

Gerontological Nurse Practitioner

Role of the Gerontological NP

Gerontological Nurse Practitioners (GNPs) provide direct health care services to young-old, old, old-old, well, frail, and demented adults. They practice independently and collaboratively in multiple rural and urban settings, including ambulatory care (geriatric, medicine, and family practice clinics), acute care (hospitals and rehabilitation facilities), long-term care (nursing homes and assisted living facilities), and home care (home health and hospice agencies).

Objectives of the GNP Clinical Track

The Gerontological Nurse Practitioner Clinical Track provides graduate students and/or currently practicing Advanced Practice Nurses with specialization in the care of older adults. This advanced plan of study prepares the student to:

- Integrate the principles of aging, health, and specialized advanced practice nursing into evidence-based clinical management of older adults, their families, and communities of diverse cultures in rural settings.
- Demonstrate comprehensive assessments, planning, and interventions with the complex health care problems of older adults and their caregivers in a variety of rural health care settings.
- Use critical thinking and decision-making skills in evidence-based clinical management of wellness, prevention, maintenance, common symptoms and syndromes, and common illnesses affecting older adults and their families in rural settings.

Plan of Study of the GNP

The GNP clinical track requires six graduate courses offered over three semesters of study (summer, fall, and spring), with one didactic and one practicum course each semester. The three sets of courses are sequential and co-requisites. This clinical track may be completed as a single or a dual major for the MSN degree or as a Post-Master's Certificate option.

The 6 semester hours of didactic courses are taken online with distance learning activities completed independently via both synchronous and asynchronous computer technologies. The 10 or 14 semester hours of clinical practicum courses are completed in the student's home area, with total of 600 or 630 clock hours, that is, 180 and 180 hours in the first and second semesters; and 240 or 270 hours in the third semester (based on the school's formula of 1 semester hour to 3 or 4 clock hours for 15 or 16 weeks). Each practicum course requires licensed preceptors for direct care at clinical sites and at least one clinical evaluation on site by the faculty. Course objectives include identified competencies for GNPs (DHHS, 2002).

All applicants to the GNP clinical track are required to meet the criteria of the home School of Nursing for admission into their MSN program as full-time or part-time students. Students are required to complete the core curriculum courses (i.e., theory, research, health/social policy, ethics, et al) and the advanced health assessment, advanced pathophysiology, and advanced pharmacology courses of their home school. Students who successfully complete the 16 or 20 semester hours and competencies of the GNP clinical track then are eligible to graduate from their home school and to apply for the American Nurses Credentialing Center or the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners for certification as a Gerontological Nurse Practitioner. Interested students should contact the MSN programs at Alcorn State University, Delta State University, Mississippi University for Women, University of Mississippi Medical Center, or University of Southern Mississippi.

GNP Course Descriptions

FIRST SEMESTER (SUMMER)

CLINICAL MANAGEMENT OF OLDER ADULTS, I

2 HOURS

This didactic course is focused on the principles of aging and health, advanced assessments of older adults of diverse cultures, and common geriatric issues and syndromes with emphasis on wellness, prevention, maintenance, and early health care interventions in rural settings.

PRACTICUM IN CLINICAL MANAGEMENT OF OLDER ADULTS, I**3 or 4 HOURS**

This 180-hour practicum course is focused on the diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic health problems of older adults of diverse cultures, with emphasis on wellness, prevention, maintenance, and early health care interventions in rural health care settings.

SECOND SEMESTER (FALL)**CLINICAL MANAGEMENT OF OLDER ADULTS, II****3 HOURS**

This didactic course is focused on the diagnosis and treatment of common acute and chronic geriatric illnesses and complex health problems of older adults of diverse cultures, including frail and demented older adults in rural settings.

PRACTICUM IN CLINICAL MANAGEMENT OF OLDER ADULTS, II**3 or 4 HOURS**

This 180-hour practicum course is focused on the diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic health problems of older adults of diverse cultures, with emphasis on advanced health care interventions with frail and demented older adults in rural health care settings.

THIRD SEMESTER (SPRING)**CLINICAL MANAGEMENT OF OLDER ADULTS, III****1 HOUR**

This didactic course is focused on synthesis of theory into evidence-based advanced gerontological nursing practice with older adults and their families of diverse cultures, integration of GNP roles, and practice management in selected rural health care systems.

PRACTICUM IN CLINICAL MANAGEMENT OF OLDER ADULTS, III**4 or 6 HOURS**

This 240- or 270-hour practicum course is focused on synthesis of theory into evidence-based advanced gerontological nursing practice with older adults and their families of diverse cultures, integration of GNP roles, and practice management in selected rural health care systems.

MISSISSIPPI EDUCATIONAL CONSORTIUM FOR SPECIALIZED ADVANCED PRACTICE NURSING

SCHOOLS OF NURSING
at
Alcorn State University
Delta State University
Mississippi University for Women
University of Mississippi Medical Center
University of Southern Mississippi

In response to the need for specialized health care for vulnerable populations in this rural state and to the limited numbers of advanced practice nurses to meet these needs, in July, 2007, the five universities' schools of nursing offering graduate programs with clinical tracks for nurse practitioners formed an educational consortium for specialized advanced practice nursing.

The **mission** of the **Mississippi Educational Consortium for Specialized Advanced Practice Nursing (MECSAPN)** is to:

- Serve the needs of vulnerable populations for specialized health care;
- Provide advanced practice nursing leaders to improve access to quality health care and reduce health disparities in vulnerable populations; and,
- Optimize access to specialized education for advanced nursing practice leaders.

The intent of the MECSAPN is to offer specialized advanced practice nursing clinical tracks that are accessible through all of the university graduate programs of the state. The students choosing these tracks are admitted, take core curriculum courses, and graduate from the NP programs of ASU, DSU, MUW, UMMC, or USM. The courses for the specialized clinical tracks are taught via distance learning to all these students together by faculty of the designated school.

Currently, the MECSAPN offers two specialized clinical tracks, the **Gerontological Nurse Practitioner (GNP)** and the **Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP)**, with either a Family or an Adult focus. The GNP clinical track is offered at ASU, DSU, MUW, UMMC, and USM and is taught by UMMC faculty. The PMHNP clinical track is offered by ASU, DSU, MUW, and UMMC and is taught by UMMC faculty; USM has a long-standing PMHNP clinical track that is offered through their regular curriculum.

Each school may offer a specialized clinical track as **full-time** or **part-time** study at the levels of **MSN, post-master's**, or as **dual majors**, depending upon their individual programs. For example:

- MSN students may choose the dual majors of FNP and Family PMHNP, or GNP and Adult PMHNP. If portions of a practicum meet criteria for both majors, up to 240 clinical hours may be applied across clinical tracks, reducing to total hours for dual majors (e.g., a total of 960 hours for a GNP/PMHNP dual major).
- Currently practicing NPs, such as FNPs or ACNPs, may choose post-master's GNP or PMHNP clinical tracks.
- GNP and PMHNP clinical tracks may be offered to students of the **RN to MSN** tracks after the BSN requirements are completed.
- Because requirements for clinical hours are determined by each program, semester hours for practicum courses may vary slightly according to each school formula.

**Mississippi Schools of Nursing with Specialized Advanced Practice Nursing Options
Contact Persons**

Alcorn State University, Natchez

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Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner

Role of the Psychiatric Mental Health NP

Psychiatric mental health nursing is concerned with the diagnosis and treatment of human responses to actual or potential mental health problems. This nursing is the science of human behavior at all levels of systems: cognitive, emotional, and behavioral processes of individuals, interpersonal relationships, group and family dynamics, organizational behavior, and community attitudes and actions (ANA/APNA, 2000, *Scope and Standards of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing Practice*).

Within mental health care, advanced practice psychiatric mental health (PMH) nursing is focused on persons with diagnosed psychiatric disorders, or those vulnerable individuals or populations at risk of mental health disorders throughout the life span. In addition to psychotherapy, these psychiatric mental health nurse practitioners (PMHNPs) may have prescriptive authority, inpatient admission privileges, 3rd-party reimbursement, and other specific privileges for mental health care. They further specialize in either Adult Psychiatric Mental Health (i.e., adolescent, adult, and older adult) or Family Psychiatric Mental Health (i.e., child, adolescent, adult, and older adult; ANCC, 2007).

Objectives of the PMHNP Clinical Track

The Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Clinical Track provides graduate students and/or currently practicing Advanced Practice nurses with specialization in the care of individuals, families, and groups with mental health problems and mental disorders. This advanced plan of study prepares the student to:

- Integrate biological, neurophysiological, psychological, developmental, psychosocial, and physical environmental factors in evidence-based clinical management of individuals, families, and groups with mental health problems and mental disorders.
- Demonstrate mental health care with individuals, families, and groups in rural settings, including psychiatric assessment and diagnosis, symptom management, psychopharmacology, group and family therapy, and techniques for individual psychotherapy.
- Develop specialized advanced practice nursing skills for mental health care, including consultation, liaison, case management, program development, and practice management in rural settings.
- Use of critical thinking and decision-making skills in evidence-based clinical management of wellness, prevention, maintenance, common and complex mental health problems affecting individuals, families, and groups in rural settings.

Plan of Study for the PMHNP

In accordance with ANCC certification, the PMHNP clinical track offers two foci, the Adult PMHNP and the Family PMHNP. Both foci include six graduate courses offered over three semesters of study (summer, spring, and fall), with one didactic and one practicum course each semester. The three sets of courses are sequential and co-requisites. This clinical track may be completed as a single or a dual major for the MSN degree or as a Post-Master's Certificate option.

The 6 semester hours of didactic courses are taken online with distance learning activities completed independently via both synchronous and asynchronous computer technologies. The 10 or 14 semester hours of clinical practicum courses are completed in the student's home area, with total of 600 or 630 clock hours, that is, 180 and 180 hours in the first and second semesters; and 240 or 270 hours in the third semester (based on the home school's formula of 1 semester hour to 3 or 4 clock hours for 15 or 16 weeks). Each practicum course requires licensed preceptors for direct care at clinical sites and at least one clinical evaluation on site by the faculty. Course objectives include identified competencies for PMHNPs (NONPF, 2003).

All applicants to the PMHNP clinical track are required to meet the criteria of the home School of Nursing for admission into their MSN program as full-time or part-time students. Students are required to complete the core curriculum courses (i.e., theory, research, health/social policy, ethics, et al) and the advanced health assessment, advanced pathophysiology, and advanced pharmacology courses of the home school. Students who successfully complete the 16 or 20 semester hours and competencies of the PMHNP clinical track then are eligible to graduate from their home school and to apply for the American Nurses Credentialing Center for certification as an Adult or a Family Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner. Interested students should contact the MSN programs at Alcorn State University, Delta State University, Mississippi University for Women, or University of Mississippi Medical Center. The University of Southern Mississippi has a long-standing PMHNP clinical track that is offered through their regular curriculum.

PMHNP COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

FIRST SEMESTER (SUMMER)

CLINICAL ASSESSMENT OF PERSONS WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS, I

— ADULT & FAMILY 2 HOURS

This didactic course is focused on a theoretical basis for advanced psychiatric mental health nursing practice with persons of diverse cultures in rural settings experiencing or at risk for common mental health problems and major psychiatric disorders. Emphasis is on the mental health environment and advanced clinical processes, including communication strategies, psychiatric assessments, and diagnostic standards.

PRACTICUM IN CLINICAL ASSESSMENT OF PERSONS WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS, I

— ADULT OR FAMILY 3 OR 4 HOURS

This 180-hour practicum is focused on the application of theoretical concepts and assessment skills with persons of diverse cultures in rural health care settings experiencing or at risk for common mental health problems and major psychiatric disorders. Clinical hours are focused on individuals of various ages.

SECOND SEMESTER (FALL)

CLINICAL MANAGEMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS, II

— ADULT & FAMILY 3 HOURS

This didactic course is focused on the advanced nursing practices of assessment, diagnosis, treatment planning, evaluation, and documentation of individuals of diverse cultures in rural settings experiencing common mental health problems, major psychiatric disorders, and psychiatric complications of physical illnesses.

PRACTICUM IN CLINICAL MANAGEMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS, II

— ADULT OR FAMILY 3 OR 4 HOURS

This 180-hour practicum is focused on integration of theory and evidence-based practice in assessment, diagnosis, intervention, and documentation of individuals of diverse cultures in rural health care settings experiencing mental health problems, major psychiatric disorders, and psychiatric complications of physical illnesses. Clinical hours are focused on individuals of various ages.

THIRD SEMESTER (SPRING)

CLINICAL MANAGEMENT OF FAMILIES AND GROUPS WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS, III

— ADULT & FAMILY 1 HOUR

This didactic course is focused on evidence-based conceptual models, theories, and techniques for therapies with groups, couples, and families of diverse cultures across the lifespan. The clinical roles, practice management activities, and strategies for complex mental health issues in rural settings also are evaluated.

PRACTICUM IN CLINICAL MANAGEMENT OF FAMILIES AND GROUPS WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS, III

— ADULT & FAMILY 4 OR 6 HOURS

This 240- or 270-hour practicum is focused on evidence-based psychoeducation, supportive therapy, and psychotherapy with groups, couples, and families of diverse cultures and on synthesis of clinical roles, practice management activities, and strategies for complex mental health issues in rural health care settings. Clinical hours are focused on families and groups.