

Annual Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements
School of Nursing
Master's Program in Nursing
Doctoral Program in Nursing

Key Assessment Findings

The School of Nursing has identified two key outcome measures for the graduate programs: performance on comprehensive examinations and the results of certification examinations.

Performance on comprehensive examinations reflect how well the student has understood the material presented during the course of study. Comprehensive examination questions in the School of Nursing are reviewed by graduate faculty and revised each semester. These examinations are graded by two examination readers on a pass/fail basis, and in the case of a disagreement a third reader is requested to review the examination. Grading rubrics are used for all graduate comprehensive examinations. Comprehensive examination results are reported in Table 1.

Table 1 Comprehensive Examination Results AY 2010/2011

Category of Comprehensive	Number writing	Number passing	2010/2011% passing	2009/10 comparison
Master's Level	18	17	94.4%	84.2%
DNP Level	1	1	100%	100%
Ph.D Level	7	7	100%	100%

Performance on national certification examinations are the second outcome measure used by the School of Nursing graduate programs. National certification examinations are required in order to be licensed as an advanced practice nurse. The American Nurse Credentialing Center (ANCC) administers the Adult Nurse Practitioner, Family Nurse Practitioner, and Advanced Public Health Nurse examination . The Pediatric Nursing Certification Board administers the examination for the pediatric nurse practitioner. Results of these examinations are reported in Table 2 for the 2010 graduating class. It should be noted that the ANCC does not report results of the examination by graduation date, therefore we can only assume that those who wrote the examination in the current year were 2010 graduates. The School of Nursing has contacted the ANCC with a request to include graduation dates on future reports but so far this request has been unsuccessful. This problem has been recognized by the accreditation body for academic nursing programs (CCNE) and is being addressed at the national level.

Table 2 Certification Examination Pass Rates for January 2010 to December 2010

Examination	# eligible	# taking	# passing	% pass 2010	% pass 2009
Adult Nurse Practitioner/ Adult Health CNS	6	0**	4	N/A	80%
Advanced Community/Public Health*	4	0**	0	N/A	N/A
Family Nurse Practitioner	5	4	3	80%	75%
Pediatric Nurse Practitioner	4	7**	7	100%	100%

**The Advanced Community Public Health certification examination is relatively new and is not required by many employers of community health graduate nurses. The ANCC reports results only on a calendar year basis, so 2011 graduates are not included in these results.

Curricular Improvements

It should be noted that small numbers in the graduate student cohort writing a particular certification examination create a large percentage change if a single student fails the certification examination. The School of Nursing monitors the certification examination pass rates and has set a target of 100% pass rates on all certification examinations. In order to achieve this goal the faculty have determined that admission selectivity should continue to be monitored for the incoming graduate class as well as continuing improvements in instructional process to assure that entering students are supported to gain essential skills. During the last academic year the following measures have been implemented to improve student recruitment, admissions, and instructional process.

During the last academic year the following measures have been added to strengthen performance on the certification examinations and maintain the gains on the comprehensive examinations.

- Re-design of the course in evidence-based care and health informatics to provide more clinical case-based discussions to assist students to apply the knowledge gained.

- Revision of the comprehensive examinations for the MSN students, with migration to an on-line testing format, specific preparation guidelines, and standardized evaluation rubrics.
- Providing increased opportunity for student interaction with the advanced practice interdisciplinary team in both health assessment and advanced pathophysiology by adding a physician to the instructional team in both classes.
- Merging two previously offered research courses into one holistic course that incorporates content in evidence-based practice as well as basic research principles and methods.
- Redesign of the introductory epidemiology course and re-sequencing of courses to allow students to take the course in the summer.
- Additional of a rubric to grade the DNP portfolio assignment which is a terminal project that supports integration and performance on the DNP comprehensive examination.
- Addition of an advanced statistics class and a philosophy of science class taught by nursing faculty to assure integration between nursing research and supporting course content.