



# The University of Texas at Austin School of Nursing

## Alternate Entry Graduate Programs: Frequently Asked Questions

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### General Information:

#### What is the Alternate Entry (AE) graduate program?

The Alternate Entry Master of Science in Nursing (AEMSN) program is designed for persons holding Baccalaureate or graduate degrees in disciplines other than nursing.

#### Will I have a Bachelors degree in Nursing when I graduate?

While AE students complete coursework to prepare them for their RN licensure, they do not earn a Bachelors degree. After successfully completing an AE program, the student will have a Masters or PhD in Nursing.

#### What degrees and concentrations does the School of Nursing (SON) offer?

1) Alternate Entry Master of Science in Nursing in any one of the following concentration areas:

-  Adult - Gerontology Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS)
-  Psych/Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP)
-  Leadership in Diverse Settings (LeaDs)

2) Alternate Entry Doctor of Philosophy (AEPhD) degree

#### How do I schedule an appointment with a graduate program coordinator for information about the programs?

We recommend that if possible you attend one of the frequent [information sessions](#) held throughout the year. The schedule for the sessions may be found on the School of Nursing website. Additionally, you may email the coordinator, [Tracy Demchuk](#), with questions or to schedule an appointment.

Prior to requesting additional information, we recommend that you visit the School of Nursing website and/or review the FAQs below.

#### Where are the School of Nursing and the Graduate Student Affairs Office located?

The School of Nursing is located at 1710 Red River, Austin, Texas 78701. The Graduate Student Affairs Office is on the main entrance floor (2<sup>nd</sup> level) in Rooms 2.414 and 2.408.

#### Can you mail me a packet of information?

Information packages are not provided as all of the information available to prospective students may be found on the [School of Nursing website](#).

## Does the School of Nursing offer any on-line or distance learning courses or degrees?

While many of the courses use a variety of technologies in teaching, many of which include use of online strategies, all courses are taught in classroom or clinical settings.

## Admission Requirements and the Application Procedures:

### When can apply for admissions and what is the application deadline?

The online AEMSN and AEPHD admissions application is available **August 1<sup>st</sup>** and the application deadline is **October 1<sup>st</sup>**.

### How do I apply to the graduate program in Nursing?

The Graduate and International Admissions Center (GIAC) process applications for graduate admissions. To apply for graduate admission to the School of Nursing the admissions application must be completed electronically at [Apply Texas](#) during the open application period of **August 1 through October 1**.

The following documents must be uploaded via the [Online Status Check](#) page by the **APPLICATION DEADLINE of October 1st**:

- ✚ **Application**-GIAC process applications for graduate admissions. Applications are to be completed and paid at [Apply Texas](#). For additional information on Graduate admissions, please visit the [University of Texas at Austin Graduate School](#) webpage.
- ✚ **Official Transcript(s)** from each **four-year academic institution** you have attended as well as **transcripts** from **Community Colleges** attended for prerequisite courses. Upload a copy of official transcripts dated one year or less; if admitted official, hard copy, transcripts are required.
- ✚ **Official** report of **GRE** scores; scores are valid 5 years prior to the program start date. GRE School Code: 6882 (a department code is not required).
- ✚ Current **Curriculum Vitae (CV)** indicating educational background, professional experience, volunteer experience and other relevant information (e.g. publications, scholarship and awards, professional organizations and community activities).
- ✚ **Statement of Purpose** should be uploaded on the Status Check page. **DO NOT use the essay box on ApplyTexas**. *The SOP must be double spaced, 1 inch margins, 12-point and maximum length of 2 pages, addressing the following:*
  - Discuss the development of your interest in nursing graduate education.
  - Discuss the basis for your choosing nursing as opposed to other health-related professions.
  - Identify the concentration for which you are applying, including the basis for choice, any experience in this area, and goals for working in this area.
  - Discuss any special circumstances that you believe require further clarification.
- ✚ **Three references**. Provide the name, position and email address for three recommenders on the application for admissions. Recommenders are sent an email with instructions on completing the reference form.
  - *At minimum one recommender must be from a healthcare professional, such as a nurse, physician, nurse practitioner or clinical nurse specialist.*
- ✚ **Prerequisite check sheet**. Provided after application completion to be completed by student.
- ✚ **Prerequisite transcript evaluation** completed by the School of Nursing (if applicable).
- ✚ **International applicants** must provide official report of Test of English as a Foreign Language (**TOEFL**).

Please Note: **Former or current graduate student** of UT Austin last enrolled in a graduate program other than nursing, must pay and submit an application to [Another Graduate Major](#) and provide all applicable documents.

**When does the AEMSN and AEPHD program begin?**

The AE program has one admission per academic year and begins in the summer semester.

**Is there a minimum GPA required for admission?**

The Graduate School of the University of Texas at Austin requires an upper-division GPA of at least a 3.0. This requirement is calculated based on the grades earned in upper-division (junior and senior level) undergraduate and graduate courses.

If you do not have a 3.0 GPA, you may be admitted with *conditions* if all other components of your application are strong. Conditions may be placed by the Associate Dean of the Graduate School, or by the Graduate Admission and Progress Committee in the School of Nursing.

**Do I have to take the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) to be admitted?**

Yes, a GRE taken no more than 5 years prior to the anticipated start of the AE program is required for all applicants, including applicants with a graduate degree. This requirement cannot be waived. The University of Texas at Austin school code is 6882.

**What is the required minimum GRE score?**

There is no minimum score requirement; however, the School of Nursing recommends a combined total score of 300 on the Verbal and Quantitative sections of the exam. The Analytical Writing section score is required and considered in the admission process.

**How and when do I arrange to take the GRE?**

Information regarding the GRE, test dates, and test locations is available via the [GRE website](#). The School of Nursing strongly recommends that you plan to take the GRE no later than 1 month prior to the application deadline of October 1<sup>st</sup>.

**How are applicants reviewed?**

Applications are reviewed utilizing all required components of the applications: GRE score, GPA, Pre-requisite GPA, Statement of Purpose, CV, References, and Interview. Each component is important and contributes to the final cumulative score.

**From whom should I request references?**

We recommend professional references such as current or past instructors, a current or past supervisor or manager, and at minimum one reference is *required from a healthcare provider*. The healthcare provider can be someone who worked with you, or supervised you, during volunteer or work experience.

**When are admission decisions made?**

Admission decisions are usually completed by March 1.

**How many students do you admit into your program each year?**

Approximately 60

**What are the prerequisites for the AE programs?**

The AE programs require the following prerequisites:

1. Human Anatomy + lab (4 credit hrs)
2. Human Physiology + lab (4 credit hrs)
3. Microbiology (3 credit hours)
4. Pharmacology (3 credit hours)
5. Human Growth & Development (3 credit hours)
6. Nutrition (3 credit hours)
7. Statistics (3 credit hours)

**Must all the prerequisite courses be completed prior to applying for admission to the School of Nursing graduate programs?**

No, applicants **MUST** have completed a minimum of **5** prerequisite courses by December 31<sup>st</sup> of the application year. Three of the five completed courses must include **Human Anatomy, Microbiology**, plus any three other prerequisite courses. Applicants to the AEMSN and AEPHD programs must, however, complete the required prerequisites by the start of the program (typically around June 1<sup>st</sup>).

**How do I request a transcript review to determine which of the AE required prerequisites I've already taken and still need to take?**

The [AE Prerequisite Course Equivalencies](#) chart on the School of Nursing web site lists the prerequisite courses and their equivalencies for many Texas colleges and universities.

If, after referencing the chart, you still wish to have your transcript reviewed by the Graduate Student Affairs Office staff, please email your request and include copies of your transcripts to the Graduate Coordinator, [Tracy Demchuk](#). Please allow up to 7-10 days for the review completion.

**Where should I take the prerequisite courses?**

Prospective students may take the prerequisite courses, campus based or online/distance learning, at any accredited community college or university. Please see the approved distance learning courses for the [AE Prerequisite Course Equivalencies](#) chart on the SON web site for more information. All courses are evaluated by the grade earned with no differentiation in online, community college or four-year institution. The School of Nursing must approve all AEMSN prerequisite courses.

**How do I acquire volunteer experience in a healthcare environment?**

Contact local volunteer organizations, charities, clinics, and hospitals and ask for the Volunteer Coordinator who may be able to assist you in acquiring a volunteer position.

**How can I become a Nurse Practitioner (NP) through the AE program?**

The Psych/Mental Health NP is the only NP program available to the AE student.

**When does the program start?**

All AE students will begin course work in the summer, typically around June 1.

**How long will it take to complete the program? Can I attend the program as a part-time student?**

The minimum time to complete the AEMSN program is 2.5-3 calendar years for full-time students. The minimum time to complete the AEPHD program is 4 calendar years plus dissertation. All AE students must be enrolled full-time for the first 12 months of the program, after which, upon successful completion of the NCLEX, students may complete the program as a part-time student. Part-time study, however, will extend the length of time necessary to complete the degree.

**Do I have to choose a concentration area at the time of application?**

Yes, AEMSN students must select a concentration area at the time they apply. Concentration areas available to AEMSN students are:

-  Adult - Gerontology Clinical Nurse Specialist
-  Psych/Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP)
-  Leadership in Diverse Settings (LeaDs)

AEPHD applicants do not select a concentration area.

**How do I know which concentration area is best for me?**

Prospective AE MSN students are encouraged to volunteer in a healthcare setting, talk with nurses, read the Institute of Medicine 2010 report summary, The Future of Nursing and search various websites with areas of interest. [DiscoverNursing.com](#) is a site many of our students have found useful.

### **When do I take the RN licensing exam?**

AEMSN and AEPHD students are eligible take the NCLEX to become licensed RN's in Texas upon successful completion of all foundation courses in early summer of the second year enrolled in the program. Note: AE students do not earn a BSN and must complete the MSN in order to graduate. AE students must be licensed in order to enroll in the MSN concentration courses.

**\*RN licensure is not to be construed as an exit point or a substitute for the BSN degree.**

### **Will I be able to work as an RN while I am a graduate student?**

Yes, upon receiving the RN license, you can legally be employed as an RN in the state of Texas. Students who acquire work experience as an RN during the program typically find master's level coursework more meaningful and move into their first full-time position after graduation with increased ease and confidence.

### **Will I be eligible for licensure in states other than Texas?**

Yes, however, application for licensure in other states can only be made after all MSN degree requirements are completed. For particular requirements per state contact the state Board of Nursing in the state of interest.

## **Admitted Students:**

### **When are Nursing courses offered?**

Courses are typically scheduled Monday through Friday between 8:00 am and 7:00 pm.

### **Must I be enrolled as a full-time graduate student?**

Students in the first 12 months of the AEMSN and AEPHD programs **must** be enrolled full-time (approximately 12-14 hours per semester). All other graduate students may be enrolled part-time, under 9 credits. All degree course requirements must be completed within six years.

### **Will I be able to work while enrolled in a graduate program?**

Even though the workload is heavy, some full-time students do work part-time while enrolled in courses. However, students who work full-time generally cannot carry a full course load. AE students are highly encouraged **not** to work during their first 12 months in the program since their training and course load are rigorous and demanding.

### **What grades are expected of graduate students?**

The Office of Graduate Studies requires a minimum GPA of 3.0 (B average) for admission to, retention, and graduation from the University of Texas at Austin.

### **If I have started a graduate program at another institution, will I be able to transfer my credits if admitted to your program?**

A student seeking to use coursework from another institution is considered for transfer on a case-by-case basis and must provide the School of Nursing Graduate Advisor with an official transcript, the official explanation of the course numbering system, grading system, and the course syllabus from the institution at which the course was completed.

### **I live in another state now. Will I be considered a Texas resident after I finish a year of graduate school?**

Possible, a person who has not lived and worked in Texas for one calendar year before enrolling in a public institution is generally not re-classified as a resident for tuition purposes. Please visit the [Texas Residency](#) home page for additional information.

## **Financial Considerations:**

### **How much are tuition and fees?**

[Tuition and fee](#) information can be found online on the Office of Accounting website. Graduate tuition and fees are based on the number of hours taken per semester. Most full-time students take an average of nine credit hours per semester. Please refer to the tuition and fees chart on the Office of Accounting website for the most up to date information.

### **Does the School of Nursing offer any financial aid for graduate students?**

Yes, in limited amounts. The School of Nursing offers scholarships ranging from approximately \$200-\$3,000 per semester. Competitive fellowships also are offered through the Office of Graduate Studies for continuing students. There also are a limited number of Teaching Assistant and Research Assistant positions available after the first year of study. Some tuition assistance is provided to students who are awarded fellowships and to students holding Assistant Teaching, Research Assistant and Assistant Instructor positions.

Applicants are encouraged to begin searching for financial aid at least nine months prior to the semester in which you enroll. There are many private scholarships and grants whose application deadlines are in the fall semester.

All financial aid applicants must complete a FAFSA form. Please visit the [Student Financial Aid](#) website for more information.

### **Where do I apply for fellowships/scholarship awards?**

The School of Nursing online scholarship application can be found on the UT Austin School of Nursing website under [Scholarship/Financial Aid](#).

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