

## **FNP Program: General Information and Quick Facts**

**Overview:** Western Carolina University will begin a BSN to Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program with a family nurse practitioner (FNP) concentration starting May 2022. This 36-month full-time program requires a minimum of 83 course credits and 1000 clinical practice hours. The BSN-DNP/FNP program of study has been posted to the FNP program website for review. A part-time doctoral program of study is not available for this track since students begin, progress, and graduate as a cohort. Application for a master's option is no longer available. **Application deadline for entry into the May 2022 class is January 1, 2022.** *The application for program entry will be available mid-July 2021.* There are 18 available seats. Admittance will occur on an annual basis.

**Certificate FNP Program:** A post-doctoral certificate option is not currently available.

**Application Requirements:** All application requirements must be completed by the application deadline date so the application can be considered for review. The most encountered missing requirement is a reference, which results in an incomplete application. Incomplete applications are not reviewed.

It is important to note that an application can be started if an applicant is in the process of completing a BSN, taking a prerequisite statistics course, or completing one year of nursing experience. The application will still be reviewed if these requirements can be obtained before the program start date. If a seat in the program is offered, it will be contingent upon successful completion of the missing requirement. An official transcript of the BSN and/or statistics course will need to be sent to the Graduate School confirming satisfactory completion.

**Application Process:** The application process includes the submission of a professional statement/essay and resume that has specific requirements. The quality of the professional statement and whether the specific requirements are addressed is crucial in the admission decision. Specific requirements pertaining to these documents can be found under Application Process on the FNP program website.

Once all completed applications are read and scored by FNP faculty, applicants will be offered an interview based on their ranking score. Interviews will occur approximately 3 to 4 weeks after the application deadline date. Applicants will be notified via email as to whether an interview has been requested. A few weeks following the interview, applicants will receive another email informing them of their admission status.

Some applicants will be informed that they have been placed on a waitlist. When an applicant is waitlisted, they are assigned the next available seat should one become available. There is no guarantee when and if a seat will open. On occasion, a seat has been known to open as late as the first week of class.

**Schedule:** Students are required to attend classes at the Biltmore Park instructional site every Tuesday throughout the semester as well as take online courses. Once a semester, students are required to be on campus on a Monday or Wednesday for the day, but notification is provided in advance for scheduling purposes. On-site classes are

typically held between 9 am to 3 pm but this varies by semester. Since classes do not begin until 9 am, students who reside 2-2 ½ hours away have time for travel.

**Clinical Training Schedules:** Clinical courses begin the third semester. This is when reducing work to part-time or prn status should be considered if not already done. Adding a clinical day to the semester means additional travel and preparation that results in a broader time commitment. Many students are still able to work two 12-hour shifts per week, but this is dependent upon personal and professional obligations. Clinical days are arranged individually between students and preceptors each semester and typically average one 8-hour day per week for most semesters. During the fall semester of the third year, clinical days increase to two days a week.

**Clinical Rotations:** Students are responsible for selecting and establishing their clinical sites per specific guidelines that are provided upon entry into the program. WCU does have a Clinical Placement Coordinator for the FNP program who facilitates the process and keeps a list of sites with current contracts. FNP students have access to the FNP Clinical Site Database to assist in arranging clinical placement with sites currently under contract with WCU. If a student secures a clinical site not currently under contract, a clinical contract will need to be established.

**Attrition Rate:** Historically, the MS(N) program has experienced a very low attrition rate; reasons have always been related to circumstances and not grades. FNP faculty are dedicated to student success and continually work to create an environment conducive to learning whether online or face-to-face in the classroom.

**Pass Rate:** WCU's FNP program graduates have had a 96-100% first-time pass rate on the national certification exam for the last 10 years.

**Study Abroad Opportunities:** Study abroad opportunities have been halted due to the pandemic. Previously, there was one study abroad opportunity in Scotland. It is hoped these opportunities will resume and expand once more positive gains are observed with the coronavirus.

**Scholarships:** The University has scholarships and financial aid opportunities that students can inquire about through the Financial Aid Office. Full-time graduate student status allows students to apply for federal financial aid and other scholarships that would not otherwise be available under part-time status.

**DNP information:** A DNP is currently not required to practice as a nurse practitioner. However, the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties has made the commitment to move all entry-level nurse practitioner education to the doctoral level by 2025. While no mandate has happened yet, it's possible this could happen in the future. Both national certifying bodies, the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) and the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Board (AANPCB), continue to require a master's degree/MS(N) with a nurse practitioner population focus for certification exam eligibility.

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