

COMPARISON OF ADVANCED DEGREE PROGRAMS

Master of Science — Family Nurse Practitioner (MS-FNP), Doctor of Nursing Practice — Family Nurse Practitioner (DNP-FNP) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

	MS-FNP	DNP-FNP	PhD
Focus	Direct patient care at the advanced practice level with focus on effecting positive patient outcomes for the individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice-focused terminal degree at the advanced practice level • Combines direct patient care with focus on individuals, populations, organizations and systems to effect positive patient outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research-focused terminal degree • Explores areas where there are gaps in scientific understanding • Focuses on scientific content and research methodology
Evidence-based practice	Applies knowledge of evidence-based practice in collaboration with individual patients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies knowledge of evidence-based practice in collaboration with individuals, populations, organizations and systems • Learns to critically assess the evidence and transition valid and reliable research into practice • Develops collaborative relationships with researchers to facilitate translation into practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generates new evidence (new knowledge) to advance nursing science and improve care • Develops collaborative relationships with practice to facilitate transition of current research into practice

	MS-FNP	DNP-FNP	PhD
Foundations of Advanced Practice Nursing (APN)	Combines foundations of APN with ethical practices, legal concerns, social, behavioral, medical and nursing science with focus on the individual patient	Combines foundations of APN with ethical practices, legal concerns, social, behavioral, medical and nursing science with focus on the individual patient, populations, organizations and systems	
Complex health systems	Develops understanding of health care systems and reimbursement structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops understanding of complex health systems and the medical industrial complex • Applies this understanding to navigate and effect system change to improve patient outcomes 	Develops and expands the body of knowledge that advances understanding of complex interactions in health systems that impact outcomes as well as how this knowledge might be utilized to positively impact outcomes
Health policy	Develops an understanding of health policy	Applies knowledge of health policy to achieve legislative advocacy and effect system change to improve patient outcomes	
Informatics (health information systems)	Develops an understanding of informatics and ways it might be used in nursing to maximize efficiency, steward resources and enhance the quality and safety of patient care	Develops an understanding of informatics and seeks to identify ways it might be used in nursing and health care systems to maximize efficiency, steward resources and enhance the quality and safety of patient care	Develops an understanding of informatics and seeks to identify ways it might be used in nursing and health care systems to generate new knowledge
Health equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops understanding of factors that contribute to health inequities • Implements change at the individual patient level to reduce inequities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies understanding of factors that contribute to health inequities • Implements change at the individual, population, organization and system level to reduce inequities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeks to understand and investigate factors that contribute to health inequities • Evaluates interventions to reduce inequities, advancing knowledge