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

**Overview:** Western Carolina University offers a BSN to Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program with a family nurse practitioner (FNP) concentration. This 36-month full-time program requires a minimum of 83 course credits and 1000 clinical practice hours. The program of study has been posted to the FNP program website for review. Admittance occurs on an annual basis with October 1st as the deadline for application submission. Curriculum begins in May. There are 18 available seats in the program.

A part-time doctoral program of study is not available since courses are offered once a year. Application for a master’s option is no longer available. There is no MSN stop out for the BSN to DNP program. Once the DNP program is started, it must be completed in its entirety to obtain a conferred degree. Students begin, progress, and graduate as a cohort.

**Application Requirements:** All application requirements must be completed by the application deadline date for the application to be considered for review. The most frequently encountered missing requirement is a reference, which results in an incomplete application. Incomplete applications are not reviewed. It is important for applicants to make sure all documents are submitted by the due date.

It should be noted 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(s). 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. Specific requirements are outlined for both documents on the FNP program website. The quality of the professional statement and whether the specific requirements are addressed is crucial in the admission decision.

Once all completed applications are read and scored by FNP faculty, applicants will be offered an interview based on their ranking score. 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 notifying them of their admission status.

Applicants will either be accepted, denied, or wait listed. When applicants are waitlisted, a seat in the program is offered 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 a few hours away have time for travel. Some students who have extended travel, choose to spend the night in Asheville.

**Clinical Training Schedules:** Clinical courses begin the third semester. This is when reducing work to part-time 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. FNP students do have access to an FNP Clinical Site Database; this can 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.

While some clinical sites accept a medical and/or religious exemption for obtaining the COVID vaccine, some do not. It is important to know that if you are admitted into the program and choose not to receive the vaccine, your progress in the program may be halted due to inability to secure a clinical site.

**Attrition Rate:** Historically, the FNP program has experienced a very low attrition rate; reasons for attrition 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.

**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 occur 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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