



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 programs are designed for persons holding a Baccalaureate or graduate degrees in disciplines other than nursing and want to become a registered nurse and earn a master's or a doctorate (DNP or PhD) in nursing.

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

No, while AE students' complete coursework to prepare them for their RN licensure, they do not earn a bachelor's degree. After successfully completing an AE program, the student will have a Masters, DNP, or PhD in Nursing.

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

1) [Alternate Entry Master of Science in Nursing \(AEMSN\)](#):

👉 Leadership in Diverse Settings (LeaDs)

2) [Alternate Entry Doctor of Nursing Practice \(AEDNP\)](#) in one of the following tracks:

👉 Adult - Gerontology Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS)

👉 Pediatric Nurse Practitioner-Primary Care (PNP-PC)

👉 Psych/Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP)

3) [Alternate Entry Doctor of Philosophy \(AEPhD\)](#) degree

How do I get additional information about the programs?

We recommend that you attend one of the virtual [information sessions](#) held throughout the year. The schedule for the sessions may be found on the School of Nursing website.

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

The School of Nursing is located at 1710 Red River, Austin, Texas 78712. The Graduate Student Services Offices are on the main entrance floor (2nd level) reception 2.400.

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, most 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, AEDNP and AEPHD admissions application is available **August 1st**, and the application deadline is **October 1st**.

How do I apply to an AE program?

Graduate Admissions process graduate program applications. To apply for graduate admission to the School of Nursing the admissions application must be completed electronically on the [Graduate School Application for Admission webpage](#) during the open application period of **August 1 through October 1**.

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

- ✎ **Application-** The Graduate Admissions Office process applications for graduate admissions. Applications are to be completed and paid on the [Graduate School Application for Admission webpage](#). For additional information on Graduate admissions, please visit the [University of Texas at Austin Graduate School](#) webpage.
- ✎ **Official Transcript/s** from all **academic institution** attended are required including **Community Colleges**. Upload a copy of official transcripts dated one year or less; if admitted official, hard copy, transcripts are 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. *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.
 - Provide any information that you believe your application would be incomplete without and that sheds more light on your unique potential to succeed in a graduate nursing program and contribute to the University community and the nursing profession.
- ✎ **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](#)**. Document completed by the applicant that provides prerequisite course information (number, name, institution, semester, grade, and credits).
- ✎ **International applicants** must submit an official score report demonstrating an adequate knowledge of English (TOEFL or IELTS). See policies on the Graduate School's [International webpage](#).

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

No, the GRE is not required.

When does the AEMSN, AEDNP, and AEPHD program begin?

The AE programs have 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 from any higher education institution attended.

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.

How are applicants reviewed?

Applications are reviewed utilizing all required components of the applications: Graduate Admissions 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 the AE program each year?

Approximately 64

What are the prerequisites for the AE programs?

The AE programs require the following 7 prerequisites:

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|--|---|
| 1. Human Anatomy + lab (4 credit hrs) | 5. Human Growth & Development- Life Span (3 credit hours) |
| 2. Human Physiology + lab (4 credit hrs) | 6. Nutrition (3 credit hours) |
| 3. Microbiology (3 credit hours) | 7. Statistics (3 credit hours) |
| 4. Pharmacology (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** complete a minimum of 5 prerequisite courses by December 31st of the application year. ***Human Anatomy, and Microbiology must be included in the five.*** Applicants to the AEMSN, AEDNP, and AEPHD programs must complete all seven prerequisite courses by the start of the program (typically around June 1st).

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 website lists the prerequisite courses and their equivalencies for many Texas colleges and universities.

If, after referencing the list, you still wish to have your transcript reviewed by the Graduate Student Services Office staff, please email your request and include copies of your transcripts to the Graduate Student Services at, nugrad@nursing.utexas.edu. Please allow up to 7-10 days for the review completion.

Where should I take the prerequisite courses?

Prerequisite courses can be taken at any accredited community college or university. Campus based or online/distance learning are acceptable. 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 Pediatric NP- Primary Care and the Psych/Mental Health NP are the two NP program available to the AE DNP 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 **AEMSN** program is a 3-year full-time program and the **AEDNP** program is a 4-year full-time program. 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 and will increase the total tuition paid.

Do I have to choose a track at the time of application?

Yes, for the **AEDNP** program only applicants must select a track at the time they apply. The tracks available to AEDNP applicant are:

- 👉 Adult - Gerontology Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS)
- 👉 Pediatric Nurse Practitioner-Primary Care (PNP-PC)
- 👉 Psych/Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP)

The AEMSN only offers the Leadership in Diverse Settings track and the AEPHD applicants do not offer tracks.

How do I know which track is best for me?

Prospective AE students are encouraged to volunteer in a healthcare setting, talk with nurses, read the [Institute of Medicine 2020-2030 Future of Nursing summary](#), and search various websites with areas of interest. [Johnson & Johnson's Nursing page](#) is a site many of our students have found useful.

When do I take the RN licensing exam?

AEMSN, AEDNP, and AEPHD students are eligible take the NCLEX to become licensed RNs in Texas upon successful completion of all foundation courses in early summer of the second year of the program. Note: AE students do not earn a BSN and must complete the MSN, DNP, or PhD to graduate. AE students must be licensed to enroll in the MSN or DNP core 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. International students should refer to the [Texas Global website](#) for information about working as a student.

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.

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

Possible. Please visit the UT Austin [Texas Residency](#) for additional information.

Financial Considerations:

How much are tuition and fees?

Tuition and fee information can be found online on the Texas One Stop's [Tuition Rates](#) webpage. Graduate tuition and fees are a flat rate based on the number of hours taken per semester. Most full-time students take an average of nine credit hours per semester.

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

The School of Nursing offers scholarships, in limited amounts, ranging from approximately \$300-\$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. Some tuition assistance is provided to students who are awarded fellowships and to students holding Teaching Assistant, Research Assistant, and Assistant Instructor positions.

Applicants are encouraged to begin searching for financial aid at least 9 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 [Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid](#) website for more information.

Contact Information:

Graduate Student Services

Phone: 512-232-4780

Email: nugrad@mail.nur.utexas.edu