



## Doctor of Nursing

This professional doctorate is specifically aimed at experienced registered nurses who are seeking to extend their professional and research capacities. The Doctor of Nursing (DNurs) requires the student to make a significant and original contribution to knowledge through research, evidenced by the completion of three, linked research projects presented in a research portfolio.

In the DNurs, students are expected to use a range of research methods to investigate their chosen topic in order to gain a broad understanding of research. In addition, the research must be practice-based. Thus, the DNurs is particularly suitable for clinicians who wish to investigate topics relating directly to their own sphere of practice.

The DNurs is a practice orientated academic program, which is designed to prepare graduates to act effectively as leaders in the nursing profession. In keeping with this, the program aims to produce graduates who are able to respond effectively to the many challenges and problems of modern health care.

### PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Students of the DNurs program will:

- Through their research make a significant and original contribution to nursing knowledge.
- Demonstrate competence in the design, conduct, analysis and reporting of practice-based nursing research.
- Appreciate the range of research designs and methods that are particularly suitable for practice-based research and service evaluation, and understand the practical, methodological and ethical issues that are related to nursing and health services research.
- Demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of how nursing knowledge and improvements in practice can be advanced through research (both in general and in relation to their own professional context).
- Demonstrate an ability to disseminate ideas through publication, seminar, workshop and conference presentations.
- Understand the political, professional and policy contexts surrounding healthcare research, including new emphases on collaborative, interdisciplinary, inter-agency and international research; the closer relationship between 'R' and 'D'; and the growing involvement of consumers in shaping research agendas and the ethical conduct of research.
- Appreciate the full range of research-related roles of professional nurses: namely, appraising, using, implementing, facilitating, designing, undertaking, supervising, commissioning and disseminating research.

### ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Applicants must be Registered Nurses, with current registration, who have established themselves in their chosen field of professional practice (normally with at least 5 years of experience working as a RN), and who hold a Masters degree in Nursing (or a cognate discipline). A Masters degree which contains only coursework will not be accepted for entry into the DNurs program.

Applicants without a Masters degree, but who have an Honours degree in Nursing, with at least IIA standard, may be considered if they have substantial clinical experience, evidence of continuing professional development and academic ability (e.g. publications) and an adequate level of basic research knowledge.

As well as academic ability and professional experience, DNurs applicants should be highly motivated to become research-active practitioners and ultimately, clinical and professional leaders. The program is particularly suitable for RNs who are Charge Nurses, Unit Directors, Clinical Nurse Specialists, Advanced Practitioners or Nurse Consultants.

An applicant may only be enrolled as a candidate for the degree, if the proposed field of study and research is acceptable to the Discipline of Nursing.

## FEES

The DNurs is classified as a higher degree by research and therefore Australian students are eligible for funding under the research training scheme. However, international students will be required to pay full fees of \$20,000 per year (full time).

## PROGRAM DURATION AND STRUCTURE

The program is conducted over 3 years full time or 6 years part time study. The structure is outlined in the table below. Students are required to attend two research weeks per year.

Research Project 1 E.G. Systematic or critical integrative review (20,000 words)	Research School	Year 1 Semester I full time Year 1 Semester I and II part time
Research project 2 (20,000 words)	Research School	Year 2 full time Year 3 & 4 part time
Research project 3 (20,000 words)	Research School	Year 3 full time Year 5 & 6 part time
Total portfolio (70,000 words) Projects 1, 2 & 3 with linking chapters, introduction etc.		Submit at the end of Year 3 full time or year 6 part time

## STRUCTURED PROGRAM

The DNurs structured program will be conducted in a systematic and structured fashion, preparing students for their research by assisting them to establish their research focus and to develop their research questions and methodologies.

This process will assist students develop the foundation for the individual research components of their program. DNurs students will attend two intensive week long research schools per year, where they will have the opportunity to work with their supervisors, visiting scholars and staff and to interact with fellow students in developing their research ideas. This research focus must have the potential to allow enquiry using different methodologies and methods.

To assist students prepare a systematic review protocol, training in use of software designed to assist researchers in this process is provided. Students are also required to attend the University's Induction program in their first semester of study.

Thus the specific objectives of the structured program are for students to:

- Appraise their field of nursing practice to identify a research focus and to develop some preliminary research questions.
- Explore the practical, methodological and ethical issues in relation to their area of research.
- Critically examine the concepts of 'clinical and cost-effectiveness in health care' and 'evidence-based practice' in nursing.
- Explore the political, professional and policy context of nursing research.
- Complete a protocol for a systematic or critical integrative review.

## RESEARCH

With the move towards evidence-based practice in health care it is important that students pursuing doctoral study are able to collect, appraise and integrate the evidence relating to their research topic at an advanced level. Therefore in the first year full time or first two years part time, for the research component, students will conduct a systematic review or, if suitable research is not available, a critical integrative review of the literature regarding a topic in their chosen field.

In the subsequent two years full time or four years part time, students will plan two research projects, submit the proposals, undertake the studies and write up the reports. These two completed research studies together with the systematic or critical integrative review will be presented in the final portfolio (70,000 words), with an introduction and in depth final discussion that draws the work together into a cohesive portfolio. The completed portfolio will be assessed by two examiners external to the university.

## APPLICATIONS

Prospective students should contact the department and speak to the program coordinator prior to lodging an application form.

Application forms for the DNurs program can be found at The University of Adelaide Graduate Centre web site:

<http://www.adelaide.edu.au/graduatecentre/scholarships/postgrad/pgforms.html>

Application forms need to be forwarded to the Adelaide Graduate Centre:  
Graduate Centre  
The University of Adelaide  
Level 13, 10 Pultney Street  
Adelaide SA 5005

## PROGRAM COORDINATOR



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