Graduate and Professional Programs Admissions
Policy and Procedures
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Graduate and Professional Programs Admissions

Policy and Procedures

**Policy:** The College of Nursing needs to have admissions procedures which will ensure that the admissions process is fairly implemented, ensure diversity in the student population, and clearly defines the admissions criteria by program.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is intended to:

- Standardize the admissions policies across the College of Nursing by program
- Provide reference to new/old employees in the Student Affairs Office on admissions procedures
- Ensure consistency in information delivered to decision making committees across programs.

**Scope:** Student Affairs and AAC
Nursing Education Application/Selection Process

Prior to each admission cycle, the Associate Dean for Academic Programs, in consultation with the Nursing Education Program Director, will determine the number of applicants to be admitted to the Nursing Education program. Applicants for the Nursing Education program will be processed according to the criteria listed below. The review consists of applicant’s last 60 grade point average (GPA), completion of pre-requisites, confirmation of an active RN license, and status of reference letters. Admission will be extended to a predetermined number of most qualified applicants with priority given to highest qualified applicants.

Admission Criteria

Criteria:

1. Last 60 Grade Point Average
2. Completion of pre-requisites
3. Verification of an active RN license
4. Submission of 3 letters of recommendation

Developing the Matrix

In developing the matrix Student Affairs will collect transcript data for each applicant and provide a single spreadsheet consisting of applicants for all OUCN sites to AAC for review. Academic Affairs Committee will review the applicants and recommend decisions of admission, alternate and deny for each applicant.

Decision Making Process

AAC will recommend decisions that are forwarded by Student Affairs to the Dean. Student Affairs is responsible for all applicant communications related to admissions. Admission actions shall be processed within two weeks of the AAC meeting.

Who Will Be Admitted?

The pre-determined cohort size will be satisfied by use of the criteria discussed above.
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Nursing Administration/Management Selection Process

Applicants for the Nursing Administration/Management Programs will be processed according to the admission criteria listed below. The review consists of applicant’s last 60 grade point average, completion of pre-requisites, confirmation of an active RN license, and status of reference letters. Admission will be extended to a predetermined number of most qualified applicants with priority given to highest qualified applicants.

Admission Criteria
Criteria:

1. Last 60 Grade Point Average
2. Completion of pre-requisites
3. Verification of an active RN license
4. Submission of 3 letters of recommendation

Developing the Matrix

In developing the matrix Student Affairs will collect transcript data for each applicant and provide a single spreadsheet consisting of applicants for all OUCN sites to AAC for review. Academic Affairs Committee will review the applicants and recommend decisions of admission, alternate and deny for each applicant.

Decision Making Process

AAC will recommend decisions that are forwarded by Student Affairs to the Dean. Student Affairs is responsible for all applicant communications related to admissions. Admission actions shall be processed within two weeks of the AAC meeting.

Who Will Be Admitted?

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CNS Application/Selection Process
Prior to each admission cycle, the Associate Dean for Academic Programs, in consultation the CNS Program Director, will determine the number of students to be admitted for the current admission cycle. Review of applicant’s grade point average, post-BSN experience, and earned graduate degrees will determine admission consideration. Additional admission consideration (i.e. reading of essays and interview offers) will be extended to a predetermined number of most qualified applicants and priority will be given to applicants with the highest GPA, strongest experience, and earned graduate degrees.

Admission Criteria and Weights

Criteria:
1. Grade Point Average (from a nationally accredited Nursing Program)
   - Outstanding (3 points) - 3.75-4.0
   - Above Average (2 points) - 3.50 – 3.749
   - Average (1 point) = 3.25-3.49
   - Below Average (0 points) = 3.0-3.249
2. Experience post BSN
   - Outstanding (2 points) - 5 or more years
   - Average (1 point) - 2 - 5 years
   - Below Average (0 points) - < 2 years
3. Earned Graduate Degree
   - Outstanding (2 points) - Graduate degree in health related area
   - Average (1 point) - Graduate degree in non-health related area
   - Below Average (0 points) - No previous graduate degree
4. Essay
   - Outstanding (4 points)
   - Above Average (3 points)
   - Average (2 point)
   - Below Average (1 points)
5. Interview
   - Outstanding (4 points)
   - Above Average (3 points)
   - Average (2 point)
   - Below Average (1 points)
Weights for each criterion are listed below and will be multiplied by applicant’s scores in each respective area. These scores will be totaled by Student Affairs (SA) and provided in spreadsheet format (matrix) to AAC for admission discussion and recommendation.

1. Grade Point Average – 1.0
2. Experience - .75
3. Graduate Degrees - .5
4. Essay – 1.0
5. Written Response to Question – 0.5
6. Interview – 1.5

After consideration and ranking of applicants by grade point average, experience and earned graduate degrees, Student Affairs will provide the CNS Program Director a prioritized list of applicant essays for review.

Written Communication Skills

Essays are collected as applicants complete the Supplemental Application. CNS faculty will evaluate essays based on technical writing ability (spelling, grammar, punctuation) and content (organization, succinctly made points, defense of conclusions). As noted earlier, written communication skills are carefully considered in the evaluation of candidates. Essays will be provided to the reader without identifiable information such as names, GPAs, etc. Two CNS faculty will review and score each applicant’s essay. At least one of the reviewers will be a CNS within the applicant’s desired specialty. The CNS faculty reviewers will independently submit essay scores to Student Affairs for averaging and inclusion in the scoring matrix. The essays will be scored using the following scale:

4 = Outstanding
3 = Above Average
2 = Average
1= Below Average

Immediately prior to the interview, the applicant will be asked to respond to one question on a subject with which they are familiar. The response should be limited to 5-8 sentences (one paragraph). This response would be evaluated based on the applicant’s critical thinking skills, grammar, punctuation, and cogent thoughts and ideas. Criteria for scoring the response would be:

4 = Outstanding (demonstrates excellent ability to critically, concisely and cogently address one topic; applies appropriate grammar and punctuation within the written document)
3 = Above Average (demonstrates ability to address one topic, implements two of three elements (critical concise and/or cogent thoughts; relatively appropriate grammar and punctuation)
2 = Average (has some difficulty addressing one topic: utilizes only one element of thinking process, several grammar and punctuation errors)
1= Below Average – does not demonstrate ability to provide written content with appropriate thinking processes; grammar and punctuation are not acceptable)
The Interview

Ideally, interview panels will consist of at least two (2) members of the CNS faculty; at least one of the panelists will be a CNS within the student’s selected population foci. Each panel will have the applicant’s supplemental application and letters of reference written on behalf of the applicant. These materials will be available to the panel at least 3 days before the scheduled interview. Panel members are strongly encouraged to review these confidential materials prior to the interview.

The panel will not have access to the applicant’s transcripts. The interview will provide the applicant the opportunity to clarify and elaborate their understanding of the CNS role and selected population foci; assure consistency between their academic and career goals; explore their perceptions regarding their strengths, assets and challenges during the program and in the role of CNS; and to assess their communication skills and professionalism.

Questions during the interview will be specific to responses offered in the essay. Additional questions may be posed in response to the applicant’s statements of interests and motivation for entering the CNS program. Questions involving marital status, financial status, age, rural or urban work interest, multicultural exposure, under-served client experience, client focus, future practice plans or religious affiliation, are not appropriate for asking during the interview process. In the event the applicant volunteers this information, it may be appropriate to follow up to some extent. For example, panel members should not ask how the applicants expect to finance their education.

The recommendation is that a 20-minute interview block be used as follows:

• The panel will preview the applicant for one or two minutes before inviting the applicant into the room.
• The interview itself should be about 15 minutes.
• Once the applicant has been excused, the panel is asked to take 5 minutes to individually rate the applicant.

Conflict of Interest

If a member of the interview panel has reasonable belief that past or current experience with a candidate could potentially lead to bias or give that candidate an advantage during the interview, please notify Student Affairs as soon as possible to ensure the applicant can be assigned to another panel.

Scoring the Interview

The interview will be scored by the individual panel members on a 4-point scale. The average (score of 2) should be in comparison to average students currently in the College. Applicants given a score of 4 should be truly outstanding. The applicant clearly articulates goals consistent with the CNS role and the specialty selected, and their responses during the interview clearly indicate motivation to pursue the CNS program. An overall score of 1 will preclude the applicant from further consideration.
Comments from the interview panel are strongly encouraged. Why did you score the applicant the way that you did? Were there negative characteristics that you noted? Did something emerge during the interview that you felt was a particularly strong characteristic of the applicant? During the final stages of the admission process, all remaining applicants in the pool “look the same”. There is a final score on the interview, which is then added into the matrix where all criteria are weighted and the candidates are ranked for admission consideration.

For applicants the panel feels are exceptionally strong (score of 4) or weak (score of 1), justification of those scores is important. If questions arise regarding admissions decisions documentation is needed regarding WHY the interview was weak. If a person with a lower GPA is selected over candidates with higher scores because of a good interview, strengths that were observed need to be documented.

Decision Making Process

After all interviews have been completed, Student Affairs will compute average scores from the CNS Interview Panel and add scores to the master applicant matrix. Student Affairs will then provide AAC with the applicant matrix. Via Student Affairs, AAC will recommend admission, alternate and deny actions, which are then forwarded by SA to the Dean. Student Affairs is responsible for all applicant communications related to admissions. Admission action letters shall be processed within two weeks of the AAC meeting.

Who Will Be Admitted?

The pre-determined cohort size will be satisfied by using pre-determined weights for the criteria below.

1. Grade Point Average
2. Post-BSN experience
3. Earned Graduate Degree
4. Demonstrated Written Skills (Essay)
5. Demonstrated Verbal Skills (Interview)

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Nurse Practitioner Program Application/Selection Process

Prior to each admission cycle, the NP Program Director, in consultation with the Associate Dean for Academic Programs, will determine the number of students to be admitted for the current admission cycle. Review of applicant’s grade point average, post-BSN experience, and earned graduate degrees will determine admission consideration. Additional admission consideration (i.e. reading of essays and interview offers) will be extended to a predetermined number of most qualified applicants and priority will be given to applicants with the highest GPA, strongest experience, and earned graduate degrees.

Admission Criteria and Weights

Criteria:

1. Grade Point Average (from a nationally accredited Nursing Program)
   - Outstanding (3 points) – 3.75-4.0
   - Above Average (2 points) – 3.50 – 3.749
   - Average (1 point) = 3.25-3.49
   - Below Average (0 points) = 3.0-3.249

2. Experience post BSN
   - Outstanding (2 points) – 5 or more years
   - Average (1 point) - 2 – 5 years
   - Below Average (0 points) - < 2 years

3. Earned Graduate Degree
   - Outstanding (2 points) = Graduate degree in health related area
   - Average (1 point) = Graduate degree in non-health related area
   - Below Average (0 points) = No previous graduate degree

4. Essay
   - Outstanding (4 points)
   - Above Average (3 points)
   - Average (2 point)
   - Below Average (1 points)

5. Interview
   - Outstanding (4 points)
   - Above Average (3points)
   - Average (2 point)
   - Below Average (1 points)

Weights for each criterion are listed below and will be multiplied by applicant’s scores in each respective area. These scores will be totaled by Student Affairs (SA) and provided in spreadsheet format (matrix) to AAC for admission discussion and recommendation.
1. Grade Point Average – 1.0
2. Experience - .75
3. Graduate Degrees - .5
4. Essay – 1.0
5. Written Response to Question – 0.5
6. Interview – 1.5

After consideration and ranking of applicants by grade point average, experience and earned graduate degrees, Student Affairs will provide the NP Office a prioritized list of applicant essays for review.

**Written Communication Skills**

Essays are collected as applicants complete the Supplemental Application. NP faculty will evaluate essays based on technical writing ability (spelling, grammar, punctuation) and content (organization, succinctly made points, defense of conclusions). As noted earlier, written communication skills are carefully considered in the evaluation of candidates. Essays will be provided to the reader without identifiable information such as names, GPAs, etc. Two NP faculty will review and score each applicant’s essay. At least one of the reviewers will be a NP within the applicant’s desired specialty. The NP faculty reviewers will independently submit essay scores to Student Affairs for averaging and inclusion in the scoring matrix. The essays will be scored using the following scale:

4 = Outstanding
3 = Above Average
2 = Average
1= Below Average

Immediately prior to the interview, the applicant will be asked to respond to one question on a subject with which they are familiar. The response should be limited to 5-8 sentences (one paragraph). This response would be evaluated based on the applicant’s critical thinking skills, grammar, punctuation, and cogent thoughts and ideas. Criteria for scoring the response would be:

4 = Outstanding (demonstrates excellent ability to critically, concisely and cogently address one topic; applies appropriate grammar and punctuation within the written document)
3 = Above Average (demonstrates ability to address one topic, implements two of three elements (critical concise and/or cogent thoughts; relatively appropriate grammar and punctuation)
2 = Average (has some difficulty addressing one topic: utilizes only one element of thinking process, several grammar and punctuation errors)
1= Below Average – does not demonstrate ability to provide written content with appropriate thinking processes; grammar and punctuation are not acceptable)

**The Interview**

Ideally, interview panels will consist of at least two (2) members of the NP faculty; at least one of the panelists will be a NP. Each panel will have the applicant’s supplemental application and letters of reference written on behalf of the applicant. These materials will be available to the

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panel at least 3 days before the scheduled interview. Panel members are strongly encouraged to review these confidential materials prior to the interview.

The panel will not have access to the applicant’s transcripts. The interview will provide the applicant the opportunity to clarify and elaborate their understanding of the NP role and selected population foci; assure consistency between their academic and career goals; explore their perceptions regarding their strengths, assets and challenges during the program and in the role of NP; and to assess their communication skills and professionalism.

Questions during the interview will be specific to responses offered in the essay. Additional questions may be posed in response to the applicant’s statements of interests and motivation for entering the NP program. Questions involving marital status, financial status, age, rural or urban work interest, multicultural exposure, under-served client experience, client focus, future practice plans or religious affiliation, are not appropriate for asking during the interview process. In the event the applicant volunteers this information, it may be appropriate to follow up to some extent. For example, panel members should not ask how the applicants expect to finance their education.

The recommendation is that a 20-minute interview block be used as follows:

- The panel will preview the applicant for one or two minutes before inviting the applicant into the room.
- The interview itself should be about 15 minutes.
- Once the applicant has been excused, the panel is asked to take 5 minutes to individually rate the applicant.

**Conflict of Interest**

If a member of the interview panel has reasonable belief that past or current experience with a candidate could potentially lead to bias or give that candidate an advantage during the interview, please notify Student Affairs as soon as possible to ensure the applicant can be assigned to another panel.

**Scoring the Interview**

The interview will be scored by the individual panel members on a 4-point scale. The average (score of 2) should be in comparison to average students currently in the College. Applicants given a score of 4 should be truly outstanding. The applicant clearly articulates goals consistent with the NP role and the specialty selected, and their responses during the interview clearly indicate motivation to pursue the NP program. An overall score of 1 will preclude the applicant from further consideration.

Comments from the interview panel are strongly encouraged. Why did you score the applicant the way that you did? Were there negative characteristics that you noted? Did something emerge during the interview that you felt was a particularly strong characteristic of the applicant? During the final stages of the admission process, all remaining applicants in the pool “look the same”. There is a final score on the interview, which is then added into the matrix where all criteria are weighted and the candidates are ranked for admission consideration.
For applicants the panel feels are exceptionally strong (score of 4) or weak (score of 1), justification of those scores is important. If questions arise regarding admissions decisions documentation is needed regarding WHY the interview was weak. If a person with a lower GPA is selected over candidates with higher scores because of a good interview, strengths that were observed need to be documented.

**Decision Making Process**

After all interviews have been completed, Student Affairs will compute average scores from the NP interview panel and add scores to the master applicant matrix. Student Affairs will then provide AAC with the applicant matrix. Via Student Affairs, AAC will recommend admission, alternate and deny actions, which are then forwarded by SA to the Dean. Student Affairs is responsible for all applicant communications related to admissions. Admission action letters shall be processed within two weeks of the AAC meeting.

**Who Will Be Admitted?**

The pre-determined cohort size will be satisfied by using pre-determined weights for the criteria below.

1. Grade Point Average
2. Post-BSN experience
3. Earned Graduate Degree
4. Demonstrated Written Skills (Essay)
5. Demonstrated Verbal Skills (Interview)

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Doctor of Nursing Practice Application/Selection Process

The OUCN DNP program utilizes a rolling admission process to ensure qualified candidates are admitted. Rolling admission is designed to encourage students to apply early to receive priority consideration for scholarships, awards, and other forms of financial aid. Utilization of rolling admissions, the DNP Selection Committee reviews applications for each admission cycle. Once a complete application is submitted, applicants are notified via Student Affairs. The Associate Dean of Academic Programs, in consultation with the DNP Program Director(s), will determine the maximum number of applicants to be admitted to the program for each cycle. When the maximum number for admission is achieved, the application cycle is closed and applications will only be reviewed for future cycles.

Admission criteria and weights are listed below.

Criterion:

1. Grade Point Average for last 60 credits (from a nationally accredited Nursing Program)
   - Outstanding (2 points) – 3.5-4.0
   - Above Average (1 point) - 3.25-3.49
   - Average (0 points) – 3.0-3.249
   - Below Average – Any grade of F (-1 point)

2. APRN Experience (CNS or NP)
   - Outstanding (2 points) – 5 or more years
   - Average (1 point) – 2 or more but less than 5 years
   - Below Average (0 points) – less than 2 years

3. Publications, Grants or Awards
   - Outstanding (3 points) 5 or more
   - Average (2 point)- 2 or more but less than 5
   - Below Average (1 point)- 1

4. Written Supplemental Application Questions and Goal Statement
   - Outstanding (4 points)
   - Above Average (3 points)
   - Average (2 point)
   - Below Average (1 point)

5. Interview
   - Outstanding (4 points)
   - Above Average (3 points)
   - Average (2 point)
   - Below Average (1 points)

6. References (minimum 3)
Weights for each criterion are listed below and will be multiplied by applicant’s scores in each respective area. These scores will be totaled by Student Affairs (SA) and provided in spreadsheet format (matrix) to AAC for admission discussion and recommendation.

1. Grade Point Average – 1.0
2. Experience - .75
3. Publications, Grants, Awards – 1.0
4. Written Supplemental Application Questions and Goal Statement – 1.0
5. Interview – 1.5

Written Communication Skills

Two DNP faculty members will review and score each applicant’s responses to supplemental application questions & goal statement. Averages of 0 are removed from further admission discussion.

The Interview

Ideally, interview teams will consist of members of the DNP faculty. At least one of the panel members will be a DNP. Each panel will have the applicant’s supplemental application and letters of reference written on behalf of the applicant. These materials will be available to the panel one week before the scheduled interview.

The applicant’s GPA is a major determinant of their invitation to interview, and panel members should be assured that all candidates are academically qualified to complete the program.

Questions used during the interview will be the same ones answered in the Supplemental application. Additional questions may be posed from the applicant’s statements of interests and motivation for entering the DNP program. Questions involving marital status, financial status, age, rural or urban work interest, multicultural exposure, under-served client experience, client focus, future practice plans or religious affiliation, will never be asked during the interviews.

The recommendation is that a 45-minute interview block be used as follows.

- The panel will ‘preview’ the next applicant’s information prior to the interview.
- The interview itself should be about 20-30 minutes.
- The panel will complete post interview scores and provide to Student Affairs.

Conflict of Interest

If a member of the interview panel has reasonable belief that his or her past or current experience with a candidate could potentially lead to bias or give that candidate an advantage during the interview, s/he should notify Student Affairs as soon as possible so that the applicant can be assigned to another panel.
**Scoring the Interview**

The interview will be scored by the individual panel members on a 4-point scale. The average (score of 2) should be in comparison to average students currently in the College. Applicants given a score of 4 should be truly outstanding – they have demonstrated a clear fit with the DNP role and specialty they have selected during the interview. An overall score of 1 will preclude the applicant from further consideration.

**Comments from the interview panel are strongly encouraged.** Why did you score the applicant the way that you did? Were there negative characteristics that you noted? Did something emerge during the interview that you felt was a particularly strong characteristic of the applicant? During the final stages of the admission process, all remaining applicants in the pool “look the same.” There is a final score on the interview, which is then added into the matrix where all criteria are weighted and the candidates are ranked for admission consideration.

For applicants the panel feels are exceptionally strong (score of 4) or weak (score of 1), justification of those scores is important. If questions arise regarding admissions decisions, we need documentation of WHY the interview was weak. If a person with a lower GPA is selected over candidates with higher scores because of a good interview, the strengths that were observed need to be documented.

4 = Outstanding  
3 = Above Average  
2 = Average  
1 = Below Average

**Decision Making Process**

After all interviews have been completed, Student Affairs will compute average scores from the DNP Interview Panel and add scores to the master applicant matrix. Student Affairs will then provide AAC with the applicant matrix. Via Student Affairs, AAC will recommend admission, alternate and deny actions, which are then forwarded by SA to the Dean. Student Affairs is responsible for all applicant communications related to admissions. Admission action letters shall be processed within two weeks of the AAC meeting.

**Who Will Be Admitted?**

The pre-determined cohort size will be satisfied by using pre-determined weights for the criteria below.

1. Grade Point Average  
2. Experience  
3. Publications, Grants, Awards  
4. Written Supplemental Application Questions and Goal Statement  
5. Interview
## Revision History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revision</th>
<th>Effective Date</th>
<th>Description of Changes</th>
<th>Requested By</th>
<th>Approved By</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>7/27/2011</td>
<td>Initial Release</td>
<td>Shawn Elwell</td>
<td>Assistant Dean for Student and Alumni Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>4/8/2012</td>
<td>Standardized across programs</td>
<td>Shawn Elwell</td>
<td>Assistant Dean for Student Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>10/22/2013</td>
<td>Updated CNS, NP and DNP to require credits from an accredited university</td>
<td>Pam Crawford</td>
<td>Assistant Dean for Student Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3/9/2016</td>
<td>Reviewed and no revisions needed.</td>
<td>S. Fix</td>
<td>Assistant Dean for Student Affairs</td>
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