

**AACHHR  
GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF PROPOSALS TO MODIFY EXISTING HEALTH  
PROGRAMS**

**University of Prince Edward Island  
Faculty of Nursing  
October 18, 2024**

**1. PROGRAM IDENTIFICATION**

1.1. Submitting institution(s)

University of Prince Edward Island

1.2. Faculty

Faculty of Nursing

1.3. School

n/a

1.4. Department

n/a

1.5. Program name

Master of Nursing, thesis stream

1.6. Program type (eg. Bachelor's degree, post baccalaureate certificate)

Master's degree

1.7. Credential(s) granted

Master of Nursing

1.8. Proposed starting date for modified program.

Fall 2025

## 2. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

### 2.1. Description of the type of change (e.g. course change, addition of work placement, change to online delivery).

The MN program currently has two streams: the Thesis stream and the Nurse Practitioner stream. **The Nurse Practitioner stream is not being changed, at this time.**

Our current thesis program includes 8 courses (27 credits) plus a thesis (9 credits) = 36 credits. We are creating a new course-based Master of Nursing stream with 7 courses (21 credits) plus a capstone course (6 credits) = 27 credits. A new program overview is provided [here](#). We are reducing the number of courses for the thesis stream to 7 courses (21 credits) plus a thesis (9 credits) = 30 credits. We have modified 6 of the existing Master of Nursing courses and added 2 new courses, including a new capstone course. One course remains unchanged (the final thesis course). Students in both streams will take all 7 courses. The only difference between the course-based and thesis stream is the final course: capstone project for course-based stream and thesis course for thesis stream students.

Course delivery will be hybrid: online delivery with opportunity for synchronous (face to face or online) weekly sessions.

### 2.2. Description of the purpose of the change (e.g. following the evolution of the discipline, accommodating the clientele to be served, establishing a better focus, resulting from an external review (provide details). If the proposed modification includes a name change, provide a rationale for the choice of new name/credential, including comment on the process of selecting the name and credential(s).

In November 2022, the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing (CASN) published the [National Nursing Education Framework](#) for Master's and Doctoral education.

Revision of the framework incorporated several documents including:

1. [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action \(2015\)](#)
2. [Declaration of Rights of Indigenous peoples \(United Nations, 2013\)](#)
3. [Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development \(United Nations, 2015\)](#)
4. [Global Pillars for Nursing Education \(Global Alliance for Leadership in Nursing Education and Science 2019\)](#)

The Framework serves as a guide to developing and revising graduate curriculum. The publication of this work coincided with our program redesign, and it aligned nicely with our intended objectives. Six learning domains organize the core expectations for our program graduates, based on the CASN National Education Framework (2022):

**1) Knowledge**

Theoretical, conceptual, and factual content in the programs.

**2) Research skills and critical inquiry**

Thinking and inquiry skills to appraise, generate, synthesize, translate, and mobilize evidence-based knowledge.

**3) Nursing practice**

Activities in a broad range of nursing roles.

**4) Communication and collaboration**

Interactions and relationships between the nurse and individuals; family (biological and chosen); communities and populations; other members of the health care team; members in other sectors; and key stakeholders.

**5) Professionalism**

Accountability, ethics, and values of a nurse.

**6) Leadership**

Social influence to help others achieve health related goals or improve the health care system.

The Master of Nursing (MN) program is founded upon the guiding principles of primary health care and designed to prepare nurses for advanced nursing practice through the integration of theory, research, and practice. Graduates will incorporate four key pillars of our 'LEAP' program: 1) leadership; 2) education, 3) applied research; and 4) advanced practice in a variety of roles and settings. The master's program is built on the existing strengths of the faculty. Graduates are prepared to function in an advanced practice role across the continuum of life, the disease trajectory and care settings.

2.3. Anticipated date of completion of last student enrolled in existing program.

We currently have 5 students who are completing their thesis. They have all completed the required course work, have supervisory committees in place and are working on their final thesis course NURS 6000. There will be no disruption in studies for these students. We anticipate that they will graduate by the spring 2025.

#### 2.4. Description of the target clientele of the program.

Using the LEAP pillars, we intend to target nurses working in a variety of capacities across Prince Edward Island. We hope to attract nurse leaders working in the community, acute care and administrative leaders in healthcare provincial and federal healthcare. The education focus will be attractive to nurses currently working or hoping to work in education in the community, in acute care, University and College environments as well as administrators. We also hope to attract clinicians, across care settings who work with patients across the lifespan to address 'real life' challenges in practice and quality improvement. The hybrid delivery model will enable us to reach nurses in remote locations.

#### 2.5. Evidence of student demand.

One of the challenges of our program over the years has been getting students to complete their final thesis course or taking far too long to complete their final thesis. This becomes a burden to both the faculty and learner. We believe that the course-based option will optimize student's ability to graduate in a timely, predictable manner.

A benchmarking activity was undertaken in the summer of 2022 to identify all course-based Master of Nursing programs across Canada. Raw data is provided [here](#) with a summary [here](#). In order to evaluate our proposed program, we developed and circulated a [stakeholder survey](#) including the draft program overview, course descriptions and calendar. Key stakeholders included Health PEI (prospective employer) and the College of Registered Nurses and Midwives of PEI (regulator agency). Twenty-four respondents completed the survey. The [survey results](#) indicate strong support (agree or strongly agree) for the proposed program, course descriptions, timetable and delivery method.

#### 2.6. Using the table provided below as a guide, provide a side-by-side comparison of the program as it was last submitted and the proposed modifications:

<b>Program Name</b>	
Program name: Master of Nursing, thesis stream Credential(s) granted: Master of Nursing	Program name: Master of Nursing, thesis or course-based stream Credential(s) granted: Master of Nursing
<b>Program Duration</b>	
Expected program duration (in years): Full-time: 3-4 years Part-time: 4-5 years Total number of credits: 36	Expected program duration (in years): Full-time: 3 years (8 consecutive semesters for course-based stream); 4 years for thesis stream (7 consecutive semesters followed by thesis course that typically takes at least one year to complete) Part-time: Total number of credits: 27 course-based stream; 30 credits for thesis based stream
<b>Admission Requirements and Standards</b>	
(If more than one path to admission, address each) Admission criteria will be the same for both paths, unchanged from present	
<b>Method of Program Delivery</b>	
Specify: Face to face	Specify: Online delivery with opportunity for synchronous (face to face or online) weekly sessions.

### 3. PROGRAM NEED

- 3.1. Comparison of the proposed program modification with other similar programs offered elsewhere in the Atlantic Region. If offered elsewhere, provide rationale for replicating the program.

We completed a benchmarking activity that was undertaken in the summer of 2022 to identify all course-based Master of Nursing programs across Canada. Raw data for course-based, non-thesis programs is provided [here](#) with a summary [here](#).

## **Dalhousie University**

### **Similarities**

- Master of Nursing professional stream similar to UPEI proposed course-based stream
  - intended for students seeking to develop the theoretical knowledge to lead professional practice change and the evaluation of practice change.
  - 30 credit-hour course-based non-thesis program, students complete both required and elective classes focused on practice-related theory and research. Students attend seminars and discussions to strengthen their theoretical knowledge.
  
- Master of Nursing Science stream similar to UPEI existing Master of Nursing thesis stream
  - Preparation for career in academia and/or research; research foci
  - 27-credit hour program is comprised of 5 courses plus a thesis.
  - A full-time MScN student will complete the MScN program in 2 years. A part-time student will complete the program in 4 years.

### **Differences**

- At Dalhousie, Full-time students in the MScN program usually complete three courses per term. Part-time students in the MScN program usually complete 1-2 courses per term
- In our program, students will be limited to one course per term, this will enhance their ability to continue to work full-time
- 27 credits (UPEI course-based stream) vs 30 credits (professional stream)
- 30 credits (UPEI thesis stream, 7 courses plus a thesis) vs 27 credits (5 courses plus a thesis)
- Dalhousie course focus on policy and philosophy

## **University of New Brunswick**

### **Similarities**

- Blend of synchronous and asynchronous online learning at both universities
- Part-time students at UNB and UPEI generally complete 1 course per term
- All students at both universities must complete a thesis or report.

### Differences

- UNB students can be complete program on either a full or part-time basis
  - Full-time students in the thesis/report stream complete a total of 18 credit hours (6 courses) in year 1 and thesis/report work in year 2.
  - Part-time students in the thesis/report stream complete a total of 18 credit hours (6 courses) in years 1, 2, and 3 and focus on the completion of their thesis/report work in year 4.
- UNB offers 3 independent study courses

### Memorial University

- learn to integrate and synthesize philosophical perspectives, theories, research and skills.

### Similarities

- course-based program at both universities -Master of Science in Nursing (MScN), Practicum at Memorial
- Students at both universities choose a practicum project relevant to their interest and work setting that addresses a real need for change and demonstrate advanced nursing practice competencies.
- Both universities offer courses on leadership, education and knowledge translation

### Differences

- Asynchronous learning online at Memorial
- 2-3 years if full-time at Memorial

3.2. Provide information on the current and anticipated job market to which the modified program is directed. Please give evidence of consultation with employers and/or professional organizations as to the current and anticipated job market.

Our Master of Nursing thesis programs prepares nurses to work in advanced practice roles such as a **clinical nurse specialist (CNS)**. A CNS is registered nurse with advanced nursing knowledge and skills in making complex decisions who holds a master's or doctoral degree in nursing with expertise in a clinical nursing specialty. The CNS is an agent of change who brings value to clients, practice settings and organizations to improve safety, promote positive health outcomes and reduce costs. These practitioners can meet the complex health needs of Canadians in a wide variety of settings and contribute to the development of a sustainable, efficient and effective health system.

A CNS can work in a variety of settings in PEI such as academia (clinical nursing instructors and professorships), acute and community care. There are numerous

nursing vacancies in Prince Edward Island (PEI) due to a high demand for healthcare professionals.

- 3.3. Provide evidence of consultation with the Ministry of Health in your jurisdiction that the program modification reflects system priorities/requirements.

In order to evaluate our proposed program, we developed and circulated a [stakeholder survey](#) including the draft program overview, course descriptions and calendar. Key stakeholders included Health PEI (prospective employer) and the College of Registered Nurses and Midwives of PEI (regulator agency). Twenty-four respondents completed the survey. The [survey results](#) indicate strong support (agree or strongly agree) for the proposed program, course descriptions, timetable and delivery method.

#### 4. PROGRAM DELIVERY

- 4.1. Identification of the program curriculum components that initiate students to engage in interprofessional collaboration.

We developed one new course related to interprofessional collaboration: NURS 6180 entitled Communication and Collaboration. The objective of the course is to prepare graduates to communicate and collaborate effectively in an advanced nursing practice role with intra-professional and interprofessional health team members and intersectoral health care partners. One specific learning objective for the course is to: use effective communication skills to develop collaborations and coalitions with intra-professional, interprofessional, and intersectoral partners. Additionally, we modified one course (NURS 6110: Professionalism 1 – Professional Growth) to prepare graduates to act ethically and professionally in an advanced nursing practice role and engage in their own professional growth. One specific course objective includes exploring accountability, autonomy, and integrity in collaborations with others in the health care system and in intersectoral partnerships.

- 4.2. Identification of program curriculum components that address the concepts of cultural competence, health equity and diversity management.

As described in 2.2, the important concepts of cultural competence, health equity and diversity management will be threaded throughout the program. We modified one course: NURS 6110: Application of Advanced **Knowledge** which explores foundations, health, health equity, health outcomes, planetary health.



Course Learning Outcomes include:

- a. Evaluating the historical, philosophical, theoretical, and socio-political foundations of the discipline on health, health equity, and health outcomes.
- b. Evaluating the application of advanced knowledge in a specialized area of nursing practice to improve health, health equity, and health outcomes.
- c. Analyzing local policies that address health, health inequities, and social, structural, and ecological determinants of health; and,
- d. Evaluating policies and interventions that address geographical and planetary health issues.

Students will be able to apply these learning in their final thesis or capstone project. The final capstone project prepares graduates to engage in an advanced nursing practice role to optimize health, health equity, and health care outcomes through experiential learning opportunities.

- 4.3. Identification of the opportunities for cross-training of other health provider students and for enhanced multi-skilling offered by the program.

While there aren't any specific opportunities for cross-training with other health provider students, we developed one new course: NURS 6190 Leadership which focuses on preparing graduates to apply leadership models to lead intraprofessional and interprofessional teams in health care services and/or nursing education. Additionally, the capstone project or thesis can include healthcare issues or problem related to nursing leadership, education, applied research or clinical practice that could include other health providers.

- 4.4. Is there capacity in the provincial health systems to support the additional clinical placements currently and in the future? Please provide affiliated agreements in support of these placements.

Not applicable. There are no clinical placements associated with the program.

## **5. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION**

- 5.1. Impact analysis of the program modification on delivery of quality health care services to consumers, on patient outcomes, on the employers, and the purchasers of service.

While we did not complete an impact analysis, we feel that the new program aligns with the national mandate and objectives for graduate nursing education in Canada as outlined in the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing (CASN) published the [National Nursing Education Framework](#) for Master's and Doctoral education

November 2022). We've reduced the overall credit load, spread course out over 8 consecutive semesters (no more than one course per term), allowed for distance-based participation across the province and provided a course-based option to facilitate graduation in a timely manner. We feel that these modifications will be attractive to nurses currently working part-time or full-time who want to continue to work while they study and complete a graduate degree. While we have retained the option to complete a formal thesis, the course-based option allows graduates to focus on real world: leadership, nursing education, applied research and clinical practice issues in healthcare.

5.2. Impact of the program modification on the professional scope of practice and core competencies in the profession.

As described in 3.2, our program prepares nurses to work in advanced practice roles such as a **clinical nurse specialist (CNS)**. The CNS is an agent of change who brings value to clients, practice settings and organizations to improve safety, promote positive health outcomes and reduce costs. These practitioners can meet the complex health needs of Canadians in a wide variety of settings and contribute to the development of a sustainable, efficient and effective health system.

5.3. Impact of the proposed program modification on professional mobility, as outlined within the Labour Mobility Chapter of the Agreement on Internal Trade.

Not applicable.

5.4. Identification of the provisions for re-training existing professionals and for the continual learning of graduates from the modified program.

Not applicable.

## 6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1. Explanation of the impact the proposed modification will have on existing resources. If no impact is anticipated, provide a rationale, including supporting evidence, for this conclusion.

We have mapped out our new program with eight (8) existing faculty taking responsibility for one course each over the eight (8) consecutive terms. We feel that we will be able to sustain the support of the program with the context of the other demands of our nursing program (e.g. undergraduate and graduate NP program).