

PSYCHIATRIC MENTAL HEALTH NURSE PRACTITIONER AND CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALIST PROGRAMS

FAQS-Masters Degree in Psych-Mental Health Nursing Is this program online?

Yes, this is an online program with only two weekend trips to campus required.

How does an on-line course work?

The online courses work in much the same structure as in-class courses. This means that they exist within Rush's quarter system. In lieu of in-person lectures, faculty provides instructor notes and activities that are designed to guide the student through the material. As with traditional formats, there are assigned readings. Most courses also include asynchronous chat sessions that allow students to post questions and responses to each other and to the instructors. Some activities include a guided interactive component, similar to classroom discussions. If a class has exams as part of its evaluation mechanism, those exams are taken online.

Are there clinical hours required and if so how many?

You will obtain a minimum of 500 clinical hours in this program.

How will I do my clinical hours?

A faculty preceptor will assist you in identifying an appropriate clinical placement as close to your home as possible.

Who can precept me?

Preceptors must be certified and practicing as advanced practice nurses in psychiatric mental health nursing. In the absence of an appropriate advanced practice nurse, we will negotiate with psychiatrists to provide clinical precepting.

Do I need to find my own preceptors?

If you know of someone with whom you would like to work, we will investigate their appropriateness and availability. If you do not know of anyone, we will attempt to identify someone for you. We make all contractual arrangements with preceptors and clinical sites.

I have taken some courses at another school. Will they count as part of my degree at Rush?

Courses that you have taken for masters credit elsewhere can be reviewed for equivalence after you are admitted. This process involves filling out a form and submitting the form and the course syllabus to the Rush registrar, who obtains approval from the equivalent course director at Rush. If you have questions about a particular course and have not yet been admitted, you may call or email [Suzanne Perraud@rush.edu](mailto:Suzanne_Perraud@rush.edu) (312-942-6860). After you are admitted you will work with your faculty advisor to develop a program of study. At least half of the required credits for a masters degree must be taken at Rush.

What if I already have a masters degree?

If you have a masters degree you should consider the post masters certificate. See FAQs on post masters degrees at Rush.

Will your program prepare me for certification as an advanced practice nurse?

You may sit for certification through the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) as a PMHNP (Adult or Family) or PMHCNS (Adult or Child) after completing our program.

What is the difference between a Psychiatric Mental Health Clinical Nurse Specialist and Nurse Practitioner?

The easiest way to describe the difference between a CNS and NP is to say that the two roles are getting closer all of the time. It is important to be aware of your state advanced practice licensing act for the most complete answers to these questions.

The PMHCNS may see patients in private practice for therapy. In addition to doing therapy with individuals and groups, the PMH CNS also work with nurses in hospitals and other systems as educators, administrators, and researchers.

The practice of the PMHNP is guided by a collaborative agreement with a psychiatrist and is provided boundaries by state licensing acts. Generally, PMHNPs see patients for all of their management needs (assessment, group and individual therapy, therapy, and other treatments including medication).

Advanced practice psychiatric nurses may work in settings like clinics, offices, and hospitals. Some do rounds with or for psychiatrists in hospitals and nursing homes.

What is the difference between the Psychiatric Mental Health Clinical Nurse Specialist and Nurse Practitioner programs at Rush?

The PMHCNS and NP programs are identical until you get to your clinical and residency hours. Your clinicals will be designed based on what your practice goals are and which certification exam you will be taking.

How does the Family PMHNP track differ from the Adult PMHNP track?

The Family PMHNP track coursework covers the lifespan and provides child clinical experiences. Though you may see the parents and grandparents of the children in groups and individual sessions, the focus of the clinical experience is on child. The family PMHNP student also takes an extra hour of mental health assessment devoted to child. While there is no specific course work on family dynamics, you are provided additional readings, clinical supervision, and guidance if you see families in your clinical experience

The Adult PMHNP track coursework is the same as that of the Family track, with one less hour (no need to take the child mental health assessment course). You may see patients in clinical aged 16 and up in your clinical practice.

Will I learn to do therapy?

You will get coursework and supervised practice in individual and group therapy with your chosen population in both the NP and CNS tracks.

I plan to keep my job as a nurse manager. Do I need to sit for certification?

One reason to consider certification (and to consider a clinical masters degree) in addition to the obvious benefits related to title recognition, is that you position yourself to be able to teach someday. We are always looking for faculty: to teach in the classroom, online, in undergraduate clinicals, and to precept advanced practice students. At a minimum, you need a clinical masters to be able to teach at Rush and at many other colleges. If you do choose this route, it is important to know that there are requirements that must be met to keep your certification current. For more information on this, see the American Nurses Credentialing Center website at <http://www.nursingworld.org/ancc/>. This is where you will be signing up for your certification exam.

I do not live in Illinois. Are there requirements specific to my state that I need to be aware of?

Whether you live in Illinois or elsewhere it is a good idea to know your state nurse practice act. The website at the National Council of State Boards of Nursing is one place to obtain information about your state's nurse practice act. http://www.ncsbn.org/regulation/nursingpractice_nursing_practice_acts.asp

You will find an interesting discussion about the differences between licensure and certification on this site at: <http://www.ncsbn.org/regulation/nlc.asp> as well as

a discussion about the differences in regulation of advanced practice nurses from state to state at: http://www.ncsbn.org/regulation/nlc_licensure_aprn.asp

Our role courses at Rush will provide in depth information on these topics.

Will I be able to work while in school?

Most of our students work while in school. Our courses are challenging and require a significant amount of time so we do recommend that you discuss your work schedule with your advisor to determine a reasonable program of study.

Do I need any special skills to take online courses at Rush?

You need computer skills. If you currently browse the internet, shop online, use a word processing program, and have some familiarity with Power Point you will be fine. You will need to check our website for specific system and software requirements and can do that at <http://www.rushu.rush.edu/onlineclasses/hd.html>.

What is the tuition?

Current tuition can be found on our website at <http://www.rushu.rush.edu/registrar/tuition.html>

I live close to Rush. Can I choose to take some classes in the classroom?

Some of the courses in our graduate nursing core and advanced practice nursing core are offered in several formats (online, in class, and compressed). Compressed courses are guided online but include an extended visit to campus (usually over a weekend). You may work with your advisor to meet your needs in this area. For more information on which course format to consider see our website at: http://www.rushu.rush.edu/nursing/pos/masters_psychiatric_np.html

What kind of financial aid do you have?

You may explore these issues on our website at: <http://www.rushu.rush.edu/finaid/index.html>
Another very helpful page on financial aid may be found at: <http://www.rushu.rush.edu/nursing/finaid.html>

How do I apply to your program?

There are several ways to apply to our program. Please see our admissions website for complete details at <http://www.rushu.rush.edu/nursing/admission.html>