

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE “INNOVATION IN ADVANCED NURSING PRACTICE” TRACK

1. Why was the innovation track in the graduate nursing program developed at Drexel University?

Healthcare today is in an unprecedented period of change and few professionals are in a better position than nurses to observe and understand the issues of the patient care frontline. For the advanced practice nurse this represents both a challenge and an unparalleled opportunity to work “outside the box” of current thinking. Healthcare today needs practitioners, educators, and leaders who are prepared to offer creative, but practical, value-added solutions to the unique issues we face like lowering the patient care error rates that result in between 44,000 and 98,000 deaths per year; improving the work environment for nurses; using technology to improve care and create efficiencies. At Drexel we believe in innovation and we practice it in our own program offerings, practice initiatives, and educational technologies. We wish to drive innovation by encouraging nurses to “create” pioneering projects.

2. What career options might I have when I complete the Drexel innovation track?

This MSN in Innovation in Advanced Nursing Practice will provide you with an understanding of what it means to innovate and the processes and environments that result in lasting change. As a clinician, educator, or nurse manager/executive, you will utilize the knowledge and skills in the program to change clinical systems and practice processes for the betterment of patient care or use the knowledge to leverage your hunches and start your own business as a consultant or entrepreneur.

3. What are the research requirements for the MSN in innovation track?

“Introduction to Biostatistics” and “Methods of Health Research” are two of the core courses in the Masters program taken by all graduate nursing students. Instead of writing a thesis, students conduct an innovation “capstone project” to be completed over three quarters (30 weeks). This project may be centered in your home institution or focused on your own future enterprise. You will submit a portfolio of the project’s conception, development, implementation, and evaluation.

4. How is the innovation track different from the masters in Nursing Leadership and Health Systems Management?

The primary objective for students in the Nursing Leadership MSN track is to develop the organizational, human resources, and strategic planning skills needed for managers and leaders within healthcare organizations. This program was recently redesigned with a new focus on the management of information and evidence-based decision making for the nurse administrator -- two skills critical for today’s high performance-oriented nurse executive. On the other hand, students in the Innovation Track focus specifically on the design of innovation and change to improve health and clinical systems. This may be a part of leadership and management but not its specific focus.

5. Your curriculum guide indicates I can make a selection of a cognate from a different college in Drexel University. What kind of courses might I select?

Students in the Innovation Track may take up to three courses from the LeBow College of Business, the College of Information Science and Technology, and other Drexel Graduate Schools according to their innovation interests. For example, if you are particularly interested in using information technology to innovate care processes you might draw from electives in the College of Information Sciences in Healthcare Informatics. Or you may take electives inside of the College in Nursing and Health Professions such as *Building and Leading High Performance Healthcare Organizations*. There will be many electives from which to choose.

6. What are some examples of capstone projects?

Many people do not know that the bilirubin light for newborns was invented because of the observation of a nurse that the jaundice in newborn babies whose cribs were near the sunlit nursery window cleared up at a faster rate than those not exposed to sun. A nurse who won the 2006 Drexel University, College of Nursing and Health Professions Bayada Award for Technological Innovation in Nursing Practice used an Electronic Health Record system to remind nurse teams to turn patients who were at high risk for pressure ulcers. The rate of pressure ulcers dropped 80% over time as a result. Your project will grow out of your observations and hunches about how you can improve practice or education, if you are a teacher. Remember Florence Nightingale's innovation of introducing basic cleanliness to hospital wards during the Crimean War? This innovation dropped the mortality rate of soldiers dramatically since they were dying from infections not from their war wounds. Innovations are often so simple and one might be lurking among your hunches.

7. How long will it take me to complete the Master's Innovation program?

The entire program is 46 quarter-credits equaling 15 courses. You must remember that quarter courses are completed in 10 weeks instead of the traditional 15 week semester. A 46 quarter credit master's degree is equivalent to a 30.5 semester credit masters degree. So the program is really very efficiently designed. There are two curricular plans: a seven quarter or a nine quarter plan. By taking two courses each quarter and adding an elective in three of the seven quarters, you could complete the program in one and a half years. However, you could choose to pace yourself differently, for example, taking one course per quarter.

8. Can I complete the program on-line?

Yes, all courses can be completed on-line. During the capstone project three-quarter period, students will attend class on-line, both synchronously (in real time) and asynchronously (not everyone online at the same time), to discuss the progress of their project. The purpose of this discussion is to provide support, to share successes and pitfalls, and to disburse the innovation that is occurring among the student group.

9. How are the requirements for the certificate program in innovation different from the complete degree?

The certificate in innovation has two options.

Option 1 is the Post-Baccalaureate Certificate Option, which requires that you take the three primary courses in the track - “Innovation in Advanced Nursing Practice: Theory and Application,” “Case Studies in Intra/Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Nursing,” and “The Nurse as an Intra/Entrepreneur and Consultant.” You will also take the first capstone course in which you will complete an innovation proposal. The total credits for the post-baccalaureate option is 12. Individuals who want to understand the theories of innovation, examine some successful and failed innovations, as well as learn what it takes to be a successful intra/entrepreneur will enjoy Option 1.

Option 2 is the Post Master’s Certificate Option, which requires that you take the primary courses in the track as listed above (9 credits) as well as the three capstone courses in which you will develop and complete a proposal for an innovation project and conduct the implementation and evaluation components (9 credits). Finally, a one credit professional seminar for advanced nursing practice will give you a total of 19 credits for this option. Option 2 is for the student who wishes to have a guided experience in the implementation and evaluation of the innovation proposed and actually complete a final work product. We believe having a portfolio of a final master’s level innovation project could sell a future employer on your idea or launch you into a new career opportunity.

10. What makes the Drexel program unique?

Drexel is the first university to offer a MSN in Innovation and Intra/Entrepreneurship **in Nursing** in the Nation. Several universities offer nurse entrepreneur conferences. Other universities have collaborative programs in innovation between Schools of Business and Nursing. However, Drexel University’s program is unique in that its focus is innovation for the advanced practice nurse, educator or executive. It is not a degree in business, nor even a nursing-business hybrid; it is rather an advanced nursing degree with a focus in innovation. The program can be completed entirely online as is the format of delivery with many other Drexel programs.

11. Is the Drexel innovation program accredited?

The College of Nursing and Health Professions Programs are fully accredited by National League for Nursing Accreditation Commission (NLNAC) and the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE).

12. Is this program only for the seasoned graduate nurse?

More important than time spent in nursing is your ability to be self-directed and your desire to understand innovation and create a significant change in healthcare or educational systems. We think this program will have appeal and relevance to both the seasoned nurse who has years of experiences from which to draw from for ideas and also to the young intra/entrepreneur who has ideas and inventions he or she wants to see marketed immediately.

13. Am I eligible for financial aid for this program?

To be eligible for federal financial aid you must at least be enrolled part-time and that means you must take a minimum of 4.5 credits per quarter. This means that you must take more than one course per quarter to be eligible for financial aid.

14. Are there scholarships available?

Notices about scholarship and grant availability are regularly sent when such monies are available to students. The MSN Program does have Advanced Nursing Education funds that are distributed on a formula basis. For nurses who live in Pennsylvania, there is often scholarship money available if certain conditions are met. There are also scholarships available through various sources. I encourage you to investigate the two links below:

<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Media/NewsReleases/2005/AACNMonsterRel.htm>

<http://www.nln.org/Careers/resources.htm>

ABOUT THE INNOVATION IN ADVANCED NURSING PRACTICE PROGRAM

This program leads to a Master of Science in Nursing with a focus on creating innovative changes in nursing practice, nursing education or nursing administration. This is the ideal MSN track for the independently thinking graduate nursing student whose career objectives may not be met by a more traditional graduate nursing curriculum.

We hope to attract a varied group of students who have a commitment to radically change healthcare systems. This individual could choose to complete a Master's degree, a post-master's certificate or a post-baccalaureate certificate in innovation. Whatever the career goals, the student could complete their education online.

The track courses in the MSN in Innovation Program will focus on models, methods, environments, and processes that will help you do your part in redesigning and improving our healthcare system. After a course in the theoretical and applied underpinnings of disruptive innovations and breakthroughs in healthcare, we will use a case-study model to examine the best and failed innovations in nursing. The intra/entrepreneur and consultant course will focus on the practical skills required to use advanced nursing knowledge to support either an independent practice or act as an internal organizational resource for innovation. Finally, under the direction of a faculty mentor with expertise in the planned capstone project, the student will spend three quarters developing a capstone project whose results demonstrate innovation and can be implemented to effect change. *This program is for the nurse who likes to tinker with ideas, who is not afraid to learn from failure, and who wants to change the healthcare and nursing world.*