Nurse Anesthesia Program
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Is the program currently accredited?

The USM Nurse Anesthesia Program (NAP) received accreditation by the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Program effective October 12, 2012. This signifies that all of the procedural steps have been successfully completed up to this point in time. This decision recognizes that the program will provide a graduate level curriculum leading to the award of a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree. A second onsite visit to the program will be conducted after five (5) years following the start of the program’s first class of students. This will allow time for certification examination scores and other measures of student achievement to be assessed by the program and reviewed by an onsite review team prior to consideration for continued accreditation. Accordingly, the program will be scheduled for its next onsite visit in Spring 2017 followed by the Council’s review of the program for continued accreditation in Fall 2017.

The USM School of Nursing is fully accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), and The University of Southern Mississippi is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and The Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL).

When will the program at USM begin?

Matriculation of the inaugural class of the USM NAP will begin in January 2013. The NAP is designed to matriculate one class per year each January.

What degree plan does the USM Nurse Anesthesia Program offer?

The program will provide a graduate level curriculum leading to the award of a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree The curriculum is designed as a post-baccalaureate to Doctor of Nursing Practice (BSN-DNP) with an emphasis in anesthesia.

How long is the USM NAP?

The USM NAP is a 36 consecutive month integrated curriculum. The Council on Accreditation requires that doctoral programs be a minimum of 36 months.

Why should I choose a DNP program?

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) and the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA) have adopted the entry-to-practice doctorate degree requirement by 2025 for Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists. Many nurse anesthesia programs have already made the transition to a doctoral program or are in the process of transition.
The DNP title is the accepted title for the terminal practice doctorate degree in nursing. A CRNA with a DNP will have the credentials necessary to not only function in the clinical setting, but also assume leadership position in healthcare systems, and to participate in academia and research.

The following links will provide additional information regarding the Doctor of Nursing Practice
http://www.aacn.nche.edu/DNP/index.htm
http://www.aana.com/doctoralinfo.aspx

How many students will be accepted?

There will be 20 applicants accepted into the program each year.

May I apply for or receive advanced standing in the USM Nurse Anesthesia Program if I have previously attended another nurse anesthesia program?

Advanced standing is **not** granted to students even if they have attended another nurse anesthesia program. The BSN-DNP program is a uniquely integrated curriculum that builds on past education and experiences and progresses from basic to complex. All students must complete the program in its entirety in the sequence listed.

BSN-DNP applicants that have previously attended another nurse anesthesia program must meet all the admission requirements of the USM NAP. All applicants will be considered within the usual admission cycle; off-cycle admissions are unavailable.

***Applicants that have been dismissed or withdrawn from another nurse anesthesia program will be required to have an official letter of good standing submitted directly from the Program Director at the NAP previously attended in order to be considered for admission to the USM NAP.

How many years of practice as a licensed Registered Nurse are required? What type of clinical experience is preferred?

Applicants must have one year of clinical experience (two years preferred) at the time of application as a licensed registered nurse in an area of intensive care nursing (ICU, CVICU, SICU, Neurosurgical ICU, MICU, etc. Level III neonatal and pediatric ICU experience is accepted.

Areas that do not meet ICU requirements are: CCU, PACU, surgery, step-down units, and emergency room. Individual consideration will be given to these areas that serve as an “overflow” unit for acutely ill patients requiring intensive care nursing as described in the previous paragraph.

Applicants must have experience in continuous ECG monitoring, invasive monitoring, vasoactive infusion management, and ventilator management.
Is the CCRN certification required?

The CCRN certification is not required for admission to the program, however; additional certification, training, and skills add distinction among the candidates.

How do I apply to the USM Nurse Anesthesia Program?

Online application forms are available. The applicant must apply to the USM Graduate School and the USM NAP. Use the following links to access the applications to the USM Graduate School which will direct the applicant to the application instructions and required forms.

https://usmgrad.admissionpros.com/default.asp

http://www.usm.edu/nursing

When is the deadline for applications?

The deadline for applications to be submitted is June 30th of the prior year to which admission is being sought. Incomplete applications will not be considered after the deadline. Application fees must be paid in full to the USM Graduate School and the Nurse Anesthesia Program for the application to be considered complete.

Supporting documents from external sources (GRE Scores, official transcripts, reference letters, pending BSN completion degrees, etc.) must be received no later than July 15th of the prior year for which admission is being sought. The application and supporting documents submitted directly from the applicant must be received by June 30th.

Are all applicants granted an interview?

Only complete applications will be reviewed. The applications process is very competitive therefore; the applicants will be screened and only the most qualified will be granted an interview with the NAP Admissions Committee.

When can I expect to be notified if I am granted an interview?

Applicants selected for an interview will be notified in August. Notification of acceptance can be expected in late September.

If I am accepted into the program will I have to make a deposit to secure my position?

Yes, applicants that are offered a position in the program are required to make a $1500 deposit to secure their position. The deposit must be received within two weeks of our offer, or the position will be forfeited to an applicant on the alternate list. The deposit will be credited toward the student’s tuition at the time of matriculation. All deposits and application fees are non-refundable.

Who can I contact at USM regarding the applications process?

Please utilize the link to the USM Graduate School for information regarding the application process http://www.usm.edu/graduateschool/admissions.php The Office of Admissions should be contacted with questions regarding the application process or the status of your application file.

NAP Frequently Asked Questions
April 6, 2016
Questions regarding specific information about the USM NAP can be directed to the NAP by contacting Nicole Magee via email nicole.magee@usm.edu or by phone at 601-266-5500.

Is there a part-time plan of study?

No. The only plan of study in the nurse anesthesia program is full-time. The program is 36 consecutive months which includes didactic and clinical components.

Can I work while I am enrolled in the program?

Employment is strongly discouraged for the BSN-DNP students because of the rigorous academic demands. If students seek outside employment they must remain in academic good standing to proceed in the program. Students are prohibited from working in any capacity that involves the administration of anesthesia.

Admission Requirements

Applicants to the BSN-DNP program in nurse anesthesia must meet the admissions criteria of the USM Graduate School in addition to the criteria set by the USM Nurse Anesthesia Program. Follow link below to access the Graduate School Bulletin.


To be considered for admission into the BSN-to-DNP Nurse Anesthesia Program the applicant must fulfill the following requirements:

1. Bachelor of Science in Nursing from a fully accredited, National League for Nursing Accreditation Commission or the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, college or university in the United States.
2. Cumulative undergraduate grade point average of 3.0 or better (where A = 4.0).
3. Completion of the Graduate Record Examination (verbal, quantitative, and analytical writing sections) within the past five years.
4. Minimum of one year of experience (at the time of application) in an area of intensive care nursing after successful completion of National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses. ICU is preferred.
5. Completion of an approved graduate statistics course achieving a grade of B or better. (The course must have been completed within the past 5 years.)
6. A current unencumbered license to practice nursing in any state with eligibility for licensure in Mississippi.
7. Proof of current certification of advanced cardiac life support (ACLS) and pediatric advanced life support (PALS).
8. Completion of the official application materials and payment of application fees by the stated deadline.
9. Personal interview with Admissions Committee (if invited).
Is an undergraduate degree in nursing required in order to apply to the program?

Yes, applicants must possess a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from a fully accredited, National League for Nursing Accreditation Commission or the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, college or university in the United States to be eligible for acceptance into the BSN-DNP program.

Are pre-requisite courses required for admission?

Yes. An approved graduate level statistics course is required as a prerequisite to the NAP. Students may enroll and be granted Conditional Admissions in order to take CHS 623 as a pre-requisite. Conditional Admission does not mean that the student has been accepted into the USM NAP, nor does it imply that the applicant will automatically be accepted. If accepted into the NAP, an official transcript documenting completion of the course (CHS 623) with a “B” or higher must be submitted prior to enrollment in the USM NAP. See the link to the USM Graduate School application to get information on registering for this course.
http://www.usm.edu/graduateschool/admissions.php

What if I have already completed a graduate level statistics course within the last five years?

If you have already completed a graduate level statistics course with a “B” or better, an official transcript and course syllabus that includes course content must be submitted for review prior to transferring the credit.

Are there other approved graduate level statistics courses that will be accepted?

An official transcript and course description that includes course content will be required in order to determine if the substitution will be permitted. Biostatistics is preferred. Please visit the website for program and curriculum updates.

Will I be required to submit an essay with my application?

Yes. You will be required to submit a two page double-spaced essay (Times Roman 12 font) articulating the reason you have chosen nurse anesthesia as a career, your personal/professional accomplishments, your strengths and weaknesses, and your short/long range professional goals.

Is there a score requirement on the GRE?

It is recommended that to be competitive an applicant should have a GRE score of:
- 300 or higher (on the 130-170 scale) when combining the verbal and quantitative scores
- 1000 or higher (on the 200-800 scale) when combining the verbal and quantitative scores
- Analytical Writing Score of 4.0 or higher (at least a 3.0 is required for admission)

How old can the GRE scores be?

The GRE exam scores must be within the past five years. Only the most current scores will be considered, even if they are lower than prior scores.
Should I spend time with a CRNA observing cases in the operating room?

It is highly recommended that you contact a CRNA in your facility and arrange a time to observe them administering anesthesia.

Must I have a Mississippi license to apply to the program?

Applicants must have a valid unencumbered/unrestricted RN license in one of the 50 United States which must be submitted at the time of application. A Mississippi RN license is not required at the time of application. Enrolled students must possess and submit a valid, unencumbered MS RN license at the time of matriculation and at all times during the program.

What is the cost of tuition for the USM Nurse Anesthesia Program?

Cost of tuition to attend the NAP can be accessed at http://www.usm.edu/nursing/nurse-anesthesia-program-nap

Is financial aid available?

Graduate School Funding Resources which include financial aid in the form of grants, loans, and scholarships can be found at http://www.usm.edu/graduateschool/funding.php

Are there additional expenses associated with the USM Nurse Anesthesia Program?

Additional fees and expenses are associated with the program.

How many clinical sites are affiliated with the USM NAP? Will I be required to rotate to all of the sites?

The USM NAP has 11 clinical sites. The NAP boasts a variety of settings that include two Level II Trauma Centers, two military hospitals, CRNA-only practices, ambulatory surgery centers, and office-based anesthesia. Additional sites will be sought as there is an increase in the number of students enrolled in the program to ensure that all students meet the minimum number of required cases set by the Council on Accreditation of Educational Programs. Students should expect to rotate to all of the clinical sites. Students will be assigned to the clinical sites in order to maximize learning opportunities.

Will I be expected to cover call shifts and Holidays while in clinical?

Yes, to meet the accreditation requirements the NAP has provided opportunities for students to obtain clinical experiences outside the regular clinical schedule by a call experience or other mechanism. Students will be assigned to call shifts and rotational shifts (e.g. 3-11, 11-7, weekends, and Holidays) to maximize clinical learning experiences.

Will the students be afforded vacation time during the 36 months?

Yes, the students will be afforded 30 days of vacation/sick time during the 36 months.
Will I be required to live in the Hattiesburg area while attending the USM NAP?

Although the majority of the DNP core courses are offered in an online/web-enhanced format students are expected to be on campus for the nurse anesthesia specific courses and the activities of the program. **Class attendance is mandatory.**

Is a Capstone Project required?

Yes, the defining characteristic of doctoral education is the demonstration of scholarship through the completion of a final project. The DNP final project can be in the form of a pilot study, a program evaluation measure, quality improvement initiatives, evaluation of a new practice model, or integrated literature review. Students will be required to disseminate the findings of their project in the form of a manuscript for publication, project, or oral or poster presentation.

Will there be a comprehensive examination required to graduate?

A cumulative and comprehensive final examination will be administered in the last semester of year 3. The comprehensive examination is designed to measure mastery of the advanced specialty content and to prepare the student for the National Certification Examination for professional licensure.

Where do I get answers to my questions regarding the USM Nurse Anesthesia Program?

Please email your questions to the NAP at nicole.magee@usm.edu or by phone at 601-266-5500.

If I am not accepted the first time and wish to reapply, what is the process?

You must reapply to the Graduate School and the NAP. Contact the Administrative Coordinator in the nurse anesthesia office and request to have your file reactivated for the next application cycle and you will be instructed as to how to proceed with the reapplication process. New and current letters of reference from your direct supervisor will be required. It is strongly recommended for applicants to demonstrate initiatives they have made to strengthen their application.

Eligibility for Certification

If you answer yes to any of the following questions you may be asked to provide additional documentation from your employer, state board of nursing, and/or the National Board on Certification and Recertification for Nurse Anesthetists http://www.nbcrna.com/Pages/default.aspx stating that you are eligible for certification and licensure as a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist upon graduation.

1. Have you ever been arrested, charged with, convicted of, pled guilty or no contest to, or been sentenced for any criminal offense in any state?

2. Have you ever had disciplinary action pending or taken regarding any health license, Certificate registration or permit you hold or have held?
3. Have you ever been denied a license, certification, registration or permit to practice in a Regulated health occupation?

4. Have you ever been denied staff membership or privileges in any hospital or health Care facility or had such membership revoked, suspended or subjected to any restrictions, probation or other type of discipline or limitations?

5. Have you ever had a malpractice judgment against you or settled any malpractice action?

6. Where you ever disciplined for academic performance or conduct violations (e.g. academic probation, dismissal, suspension, disqualification, etc.) by any college or university?

Additional resources can be found on the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA) Website by following the link below