

ADULT/GERONTOLOGY ACUTE CARE NURSING, CAPSTONE CERTIFICATE

The post graduate Adult/Gerontology Acute Care Capstone Certificate program addresses the growing need for acute care nurse practitioners (APNs), particularly in adult and geriatric populations. As healthcare evolves, there is increasing demand for advanced practice nurses with acute care training, especially in hospitals requiring acute care licensure, such as UW Hospital, Vanderbilt, and The Mayo Clinic.

This hybrid program offers flexibility while maintaining rigorous academic and clinical standards. Students will complete 500 clinical hours and a variable number of credit hours, depending on their background. The curriculum focuses on advanced clinical decision-making and leadership in the care of adults and older adults, including those in pediatric and rural community settings.

HOW TO GET IN

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The School of Nursing conducts a holistic review of all application materials. Regardless of experience level, ideal candidates possess a desire to improve their ability to deliver complex care and expand their knowledge and understanding of the specialty. The program seeks candidates who are committed to providing care to underserved populations in need of services. Since the program requires a significant time expenditure for clinical training and coursework, candidates must understand these demands and indicate they are prepared to make time in their schedules accordingly.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Bachelor's degree from an accredited nursing program
- Master's degree from an accredited nursing program
- RN license
- Certification as an advanced practice nurse or eligible to apply for certification as an advanced practice nurse
- Completion of prerequisite courses in advanced assessment across the lifespan, pathophysiology, and pharmacotherapeutics prior to starting the certificate

ADMISSIONS TIMELINE

Adult Career and Special Student Services (ACSSS) is the admitting office for all University Special students. However, the School of Nursing (<https://nursing.wisc.edu/>) makes the final admission decision upon review of all applicant materials.

- Application opens: Early September
- Application deadline: February 1
 - All materials, including transcripts, must be received by the deadline.

- Applications reviewed: February-March
- Notification of admission decision: April

APPLICATION

1. Apply for this Capstone Certificate (<https://pdc.wisc.edu/certificate/>)
 - a. Under Program - Admit Term - Choose the Fall Term
 - b. Capstone Certification Classification = Adlt/Gerontology Acute Nursing (UNCS058)
2. Seek three (3) letters of recommendation
3. Submit the following materials:
 - a. Official transcripts
 - b. Postgraduate Education Statement
 - c. Curriculum vitae or resume
 - d. Photocopy of nursing license from your current state of residence
 - e. Photocopy of advanced practice certification (if you are an APN)

Submit materials to:

Graduate Admissions
UW-Madison School of Nursing
Suite 1100 Cooper Hall
701 Highland Avenue
Madison WI 53705

ENROLLMENT

Admitted students receive a formal letter of admission to UW-Madison from Adult Career and Special Student Services along with general enrollment information. Additional details are provided on the ACSSS enrollment page (<http://continuingstudies.wisc.edu/advising/enroll-special.htm>).

The Graduate Academic Services Coordinator will send an email to admitted students with specific information pertaining to enrollment in and completion of the capstone program.

REQUIREMENTS

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Code	Title	Credits
Core		
Students must complete the following courses.		
NURSING 722	Advanced Practice Nursing Theory: Adults and Older Adults	3
NURSING 726	Foundations for APN Clinical Practice I	3
NURSING 727	Foundations for APN Clinical Practice II	3
NURSING 826	Foundations for APN Clinical Practice III	3
Application		
Students must complete each of the following courses for 2 credits each.		
NURSING 728	Advanced Practice Clinical Application and Role Development I	2
NURSING 729	Advanced Practice Clinical Application and Role Development II	2

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR CAPSTONE CERTIFICATE COMPLETION

- Students must earn a minimum grade of C in each course used to meet Capstone Certificate requirements.
- Courses in which a student elects the pass/fail or audit option will not count toward completion of Capstone Certificate requirements.
- All of the Capstone Certificate credits must be earned "in residence" (which includes on campus and distance-delivered courses) at UW-Madison.
- All of the Capstone Certificate credits must be earned while enrolled in the Capstone Certificate program.

Individual Capstone Certificate programs may have additional requirements for completion, which will be listed above as/if applicable.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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1. Conduct a comprehensive and systematic assessment of health and illness parameters in complex situations.
2. Design, implement, and evaluate care-driven interventions based on nursing science and other sciences.
3. Develop and sustain care-driven relationships and partnerships with patients (individual, family, or populations) and other professionals to facilitate optimal care and patient outcomes.
4. Demonstrate advanced levels of clinical judgment, systems thinking, and accountability in designing, delivering, and evaluating evidence-based care to improve patient outcomes.
5. Guide, mentor, and support other nurses to achieve excellence in nursing practice.
6. Educate and guide individuals and groups through complex health and situational transitions.
7. Use conceptual and analytical skills in evaluating the links among practice, organizational, population, fiscal, and policy issues.

ACCREDITATION

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Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (<http://www.aacnnursing.org/CCNE/>)

Accreditation status: Next accreditation review: 2026-2027.

CERTIFICATION/LICENSURE

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This program prepares students to meet the acute care nursing coursework and clinical hour requirements to sit for the ANCC

Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner board certification examination and gain the AGACNP credential.

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION/LICENSURE DISCLOSURE (NC-SARA)

The United States Department of Education (via 34 CFR Part 668 (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-VI/part-668/toc=1>)) requires institutions that provide distance education to disclose information for programs leading to professional certification or licensure. The expectation is that institutions will determine whether each applicable academic program meets state professional licensure requirements and provide a general disclosure of such on an official university website.

Professional licensure requirements vary from state-to-state and can change year-to-year; they are established in a variety of state statutes, regulations, rules, and policies; and they center on a range of educational requirements, including degree type, specialized accreditation, total credits, specific courses, and examinations.

UW-Madison has taken reasonable efforts to determine whether this program satisfies the educational requirements for certification/licensure in states where prospective and enrolled students are located and is disclosing that information as follows.

Disclaimer: This information is based on the most recent annual review of state agency certification/licensure data and is subject to change. All students are strongly encouraged to consult with the individual/office listed in the Contact Information box on this page and with the applicable state agency for specific information.

The requirements of this program meet certification/licensure requirements in the following states:

Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Washington, Wisconsin, Wyoming, District of Columbia, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, U.S. Virgin Islands

The requirements of this program do not meet certification/licensure requirements in the following states:

Not applicable

Updated: 1 June 2025