

## **FAQ's Post Master's PMHNP or PMHCNS**

### **What courses do I need to get a post-masters certificate in your PMHNP or CNS programs from Rush?**

Courses you will need for a post masters will depend on the courses you have had in your previous masters program. A post-masters certificate means that we have examined your existing coursework and have added the courses we believe will be needed for an education we consider equivalent to that provided to our own masters students in psych.

One caveat: if you need to take 28 credit hours or more you may choose to earn a masters degree rather than a certificate.

### **I have a masters degree in psych nursing. What will my typical post-masters PMHNP or CNS program of study look like at Rush?**

If your masters is in psych, in order to get a certificate in our PMHNP or CNS programs you will typically need our Advanced Practice Nursing Core courses and additional clinical hours, usually provided in a residency experience (NUR600).

To view the program and to determine which courses you may need, check our website posted here. Be sure to scroll down to the bottom to view the post masters requirements and prerequisites.

[http://www.rushu.rush.edu/nursing/pos/masters\\_psychiatric\\_np.html](http://www.rushu.rush.edu/nursing/pos/masters_psychiatric_np.html)

### **I am an advanced practice nurse with a masters degree in another area of nursing. What will my typical post-masters PMHNP or CNS program of study look like at Rush?**

If your masters is in another area and you are already certified as an Advanced Practice Nurse, you will need our clinical seminars and practica in psychiatric nursing and a residency experience (NUR600).

To view the program and to determine which courses you may need, check our website posted here. Be sure to scroll down to the bottom to view the post masters requirements and prerequisites.

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### **I have a masters degree in another area of nursing but I am not certified as an advanced practice nurse. What courses do I need to get a post-masters certificate from Rush?**

If your masters is in another area of nursing, and you are not an advanced practice nurse, you may need some or all of the Advanced Practice Nursing Core courses and the clinical seminars and practica in psychiatric nursing.

To view the program and to determine which courses you may need, check our website posted here. Be sure to scroll down to the bottom to view the post masters requirements and prerequisites.

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**I am an FNP who has been working with a psychiatric population in my community for twenty years. I have a collaborative agreement with a psychiatrist who has taught me everything he knows. Why do you think I need to complete post-masters in psychiatric nursing?**

In addition to knowledge of the intricate interplay of pathophysiology and psychopathology (which you probably have gained through your practice), a comprehensive understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of therapy and the other management of this challenging population is necessary to provide safe psychiatric care.

As an FNP you may refer "difficult cases" to psychiatrists and other mental health care providers. As a PMHNP, within the limits of your scope of practice and under a collaborative agreement you provide care to "difficult cases" in individual and group therapeutic encounters.

The Rush PMHNP program provides the structure within which students must take the time to think about what they say to and do with patients and to evaluate outcomes of interventions. Our virtual clinical supervision of practice has achieved national recognition and most students grow both personally and professionally as a result of their engagement in this supervision. It is the first step in what we hope is involvement in life-long clinical supervision of practice with this often personally draining yet rewarding patient population.

So, in sum, the advantage to additional education lies in its outcome: your ability to practice theoretically-driven and evidence-based advanced psychiatric nursing.

**But I still don't think I need this. My experience has given me all the knowledge I need to practice**

There must be some systematic check of this ability, and at the moment, that check is provided by certification exams with input from schools of nursing.

**Will my years of experience working with psychiatric patients count toward my clinical hours?**

While we can't count your experience toward college credit, we do consider your background when setting up your clinical practicum. Less practica time will be needed in areas where you are already competent, allowing you to spend more time on skills that you haven't used as much in previous practice. In other words, your clinical time can be tailored to your specific needs.

**I am certified as an adult PMHNP. What courses do I need from Rush for eligibility to take the family PMHNP certification exam?**

Your advisor will need to review your transcripts to be sure, but at a minimum you will need a course on child mental health assessment (and any other critical child content that might be missing from your masters program) in addition to clinical hours with children. Our clinical hours for the post masters degree are currently offered in the NUR600 format, which begins at 140 clock hours per quarter. Additional clinical hours may be required to gain competency with children.

**Do I need to find my own preceptors? What if I know of no one nearby?**

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. Our goal is to find someone who is reasonably close to where you live and work. We make all contractual arrangements with preceptors and clinical sites.

**How long will it take me to complete post-masters?**

The answer to this question depends on what you need, and when you enter. The advanced practice nursing core courses are offered throughout the year in various formats but only once a year online. The psychiatric clinical management series of courses begins in the spring, and continues through fall and winter. Clinical experiences are offered in the fall, winter, and spring. Residencies may be taken any quarter, but most students do them in the summer. For typical programs of study see our website at [http://www.rushu.rush.edu/nursing/pos/masters\\_psychiatric\\_np.html](http://www.rushu.rush.edu/nursing/pos/masters_psychiatric_np.html)

**Can I do my residency hours in my place of employment?**

We recommend that students do their residency hours in a place similar to one that they aspire to work in after they graduate. If you don't have a job yet, residency is a great time to get to know a workplace and for them to get to know you as you provide high quality care to patients or systems at no cost to them. For those students who plan to continue to work in a particular area, residency may provide you with an opportunity to get to know other systems or to work with

preceptors you may admire or choose as mentors. That said, there is no problem with staying at your place of employment if an appropriate preceptor is present and your student hours are distinct from your paid hours.