

**Direct Entry Master of Science in Nursing (DEMSN)  
Curriculum**

The DEMSN plan of study consists of 64 semester-credits and is designed to be taught as a cohort-based program in five (5) semesters over 20 months. Courses will be facilitated using traditional (in-person) and distance education (virtual) modalities. The curriculum incorporates professional nursing practice and leadership skills, including nursing clinical judgement, evidence-based practice, and interprofessional communication, and emphasizes a Culture of Health in provision of person-centered care and clinician well-being. Additionally, artificial intelligence and its impact on nursing, healthcare systems, and population outcomes promote currency with contemporary practice.

DEMSN students will enter the program with all Bachelor’s-level general education coursework and nursing prerequisites completed. Therefore, the program consists of only nursing content including 752 didactic/theory hours, 144 skills laboratory hours, and 672 clinical hours as presented in the table below.

Course Titles	Total Credits	Theory Clock Hours	Skills Lab Clock Hours	Clinical Clock Hours
Essentials of Professional Nursing and a Culture of Health	3	48		
Introduction to Pathophysiology and Pharmacological Therapies	3	48		
Foundations of Health Assessment and Clinical Nursing Skills	6	48	96	48
Nursing Scholarship and Evidence-Based Practice	3	48		
Advancing a Culture of Health: Mental Health Nursing	4	48		48
Advancing a Culture of Health: Acute Care Nursing	7	64	48	96
Advanced Physiology and Pathophysiology	3	48		
Advancing a Culture of Health: Nursing Care of Women, Children, and Families	5	48		96
Advanced Health Assessment	3	48		
Organizational and System Leadership	3	48		
Advanced Pharmacological Therapies	3	48		
Advancing a Culture of Health: Population Health	3	32		48
Healthcare Technology and Care Coordination	2	32		
Advancing a Culture of Health: Chronic Care Nursing	4	32		96
Advancing a Culture of Health: Complex Care Nursing	5	48		96
Quality and Safety through Leadership Practices	3	48		
Synthesis and Role Transition	4	16		144
<b>Totals</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>752</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>672</b>

1 theory credit = 16 hours  
 1 laboratory credit = 48 hours  
 1 clinical credit = 48 hours

Skills laboratory experiences prepare pre-licensure DEMSN graduates for professional nursing roles and responsibilities. Laboratory hours are incorporated early in the program to provide adequate time for students to learn, practice, and be evaluated before performing skills in direct care clinical settings. Clinical experiences account for 43% of DEMSN program contact hours and include both direct care and simulated experiences. Clinical hours are integrated throughout the curriculum and support the achievement of Program Learning Outcomes by providing learning experiences directed at the achievement of course-specific learning outcomes. Student clinical experiences and learning activities increase in complexity throughout the curriculum and are coordinated with theoretical learning experiences. Direct care clinical experiences are facilitated in community-based and acute care settings focused on medical-surgical, critical care, obstetric, pediatric, geriatric, and psychiatric nursing practices. Simulated clinical experiences utilize high-fidelity and virtual scenarios and emphasize clinical judgement and interprofessional collaboration skills. The table below presents planned direct care and simulated

#### DEMSN Plan of Study/Sequence of Courses

Course	Credit Hours
<b>Semester 1 Session A</b>	
Essentials of Professional Nursing Practice	3
Introduction to Pathophysiology and Pharmacological Therapies	3
<b>Semester 1 Session B</b>	
Foundations of Health Assessment and Clinical Nursing Skills	6
<b>Semester 2 Session A</b>	
Nursing Scholarship and Evidence-Based Practice	3
Advancing a Culture of Health: Mental Health Nursing	4
<b>Semester 2 Session B</b>	
Advancing a Culture of Health: Acute Care Nursing	7
<b>Semester 3 Session A</b>	
Advanced Physiology and Pathophysiology	3
Advancing a Culture of Health: Nursing Care of Women, Children, and Families	5
<b>Semester 3 Session B</b>	
Advanced Health Assessment	3
Healthcare Technology and Care Coordination	3
<b>Semester 4 Session A</b>	
Advanced Pharmacological Therapies	3

Advancing a Culture of Health: Population Health	3
<b>Semester 4 Session B</b>	
Organizational and System Leadership	2
Advancing a Culture of Health: Chronic Care Nursing	4
<b>Semester 5 Session A</b>	
Advancing a Culture of Health: Complex Care Nursing	5
Quality and Safety through Leadership Practices	3
<b>Semester 5 Session B</b>	
Synthesis and Role Transition	4
Total	64

**DEMSN Course Descriptions**

**Essentials of Professional Nursing and a Culture of Health**

This course introduces the direct-entry MSN student to professional nursing practice within a Culture of Health framework. Essential concepts related to systems of care and health professional roles, person-centered care, interprofessional communication, cultural influences on health and wellness, safety teaching and learning, and evidence-based practice are presented. Topics such as professionalism, clinician well-being, health promotion, and legal, ethical, political, economic, and social issues are discussed with an emphasis on creating a culture of health.

**Introduction to Pathophysiology and Pharmacological Therapies**

This course integrates pathophysiology and pharmacology concepts for the safe administration and management of pharmacological therapies across the lifespan. The student is introduced to pharmacodynamics, pharmacokinetics, and pharmacotherapeutics of drug classifications and how basic pharmacological concepts relate to disease etiology and pathological processes of body systems. Topics include drug action and interaction, indications and contraindications, routes of administration, safe dose ranges, therapeutic and adverse reactions, and drug use in special populations. Special emphasis is on the role of the nurse in person-centered education to minimize risk and improve outcomes.

**Foundations of Health Assessment and Clinical Nursing Skills**

This course centers on foundational nursing knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities in the provision of person-centered basic nursing care across the lifespan. A clinical decision-making process and Culture of Health framework provide context to help students think critically, make informed clinical judgements,

and assess factors that influence safe and person-centered care delivery. Concepts of holistic data collection, comprehensive health assessment related to normal findings and variations, and basic nursing skills are integrated throughout the course. Application of basic nursing care and skills including infection control, clinical documentation, mobility and immobility, skin and wound care, medication administration, oxygen therapy, fluid and electrolyte balance, bowel care and urinary care are introduced, practiced and evaluated within laboratory experiences. Clinical experiences engage students in clinical decision-making processes for the provision of culturally sensitive, person-centered care.

### **Nursing Scholarship and Evidence-Based Practice**

This course promotes the student's ability to use scientific evidence to enhance the delivery of person-centered care and inform best practices for the achievement of safe, quality, and optimal health care outcomes. Students examine evidence-based research design, implementation, analysis, and interpretation as well as legal and ethical considerations. The research process, critical appraisal of research, and translation of evidence for individual scholarly inquiry, personal nursing enhancement, and future practice protocols and standards are emphasized.

### **Advancing a Culture of Health: Mental Health Nursing**

This course focuses on person-centered nursing care using a holistic perspective with an emphasis on mental illness and mental health promotion and recovery as well as resources in the community. Therapeutic communication, an interprofessional team approach to pharmacological and non-pharmacological therapies, and the continuum of care across health settings are emphasized throughout the course. Legal and ethical issues, advocacy, and safety are addressed. Simulated and in-person care experiences allow students to apply clinical judgement, interviewing and communication skills, and evidence-based approaches to the care of people with mental health issues.

### **Advancing a Culture of Health: Acute Care Nursing**

This course focuses on evidence-based, person-centered nursing care for adults with non-complex acute care illnesses and conditions. Using a Culture of Health framework, students will acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities required to make sound clinical judgements for the promotion, restoration and maintenance of optimal health. Quality and safety are emphasized in supporting positive health outcomes and advanced nursing skills are addressed. Application of clinical judgement occurs in lab, simulation, and clinical in acute care and community settings.

### **Advanced Physiology and Pathophysiology**

This course builds upon the students' knowledge of anatomy, physiology, and pathophysiology, and focuses on the interrelationship between physiology and pathophysiology affecting wellness and disease states across the lifespan. Enhanced knowledge of physiological and pathologic mechanisms will assist the student to identify and interpret changes from normal functioning and differentiate clinical manifestations for common conditions and diseases encountered in diverse people across the lifespan. In addition to etiology, pathogenesis, and disease evolution the influence of environmental, geographic, genetic, developmental, and global factors on disease manifestation will be presented.

### **Advancing a Culture of Health: Nursing Care of Women, Children, and Families**

This course introduces students to current trends in family-centered nursing through a holistic approach to concepts related to health promotion, restoration and maintenance of childbearing women and children from birth through adolescence. The course emphasizes normal growth and development, safety and injury prevention, disease management, and the impact of culture on the family unit's response to psychological and physical stressors. Using a Culture of Health framework, students will apply sound clinical judgment in the provision of family-centered nursing care within simulation and clinical settings.

### **Advanced Health Assessment**

This course builds upon basic health and physical assessment skills and promotes the development of advanced health assessment skills necessary to create a comprehensive health database and make clinical decisions for diverse people across the life span. The process of diagnostic reasoning is emphasized as the primary means of collecting and analyzing data obtained from the health history, physical examination, and diagnostic procedures.

### **Organizational and System Leadership**

This course examines theories of organizational design and leadership as they apply to health services and dynamic healthcare systems. Students analyze the interactions of government authorities, delivery systems, healthcare finance and regulation, and organizational innovation. Management principles focused on nursing leadership roles, responsibilities and issues related to organizational behavior are emphasized. Concepts of change and resistance to change, motivation and morale, power and politics,

and leadership are explored within the context of the organizational environment allowing the student to integrate key principles of organizational dynamics and leadership effectiveness.

### **Advanced Pharmacological Therapies**

This course builds upon foundational knowledge of pharmacological therapies and fosters an in-depth understanding of pharmacological principles based on evidence-based guidelines and cultural, socioeconomic, and legal influences. Emphasis is placed on common drug classes prescribed by advanced practice nurses for acute and chronic conditions across the life span in accordance with state regulations. Factors influencing effective therapy and legal considerations are also included.

### **Advancing a Culture of Health: Population Health**

This course explores principles of community health and care of populations across the lifespan within a Culture of Health framework. Health care needs and services for populations and communities centered on community-based nursing practice for individuals, families and communities, and public health nursing in local, regional and global settings are addressed. Application of clinical judgement includes health equity action plan development focused on wellness and risk and disease prevention through relationships with population health partnerships. Clinical experiences occur in community settings.

### **Healthcare Technology and Care Coordination**

This course will evaluate the role of technology in coordination of safe, evidence-based care. Students will analyze current and emerging technologies, evaluate how informatics is integrated into complex healthcare systems, discuss the impact of technology policy and legislation on safety practices, and explore the nurse leader's role in the implementation and use of technologies to promote quality healthcare. Artificial intelligence, virtual nursing, and applications that support education, communication, safety, and privacy for the recipient of nursing care will be emphasized.

### **Advancing a Culture of Health: Chronic Care Nursing**

This course focuses on evidence-based, person-centered nursing care for adults with chronic conditions. Using a Culture of Health framework, students will acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities required to make sound clinical judgements for the maintenance of optimal health and coordination of chronic care and transitions. Palliative care is addressed with emphasis on advocacy and shared decision-

making models. Application of clinical judgment occurs in simulation and clinical in chronic care and community settings.

### **Advancing a Culture of Health: Complex Care Nursing**

This course focuses on evidence-based, person-centered nursing care for adults with complex and life-threatening illnesses, injuries, and conditions. Using a Culture of Health framework, students will acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities required to make sound clinical judgements and achievement of positive health outcomes within urgent care, emergency care, and intensive care settings. Clinical experiences occur in simulation, acute care, and community settings.

### **Quality and Safety through Leadership Practices**

This course examines nursing roles and leadership skills essential to creating and maintaining safety and quality care in healthcare organizations across the continuum of care. Communication and management skills, managerial decision-making, time and stress management, ethical and regulatory issues, and nursing shared governance are explored. Students focus on enhancing their personal and professional leadership skills within a Culture of Health framework with an emphasis on continuous improvement processes and the role the nurse plays in evaluating quality and safety in the healthcare system to reduce errors and improve health outcomes.

### **Synthesis and Role Transition**

This course promotes student integration of knowledge, skills, and attitudes learned throughout the curriculum and the development of increasing levels of autonomy in the management of care and professional nursing practice. Care management, clinical judgement, priority setting, safety, quality improvement, collaboration, delegation, and time management are emphasized. Precepted clinical experience occurs in a variety of healthcare settings.