

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 2011/2012

Category of Comprehensive	Number writing	Number passing	% passing	2010/2011% comparison % passing
Master's Level	17	14	82.35%	94.4%
DNP Level	5	5	100%	100%
Ph.D Level	8	6	75%	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 2011 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 2011 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 2011-December 2011

Examination	# eligible	# taking	# passing	% pass 2011	% <i>pass</i> 2010
Adult Nurse Practitioner/	7	5	1*	33.33%	80%
Advanced Community/Public Health*	4	3	3	100%	N/A
Family Nurse Practitioner	5	5	5	100%	100%
Pediatric Nurse Practitioner	2	2	2	100%	100%

- Three students wrote the ANCC certification examination which reports pass rates for small cohorts, one student passed. 2 students wrote the ANPCP certification examination which does not report results for cohorts under 5 students. Antidotal information reflects that these students passed which would increase the pass rate to 60%

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 advanced practice certification examination pass rates and has set a target of 90% pass rates on all certification examinations. In order to achieve this goal the faculty has 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. Admission selectivity in the MSN program increased 3.27% for the 2011 student cohort and 1.3% for the doctoral programs. On average the MSN programs admit about 60% of those who apply and the doctoral programs admit 70% of the applicant pool.

Instructional process in the graduate programs is evaluated at the process and program outcome level. Annual course reports are required for every graduate course. These course reports are presented and discussed at the curriculum committee meetings. Program outcome reports are provided for all graduate programs. Curricular improvements based on these reports during the 2011/2012 academic year are as follows:

- *Continued monitoring and review of clinical preceptors* in the advanced practice nursing program is conducted to assure that all clinical preceptors are providing sufficient support and clinical mentorship to graduate nursing students. Students submit weekly clinical logs to the faculty supervisor, and frequent communication between the preceptor and the assigned CUA faculty member is expected. Site visits are made on an as-needed basis with an in-depth end-of-semester evaluative visit for each student in a clinical course. The CUA nursing graduate program assumes the responsibility for assigning clinical sites based on faculty assessment of student experience and learning needs.
- *Graduate program directors hold required review sessions prior to the comprehensive examinations for both MSN and doctoral students.* These review sessions focus on both content review and test-taking strategies to assure that students are fully informed regarding the examination process. Students who fail comprehensive examinations are provided with a faculty mentor who assists them in remedial activities to assure that they are successful on the second attempt.
- *Revision of the rubric used to evaluate evidence-based practice was initiated effective September 2012.* The rubric clarifies the process used to evaluate evidence and transfer evidence to clinical practice. Review sessions for the comprehensive examinations reinforce the essential skills needed to evaluate and transfer evidence to clinical practice in order to increase successful performance on this portion of the comprehensive examination.
- *Revision of the Adult Nurse Practitioner program to include increased content on geriatric advanced practice nursing skills was initiated.* A grant to increase geriatric content in this program was recently funded by HRSA. These additional resources are expected to benefit students greatly and improve performance on the ANP certification examination for future student cohorts.