

Frequently asked questions about:
**Marquette University College of Nursing Master of Science
in Nursing for non-Nursing Graduates “Direct Entry”**

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Q1. *How long will this program take to complete?*

- A. The first part of the program, the Pre-MSN phase is 15 months in length and is a full time course of study. Then you will take the NCLEX exam and become licensed as a Registered Nurse in Wisconsin. At that point you continue in the next phase of the program, the MSN phase. The length of time this phase takes depends to some extent upon you, as you may pursue your studies in a full time or part time fashion; it also depends upon which Master's option you select, as the credit requirements vary by option.

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Q2. *How much does this program cost? Are costs different for out of state students?*

- A. The Pre-MSN phase involves a flat program fee, a portion of which is due at the beginning of each semester. The program fee for the prior year's cohort may be found on the Graduate School website, but is adjusted each year. When you reach the MSN phase you will be charged the per credit graduate tuition rate in effect at the time you take a Master's class. There is no cost difference for out of state residents.

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Q3. *What are my choices for entering at different times of year?*

- A. This program admits once a year only and begins the day after Memorial Day.

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Q4. *After the 15 month Pre-MSN phase, will I have a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing (BSN)?*

- A. No. The academic degree offered in this program is the MSN. At the end of the 15 month "Pre-MSN Phase," if you have maintained a 3.0 GPA (4.0 scale), we certify to the State of Wisconsin that you are academically eligible to write the NCLEX exam. Passing the NCLEX allows you to put the credentials "RN" after your name. You may then begin practice as a Registered Nurse in the State of Wisconsin while you continue your Master's studies, but you will not have a BSN or any other nursing degree until you complete your MSN.

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Q5. *You said I would be licensed as an RN in the "State of Wisconsin." Can't I practice in another State?*

- A. Your eligibility to take the NCLEX exam and get licensed through this program was based on an arrangement between the Wisconsin State Board of Nursing and Marquette University only. This cannot legally extend to other States, as nursing licensure is controlled by each State, not by a national body. We cannot guarantee that any other State will recognize your RN license until you earn an academic degree in Nursing; that will be the MSN. At that point, you should have no trouble going anywhere else in this country. If you are offered admission to this program and you enroll, you will be asked to sign a document stating that you understand the risks of leaving before completion of the program, and that an RN license might not be obtainable in another state until you earn an academic degree in nursing.

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Q6. *I see that there is an application deadline in January. If I apply earlier do I have a better chance of getting accepted?*

- A. No. We do not begin the review of applications until the deadline is past; then we review all qualified applicants at the same time. We do suggest that you apply in ample time prior to the deadline to allow time for missing documents to be requested. Only complete applications are reviewed for acceptance.

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Q7. *Do you require a personal interview as part of the admission process?*

- A. No. However, if you wish, a visit to campus can be arranged.

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Q8. *I will have to take the GREs since I do not have a 3.2 GPA. What score are you looking for?*

- A. Ideally we would like to see a combined score of at least 1000 plus at least a 4.0 on the Analytical Writing component.

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Q9. *The school where I earned my undergraduate degree does not give grades; instead I was evaluated on competencies. How will I be evaluated against other candidates who had a more traditional grading system?*

- A. You will have to provide additional supporting documentation:
1. Try to get a document from your school that explains equivalencies
 2. If they do not provide equivalencies, the written documentation evaluating your competencies in each course must be sent to us.
 3. Take the GRE.

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Q10. *I have downloaded recommendation forms from the Graduate School website. Are the forms sufficient references or should I also ask my references to write letters?*

- A. The forms are the minimum requirement. You may find it to your advantage to have letters; letters generally provide more detail that will give us a more thorough “picture” of you and your abilities and accomplishments.

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Q11. *Can I apply online?*

- A. As of September 1, 2008, all applications to the Graduate School must be completed and submitted online. You can apply online via the Graduate School website www.grad.mu.edu/index.shtml or directly at <https://app.applyyourself.com/?id=marqgrad>

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Q12. *How many spaces are there in this program? How many applicants do you have?*

- A. At the present time we admit a cohort of 48 students once each year. The applicant pool varies each year but lately has ranged from 80 to 150.

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Q13. *Can I work while I am in this program?*

- A. We suggest that, if at all possible, you not work while you are in the Pre-MSN phase of the program. If you must work, please limit it to no more than 8-10 hours a week. The program requires not only your physical presence during classes, labs, and clinicals, but there is significant time needed for study and class/clinical preparation and assignments.

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Q14. *How much clinical experience will I have in this program? Where are the clinical agencies? How many students are in a clinical group?*

- A. In the Pre-MSN phase you will have semester long clinical experiences in medical surgical, childbearing family, mental health, pediatrics, and community health nursing. The clinical agencies are located in the Milwaukee metropolitan area and in adjacent counties. Each clinical group consists of 8 students with a clinical instructor. In the MSN phase, the type and number of clinical experiences vary by your option and involve working one on one with a preceptor.

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Q15. *Are there prerequisite courses for this program?*

- A: Yes. You must have at least 5 semester credits of Human Anatomy and Physiology to include all body systems. You will need 5-6 credits of sciences from the areas of chemistry, biochemistry, microbiology, or biology (biochemistry and microbiology preferred). In addition, you need to present 3 credits of a behavioral science such as psychology or sociology. Finally, you will need at least 3 credits in statistics, which must have an inferential component. You will need to have a minimum grade of a “C” in each course for it to be considered.

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Q16. *I have already taken some of these prerequisite courses, but it was quite a while ago. Is there a time limit on these courses? Also, how will I know if you will accept the courses I took, such as statistics?*

- A. Statistics must be completed within the last five years. It is preferred that Anatomy and Physiology be completed within the last five years. If your prerequisites are older, you may wish to refresh your learning in these areas. You may contact the Coordinator of Direct Entry Programs with your questions about the suitability of a course; it is helpful if you email a hyperlink to the course description to mary.paquette@marquette.edu

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Q17. *I will still be taking prerequisite courses in the Spring semester. The courses will not be completed until after the application deadline. Will I still be considered for the program?*

- A. Yes. You can continue taking courses in the Spring, either to complete your undergraduate degree or to finish your prerequisites. We will evaluate your application and your plan for completing the courses; if we decide we would like you to join the program, we will offer you admission *contingent upon* successful completion of those courses. To facilitate the review process, it is recommended that the **majority** of your prerequisites be completed by the application deadline. In all cases, all courses leading to your degree or the completion of your prerequisite requirements must be successfully completed by the time the program starts at the end of May.

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Q18. *Do I need to take the GRE?*

- A. This program requires a GPA minimum of 3.0. However, if you have a GPA of 3.2 or higher from your Bachelor's or higher degree, you do not have to take the GRE. Some choose to do so anyway; that is completely up to you.

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Q19. *I have been out of school and working for quite a while. Do you take older students?*

- A. Age is never a criterion for admission.

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Q20. *I am concerned that my GPA does not reflect my true abilities. I did very well in my undergraduate program except for one semester which pulled down my GPA. Would you take this into consideration?*

- A. If you feel that a unique, short term situation may be a problem for your candidacy, please bring this to our attention, explaining the situation and asking us to take note of a special circumstance. For example, an applicant could ask us to look at each semester's GPA, where we would see outstanding performance except for one semester where a special problem occurred.

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Q21. *Do you consider the GPA I earned while taking my missing prerequisite courses?*

- A. We do not average this GPA with the GPA from your degree. However, high grades in your prerequisites are certainly noticed.

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Q22. *What are some things I can do to make my application more attractive?*

- A. Some of the parts of your application, such as your transcripts, cannot be changed. However, great care taken with your resume, reference letters, and your statement of professional goals can definitely enhance your candidacy. These are the pieces of your application that can give us a good picture of you as a person in addition to factual information. In addition, any experience you have in health care, whether through volunteerism, paid employment, or shadowing, should be noted in your application. And, of course, meet all the requirements and deadlines. We do not review any application that is not complete by the deadline, with the exception of prerequisite courses still in process.

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Q23. *Can you tell me what you are looking for in the statement of professional goals? Also, does that take the place of the "Essay" required in the application form?*

- A. In the statement of professional goals we are looking to see how you came to the decision to move from one career to nursing. We want to know why you are looking at not only nursing, but an advanced level of practice in nursing, and what you know about it. We want to get a picture of you! There is no right or wrong way to approach this, but it is an important part of your application. We suggest you give serious thought to the construction of this document. It can take the place of the Essay in the application form. ***Please limit your Statement to no more than 2 double spaced pages.***

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Q24. *I am interested in your program, but I am an International Student. Am I eligible to apply to this program?*

- A. You are welcome to apply, though some special additional requirements may apply to you. For example, you may need to take the TOEFL exam for English proficiency, and you may need to have a credentials evaluation of your transcripts done; special legal and financial requirements may also apply. Please contact the Graduate School for guidance with this process.

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Q25. *Is financial aid available for this program?*

- A. The Office of Student Financial Aid, specifically Ms. Coral Taylor, can be contacted at 414.288.0200 or coral.taylor@mu.edu. The Business Manager at the College of Nursing is Mr. Larry Vanden Busch (lawrence.vandenbusch@marquette.edu); occasionally tuition credits and small scholarships are available for the Pre-MSN phase. During the MSN phase, students are eligible to apply for Research Assistantships, Teaching Assistantships, graduate school tuition scholarships and other graduate student

financial aid. All admitted students will be sent applications for this type of aid during the Spring of your first year enrolled (Pre-MSN phase). Information for the MSN phase financial aid can be found at <http://www.grad.mu.edu/finaid/index.shtml>. It is strongly suggested that you investigate financial aid opportunities during your application process.

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Q26. *How can I get the application materials and list of requirements?*

- A. Contact the College of Nursing at 414.288.3810, or email karen.nest@mu.edu and ask to receive the packet for the “Direct Entry” program for non-nursing majors.

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Q27. *Is there a time limit to complete the program?*

- A. Graduate students are required by the University to complete all program requirements within 6 years.

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Q28. *Must I be CPR certified before starting the program?*

- A. CPR certification classes will be offered at the College of Nursing within the first month of the Program. You are free to seek certification elsewhere, but please note that we only accept the following certification: **American Heart Association, BLS for Healthcare Providers.**

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Q29. *If I am accepted, am I guaranteed a place in the Master’s option of my choice?*

- A. By virtue of being admitted, you are guaranteed a place in the MSN program. In the Spring of the 15 month Pre-MSN phase, you will specify your first choice; however, we cannot always guarantee your first choice.

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