



Frequently Asked Questions: Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Program Southern Connecticut State University

- **What specialty tracks do you offer at SCSU?**

We offer Family Nurse Practitioner, Nurse Educator, and Clinical Nurse Leader tracks. If you already have an MSN, all the above specialties may be obtained through a post-master's certificate track for any of these specialties.
- **What are the application deadlines for admission?**

Application deadlines are October 1st for spring admission and February 15th for fall admission. Deadlines may be extended to await application materials so long as the initial application was started before the deadline with approval of the MSN director. Please contact AdimandoA1@southernct.edu if you would like to request a deadline extension. These will be granted on a case-by-case basis and are dependent on capacity of the program(s).
- **What are the requirements for admission to the MSN program?**

Applicants need to have completed a nursing program and hold an active, unrestricted RN license **at the time of application**. A BSN is also required, though applicants who hold a current RN license at the time of application who are currently in an RN to BSN program and will complete their BSN by the end of the application cycle (ie will graduate in May for a Fall admission, or will graduate in December for a Spring admission) are eligible to apply. If admission is offered, it will be contingent upon the applicant completing their BSN degree as stated. In addition to the RN license and BSN degree, applicants need to submit 2 letters of recommendation (one from a former faculty member/educator and one from a professional colleague or a supervisor are preferred), the application essay, all transcripts following high school, and a copy of their CT nursing license. **All materials for admission are submitted via the [application portal](#) of the [School of Graduate and Professional Studies](#)**, not the Nursing Department. Information on the application process can be accessed [here](#). Incomplete applications will not be reviewed, so please be sure to check on the status of your application frequently to meet all deadlines and requirements.
- **I have a bachelor's degree in something other than nursing, am I eligible to apply?**

The Bridge Program for RNs with a bachelor's degree in another discipline was suspended in Spring 2023. Alternatively, an RN with a BA/BS in an area other than nursing may elect to take the RN/BSN courses and earn a BSN at SCSU or another university prior to applying to the MSN Program. Please contact the program director if you feel your individual circumstance deserves special consideration.
- **I graduated several years ago. Do I need a letter of recommendation from my BSN program?**

Most applicants have graduated from undergraduate nursing programs within ten years of beginning their graduate studies. It is helpful for the admissions committee to receive information from a faculty member who has had direct experience with the applicant to provide feedback about specific academic attributes, which may not be as apparent to a professional supervisor or other colleague. However, in some circumstances, if this is not possible, please have an individual who would know your educational abilities and/or potential, which may not be apparent to a supervisor, complete the academic reference. Once you enter the appropriate information on the application, an automated email will be sent to those listed, providing them with a link to use to upload your recommendation(s). No letters of recommendation are to be mailed/emailed to us or the graduate school, as they will not be accepted in hard copy. You may change/remind your recommenders through the [Graduate Admissions Portal](#).

- Once I apply to the MSN program, when will I hear of acceptance into the program?**
 All applicants who meet initial criteria for admission are reviewed by the MSN Curriculum Committee. Upon completion of all admissions materials and the interview, applicants will receive notification about their acceptance before the end of that semester, typically by December 1st and April 15th. An appointment will be scheduled with your academic advisor prior to registering for classes.
- Am I able to take courses as a non-matriculated student?**
 Applicants may take up to 3 courses (9 credits) as a non-matriculated student as space permits. This can be helpful for applicants who are considering MSN level education and want to gain a feel for coursework, or for students who have applied but have not yet been accepted to get a head start on their coursework. Eligible courses would only include the core courses, and generally would not include NUR 526 Advanced Health Assessment unless the student is a post-master's certificate candidate. Non-matriculated students require departmental permission from the program director, Dr. Adimando, to register for any course in the MSN program. Please contact Dr. Adimando via email at AdimandoA1@southernct.edu to request permission to take a non-matriculated course.
- What courses will I take in the MSN program?**
 Please see our current [website](#) where the requirements and potential plans of study are available for each of our three MSN and Post-Master's Certificate (PMC) tracks. <https://inside.southernct.edu/nursing/graduate-programs>. Course schedules are planned 2 years in advance, although summer course offerings are subject to change and may vary. *FNP students are required to take their third roles course (final semester of the program) with 220 clinical hours during the summer semester and should plan accordingly.*
- Do you accept transfer credits?**
 All requests for transfer credits are reviewed and approved by the program director once the candidate has been admitted to the MSN program. Transfer courses will be reviewed and compared to our current core courses' objectives, learning outcomes, and content. Up to 9 transfer credits can be approved for each student. Roles courses from other institutions will not be approved and need to be taken at SCSU, even for accepted transfer students.
- Are your courses online or on ground? And are they synchronous or asynchronous?**
 As of 2022, all MSN **core** courses and the **lecture** component for all FNP roles courses are *fully online*. All of the courses for the MSN-Educator and MSN-CNL students are offered **asynchronously (no live lectures)** as of Summer 2023. For FNP students, all core courses will be asynchronous with the exception of NUR 526 Health Assessment w/lab (offered online or on-ground per student preference) and the FNP roles courses, which are taken during the last three semesters of the program. These will meet virtually on Tuesday evenings and will require 1-2 visits to campus per semester for simulations, skills labs, and/or testing.

The clinical or practicum hours of the educator, FNP, and CNL roles courses will be in person, though may include some virtual aspects such as online teaching (for our nurse educator program) or telehealth opportunities within clinical sites in our FNP program. Our FNP roles courses will also have 1-2 days per semester of on-ground learning activities such as simulations, skills workshops (suturing, etc.), and live standardized patient assessments during scheduled class time (Tuesdays 5-7:30pm). These on campus dates will be provided to students on the first day of class so that students can plan accordingly for these on-ground days. FNP roles courses begin **every fall** and go through the end of the summer semester. The academic calendar for semester start dates and breaks can be found here: <https://calendar.southernct.edu/academic/month>
- Does the School of Nursing find clinical sites for MSN students?**
 We encourage all students (in all three tracks) to seek out their own clinical sites for a variety of reasons. Students are better able to identify and choose sites based on preferences, travel distance, and scheduling. However, we have a robust clinical coordination department that can support students throughout this process, including suggesting potential, high-quality preceptors and/or sites with whom we have previous relationships. Students will be informed and supported early in the program to ensure they have optimal clinical site experiences during their FNP, Nurse Educator, and/or CNL roles courses.
- My GPA falls below 3.0. Would my application be accepted?**
 It is strongly recommended that students carry a BSN and a cumulative GPA of 3.0 prior to applying for or attending the program, given that this can be predictive of future performance in many cases. However, the MSN committee will

consider applicants who fall below this GPA on a case-by-case basis. Applicants may wish to submit recent GRE or MAT scores as an additional application material for the committee to consider if their GPA falls below 3.0. It is also suggested that candidates indicate within their essay why their GPA may have fallen below 3.0 and rationale as to why the MSN committee should offer an exception to this requirement in their specific case.

- **What GPA is required once I start the program?**

Students are required to pass each course with a B (84) or better. Students who do not obtain this average will need to repeat courses as per our MSN policy. The MSN policies are available on our [graduate website](#) if a candidate wishes to review them prior to application. These policies are required to be reviewed upon admission before beginning the program.

- **How long does it take to complete the MSN program?**

FNP, CNL, and Nurse Educator students who are part-time take one or two classes each academic semester (and summer if indicated) and are generally able to complete the program of study in approximately three years. Full-time MSN-Educator or CNL students who take at least three courses each semester, or students bringing in transfer credits, can complete the program more quickly. Nurse educator students have the option of an **accelerated, 16-month course of study**. Please see our [website](#) for details on plans of study and required courses for all programs.

- **Who will be my Academic Advisor for the MSN Program?**

The MSN Program Director serves as the Academic Advisor for all students in the MSN program and advises non-matriculated students regarding their specific academic needs as well. Students seeking guidance on study habits and specific course needs or requirements should contact the course instructor for the course in which they are enrolled.

- **Will I be expected to complete clinical hours?**

All three MSN programs have required clinical hours in their specific roles courses. The FNP program requires a minimum of 660 supervised clinical hours, with 220 hours per semester or approximately 16 hours per week for 45 weeks. These include 410 hours of adult/ gerontology, 150 hours of pediatric, and 100 hours of women's health. *The third roles course and the final 220 hours of clinical hours will take place in the summer semester, so FNP students should plan accordingly.* The CNL program requires 400 supervised clinical hours, divided over two semesters (180 and 220), and the Nurse Educator program requires 12 hours per week of clinical hours for 15 weeks for a total of 180 hours per semester. Roles courses will be taken after all core coursework has been completed.

- **Who can I contact for further information?**

We encourage you strongly to read these FAQs and our graduate nursing [website](#) as most questions can be answered there. The application process is explained and can be started on the graduate admissions website: <https://grad.southernct.edu/admissions/>. If you are an applicant who has questions about the graduate school application, tuition and fees, or are having issues with submitting documents, requesting transcripts, or questions on how to do so, please contact the graduate school directly at gpsinfo@southernct.edu and/or gradadmissions@southernct.edu. If you have questions on the application process or on our programs, please contact NursingInfo@Southernct.edu.

MSN in Nursing education information: <https://inside.southernct.edu/nursing/graduate-programs/nurse-educator>

MSN Family Nurse Practitioner information: <https://inside.southernct.edu/nursing/graduate-programs/fnp>

MSN Clinical Nurse Leader information: <https://inside.southernct.edu/nursing/graduate-programs/clinical-nurse-leader>

Post-Master's Certificate (all three tracks) information: <https://inside.southernct.edu/nursing/certificate-programs>

For a complete list of tuition and fees for full and part time graduate study please click [here](#)

For information on financial aid please contact the financial aid office and/or view their website [here](#)

For information on “Ed Assist” tuition pre-pay programs for YNH employees please contact your HR/tuition reimbursement department