clinical nurse specialist (CNS) within the patient sphere with a practice focus on adults 20 years of age and older. Explores the theoretical concepts utilized in advanced nursing practice in the management of patients along the continuum of care from wellness to illness, experiencing acute, chronic, or terminal illnesses.

**ACNS 632P | ADULT-GERONTOLOGY I: CNS PRACTICE IN INDIVIDUAL PATIENT SPHERE PRACTICUM**
Units: 3 Repeatability: No
Corequisites: ACNS 632
Provides an opportunity to carry out the clinical nurse specialist (CNS) role within the patient sphere with adults 20 years and older. Emphasizes the application of the theoretical concepts utilized in advanced nursing practice in the management of patients along the continuum of care from wellness to illness, experiencing acute, chronic, or terminal illnesses.

**ACNS 634 | ADULT-GERONTOLOGY II: CNS PRACTICE IN THE NURSE SPHERE**
Units: 3
Prerequisites: ACNS 632
Analyzes and operationalizes principles of clinical leadership with nursing staff who care for individuals 20 years of age and older in a variety of settings. Emphasizes process of change, promotion of innovation, and diffusion of evidence for quality practice. Successful completion of both ACNS 634 and ACNS 634 P with a letter grade of B- or higher is necessary to pass this course.
ACNS 634P | ADULT-GERONTOLOGY II: CNS PRACTICE IN THE NURSE SPHERE PRACT
Units: 2 Repeatability: No
Prerequisites: ACNS 619 and ACNS 632 and ACNS 632P and ACNS 634 (Can be taken Concurrently)
Provides an opportunity to enact the role of the CNS within the nurse sphere with a practice focus on adults 20 years of age and older. Emphasizes skillful guidance and teaching of nursing staff to advance the care of patients, families, groups of patients, and the profession of nursing. Successful completion of both ACNS 634 and ACNS 634P with a letter grade of B- or higher is necessary to pass this course.

ACNS 636 | ADULT GERONTOLOGY III: CNS PRACTICE IN THE ORGANIZATIONAL/SYSTEMS SPHERE
Units: 3
Prerequisites: ACNS 619 and ACNS 632 and ACNS 632P and ACNS 634 and ACNS 634P
Corequisites: ACNS 636P
Emphasizes theories and principles of change management at the systems level. Analyzes CNS leadership principles in organizations/systems in which nursing care is provided for individuals 20 years of age and older.

ACNS 636P | ADULT GERONTOLOGY III: CNS PRACTICE IN THE ORGANIZATIONAL/SYSTEMS SPHERE PRACTICUM
Units: 2
Prerequisites: ACNS 619 and ACNS 632 and ACNS 632P and ACNS 634 and ACNS 634P
Corequisites: ACNS 636
In the clinical setting emphasizes applying theories and principles of change management at the systems level. Operationalizes CNS leadership principles in organizations/systems in which nursing care is provided for individuals 20 years of age and older.

ACNS 638 | ADULT GERONTOLOGY IV: ADVANCED CNS PRACTICE
Units: 3
Prerequisites: ACNS 619 and ACNS 632 and ACNS 632P and ACNS 634 and ACNS 634P and ACNS 636P and ACNS 636 and ACNS 636P
Corequisites: ACNS 638P
Focuses on further development of evidence-based clinical knowledge in a selected area of CNS practice. Provides opportunities to explore CNS role development issues. Based on a gap analysis, an evidence-based practice change is designed, evaluated, and presented relative to an a priori evidence-based benchmark. A letter grade of B- or higher is necessary to pass this course.

ACNS 638P | ADULT GERONTOLOGY IV: ADVANCED CNS PRACTICUM
Units: 3
Prerequisites: ACNS 619 and ACNS 632 and ACNS 632P and ACNS 634 and ACNS 634P and ACNS 636P and ACNS 636 and ACNS 636P
Corequisites: ACNS 638
Focuses on further development of evidence-based clinical knowledge and expertise in a selected area of CNS practice. Students design an evidence-based clinical project to improve the care for individuals 20 years of age and older. The project is implemented using an evidence-based approach to a clinical problem or professional issue.

ACNS 639 | CNS PALLIATIVE CARE PRACTICUM
Units: 2 Repeatability: No
Prerequisites: PHDN 688
Provides an in-depth experience into the role of the Palliative Care CNS with the practice focus on adults 20 years and older. Emphasizes advanced nursing skills in assessment, symptom management, and psychosocial care to patients and family with serious health conditions. Stresses advocacy for those patients at the end of life requiring palliative care and hospice. Focuses on the interdisciplinary health care team in providing a collaborative plan of care.

APNC 520 | ADVANCED PATHOPHYSIOLOGY
Units: 3-4 Repeatability: No
Prerequisites: APNC 520 (Can be taken Concurrently)
Explores theoretical and clinical practice principles of advanced physical assessment and diagnosis across the lifespan. Utilizes various methods of comprehensive evidence-based data gathering, analysis, and documentation including history taking, physical examination, screening for common diseases, diagnostic procedures, and differential diagnoses. Differentiates abnormalities from common normal variations characteristic of various developmental, cultural, and ethnic groups. Laboratory-based practicum experiences provide the opportunity for the integration of theory with APRN role responsibilities specific to physical assessment and diagnosis. Note: Successful completion of the course with a letter grade of B- or higher is necessary to pass the course. A minimum 80% examination average must be achieved in order to successfully complete the course.

APNC 521 | APRN PHYSICAL ASSESSMENT AND DIAGNOSIS
Units: 3-4 Repeatability: No
Prerequisites: APNC 520 (Can be taken Concurrently)
Explores theoretical and clinical practice principles of advanced physical assessment and diagnosis across the lifespan. Utilizes various methods of comprehensive evidence-based data gathering, analysis, and documentation including history taking, physical examination, screening for common diseases, diagnostic procedures, and differential diagnoses. Differentiates abnormalities from common normal variations characteristic of various developmental, cultural, and ethnic groups. Laboratory-based practicum experiences provide the opportunity for the integration of theory with APRN role responsibilities specific to physical assessment and diagnosis. Note: Successful completion of the course with a letter grade of B- or higher is necessary to pass the course. A minimum 80% examination average must be achieved in order to successfully complete the course.

APNC 521L | HEALTH ASSESSMENT AND DIAGNOSIS LAB
Units: 1 Repeatability: No
Core Attributes: Lab
Explores theoretical and clinical practice principles of advanced physical assessment and diagnosis across the lifespan. Utilizes various methods of comprehensive evidence-based data gathering, analysis, and documentation including history taking, physical examination, screening for common diseases, diagnostic procedures, and differential diagnoses. Differentiates abnormalities from common normal variations characteristic of various developmental, cultural, and ethnic groups. Laboratory-based practicum experiences provide the opportunity for the integration of theory with APRN role responsibilities specific to physical assessment and diagnosis. Note: Successful completion of the course with a letter grade of B- or higher is necessary to pass the course.

APNC 523 | PHARMACOLOGY IN HEALTH MANAGEMENT
Units: 3 Repeatability: No
Prerequisites: APNC 520
Provides an evidence-based knowledge of pharmacotherapeutics for patients across the lifespan including special populations. Develops a foundation for decision-making necessary for initiating, monitoring, and modifying pharmacological treatment plans. Note: Successful completion of the course with a letter grade of B- or higher is necessary to pass the course. A minimum 80% examination average must be achieved in order to successfully complete the course.
APNC 524 | ADVANCED PHARMACOLOGY
Units: 3
Prerequisites: MEPN 535
Provides the knowledge and skills needed to assess, manage, and recommend treatment plans, utilizing broad categories of pharmacologic agents, for common and complex health problems in a safe, high quality and cost effective manner. Pharmacotherapeutics, pharmacodynamics, pharmacokinetics and pharmacogenomic skills will be developed utilizing case scenarios with an emphasis on direct application to clinical nursing practice.

MSNC 503 | NURSING PRACTICE WITH DIVERSE FAMILIES IN COMMUNITIES
Units: 2
Corequisites: MSNE 546
Examines philosophical, theoretical, and conceptual bases for care of diverse families and groups in community settings. Analysis of community perspectives provides a foundation for general and advanced practice and research with families across the lifespan. The national health objectives provide a framework for family and community health promotion and risk reduction. Issues that affect family, aggregate, and community health and wellness are examined using an ecological perspective that includes social, political, cultural, and economic aspects of the environment. Addresses intervention strategies with families to achieve desired health outcomes in their community.

MSNC 507 | STATISTICS
Units: 3
Repeatability: No
Provides students with necessary skills to perform statistical analysis of data in order to present information in a meaningful way. Emphasizes basic understanding of probability concepts, common probability distributions, and inferential statistical methods. Includes identification of data requirements and statistical method to answer specific research questions. Incorporates SPSS statistical software as well as statistical calculations. Explores methods to display data and findings. Assists students to interpret SPSS output, and effectively present findings. Also focuses on critical review of scientific manuscripts and interpretation of findings.

MSNC 511 | EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE: ROLE OF THEORY AND RESEARCH
Units: 3
Repeatability: No
Focuses on the critical links between nursing theory, research and evidence based practice. Examines the theoretical foundations of nursing science including how theory has influenced the history and current practice of nursing. Emphasizes the importance of research for building an evidence base for nursing practice. Reviews the components of evidence-based practice, with emphasis placed on knowledgeable appraisal of theory and research to evaluate the evidence base for clinical practice.

MSNC 512 | INFLUENCING THE HEALTH CARE ENVIRONMENT: POLICY AND SYSTEMS
Units: 3
Provides an understanding of nursing’s leadership role in the analysis and evaluation of policy, organization, and financing of health care. Focuses on the organization of health care systems, the political and economic forces that influence health care delivery, and the formulation of policies affecting health care.

MSNC 518 | PHYSICAL ASSESSMENT AND DIAGNOSIS FOR RNS
Units: 4
Prerequisites: APNC 520
Corequisites: MSNC 518L
Focuses on theoretical and clinical skill development in physical assessment and diagnosis, across the life span. Designed to prepare the advanced generalist registered nurses with the knowledge and skills to make appropriate focused assessments and draw accurate conclusions about physiological/psychosocial instability/complications/sequelae of disease processes and/or therapeutic interventions.

MSNC 518L | PHYSICAL ASSESSMENT AND DIAGNOSIS FOR RNS LAB
Units: 0
Corequisites: MSNC 518

MSNC 534 | CLINICAL NURSE LEADERSHIP
Units: 6
Explores and integrates concepts of leadership that are central to the practice of the clinical nurse leader (CNL) including: horizontal leadership, effective use of self, reflective practice, advocacy, lateral integration of care, change theory, and role analysis and implementation. Oversees patient care provided by staff, in collaboration with RN preceptor or mentor, to improve patient outcomes. Serves as a role model for staff in anticipating risks and providing comprehensive care to individuals and clinical cohorts. Reviews and modifies, if necessary, standards of care for specific patient populations. Designs and proposes an implementation and evaluation plan for an evidence-based project designed to effect change in patient/staff outcomes.

MSNC 534P | CLINICAL NURSE LEADER PRACTICUM II
Units: 3

MSNC 599 | INDEPENDENT STUDY
Units: 6