DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE

The Doctor of Nursing Practice - Family Nurse Practitioner (DNP-FNP) degree is designed for those nurses who are interested in advance practice nursing clinical leadership. DNP-FNP graduates are prepared as clinical experts in the delivery of primary care across populations. The DNP-FNP focuses on critical thinking, leadership, and policy skills necessary to advocate and create changes in healthcare practice for populations and individuals. The program offers an online format, providing flexibility for students to remain in their current work positions. Optional opportunities for personal interaction are included with faculty and peers in focused intensive sessions at selected points during each semester. Clinical coursework and immersion experiences are conducted in primary care settings. Students complete most clinical requirements in their home community, but may need to travel for specialized clinical experiences including rural health care settings. Admission to the University does not guarantee admission to the program.

The DNP-FNP program includes coursework in nursing theory and research, health information systems, organizational leadership, health policy, quality improvement, statistics, and evidence-based practice; as well as advance practice nursing cognate courses that develop Family Nurse Practitioner knowledge and skills in order to provide primary care for individuals across the lifespan. Content includes chronic illness management, health promotion and disease prevention and didactic and clinical content specific to patient populations within the Family Nurse Practitioner scope of practice. Eight academic credit hours are dedicated to the development, implementation and evaluation of the DNP-FNP scholarly project. The program includes over 1000 hours of immersion in clinical practice to build and assimilate knowledge necessary for complex, advanced practice. These experiences also provide the context within which the final DNP-FNP scholarly project is completed.

The DNP-FNP curriculum at Colorado Mesa University is based on the “Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice” identified by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculty’s Independent Practice Competencies and Primary Care Competencies for Family Nurse Practitioners. The ten AACN Essentials include the scientific underpinnings for practice, organizational and systems leadership for quality improvement and safety, clinical scholarship and analytical methods for evidence-based practice, information systems/technology and patient care technology for the improvement and transformation of health care, healthcare policy for advocacy in health care, inter-professional collaboration for improving patient and population health outcomes, clinical prevention and population health for improving health, advance nursing practice, and specialty-focused competencies to prepare graduates for national specialty certification as an advance practice nurse. Graduates prepared for an advance practice role as a Family Nurse Practitioner will demonstrate practice expertise, specialized knowledge, and expanded responsibility and accountability in the care and management of individuals and families.

The DNP-FNP degree is built upon the generalist foundation acquired through a baccalaureate or advanced generalist Master’s in Nursing. The curriculum may be individualized for students based on their prior education and experience. A candidate with a baccalaureate degree would take all courses in the program; someone who already possesses a master’s degree would take coursework to achieve competencies not previously attained. Some students may elect to complete a MSN as they progress toward their DNP-FNP. The DNP-FNP is the final step on the nursing career ladder at Colorado Mesa University.

Admission to the DNP-FNP Program

Candidates not meeting all of the above requirements may be admitted under conditional status.

General Policies
Up to nine credit hours may be taken in a “non-degree seeking student” status and later applied to the program requirements. Up to 30% of the credit hours of applicable courses, with a grade of “B” or higher, may be transferred from a regionally accredited institution into the program. Additional information may be found in the Transfer Credit section.

Requirements
Program of Study
See Doctor of Nursing Practice - Family Nurse Practitioner (DNP-FNP) (http://catalog.coloradomesa.edu/areas-study/nursing/doctor-nursing-practice-family-nurse-practitioner-dnp-fnp) for information on program requirements.