

## Major in Mental Health Nursing

### Background and Introduction

Monash University has developed a reputation for excellence and innovation in the field of postgraduate mental health nursing education since the introduction of the Graduate Diploma of Nursing (Psychiatric Nursing) in 1995 and the Graduate Certificate of Nursing (Mental Health) in 2001. For the past decade these courses have provided nurses from Victoria and around Australia with the advanced knowledge and skills necessary for specialist practice in mental health nursing. Many graduates of the programs now occupy positions of leadership within the profession and more recent graduates form the backbone of the mental health nursing workforce.

The Master of Nursing (Mental Health Major) is designed for registered nurses who wish to pursue a career in mental health nursing. The mental health major consists of theoretical content and specialist mental health skills to consolidate and extend the knowledge and skills developed in undergraduate study. Patients in contemporary specialist mental health services have complex needs requiring a high level of mental health nursing expertise while patients with mental health problems and disorders in non specialist mental health settings, often go unrecognized and untreated because of the lack of mental health expertise in such settings.

Quality mental health nursing care in all settings and at all levels is strengthened by a professional commitment to high standards of practice, specialist education and currency of practice.

### Nurses Board of Victoria (NBV) recognition of qualification requirements

Registered nurses wishing to apply for Nurses Board of Victoria (NBV) recognition of their psychiatric nursing qualification (previously known as endorsement), must complete the Graduate Diploma or Master of Nursing level of study. Students who exit with a Graduate Certificate of Nursing will *not* be eligible for NBV recognition of a psychiatric nurse qualification.

### NBV Clinical requirements

Students seeking NBV recognition must complete three specialist clinical core units with a minimum of 250 hours of supervised clinical experience each. Of the course total of 750 clinical hours at least 250 hours must be in an acute admission unit. Experienced mental health nurses, for example, division three nurses or division one nurses with a NBV recognised psychiatric nurse qualification do not have to complete the clinical hours and may be eligible for credit for previous study or clinical experience.

### International (off shore) students and non-mental health nurses

Off shore students and students who do not wish to pursue a career in mental health can select a mental health unit to study but do not have to complete the clinical component. International on campus students can undertake a full time study load.

### Career Paths

Mental health nursing roles are expanding and developing in a range of specialist and non specialist health care settings including specialist mental health and primary health services. In addition to role expansion the development of new levels of mental health specialisation such as the credentialed mental health nurse (Australia College of Mental Health Nurses), and the mental health Nurse Practitioner require a specialist mental health nursing education beyond what the undergraduate programs can deliver.

The mental health major is suitable for nurses wishing to provide mental health care across the spectrum of nursing practice. This spectrum may be classified according:

- *Age:* Child and Adolescent, Adult, Aged Care
- *Diagnosis:* Schizophrenia, Drug and Alcohol, Peri-natal Mental Health, Psychiatric Emergency, Eating disorder etc;
- *Points along the continuum of care:* Health Promotion, Early Intervention, Crisis Assessment, Continuing Care etc;
- *Health setting:* Forensic, Emergency Department, Rural, Community, Inpatient, Primary Care etc.

Graduates will be direct providers of specialised nursing care, clinical nurse specialists, nurse consultants and case managers of people with mental illness and their families.

Graduates of the Master of Nursing Mental Health Major may also be nurse practitioners, unit managers and educators. Graduates who complete their Master of Nursing with a research study may go on to undertake a Doctor of Philosophy and participate in a research career.

### **Industrial Partner Support**

The mental health team has strong industry partnerships with Eastern Health, Latrobe Regional Hospital, Mildura Base Hospital, Peninsula Health and Southern Health and 12 credit points are awarded for successful completion of their graduate nurse program (GNP) toward the mental health major. The Monash mental health team are keen to expand the number of industry partners and welcome approaches from mental health services who wish to send their students to Monash to undertake postgraduate studies in mental health nursing.

### **Example of part-time study pathway:**

#### **Year 1**

Semester 1	<a href="#">NUR5215</a> Mental Health Nursing Concepts and Practice *	12 credit points
Semester 2	<a href="#">NUR5227</a> Integrated Mental Health Care*	12 credit points

***Exit point number 1 Graduate Certificate in Nursing (Mental Health) 24 credit points***

#### **Year 2**

Semester 1	<a href="#">NUR9214</a> Advanced Therapeutic Interaction, <b>OR</b> <a href="#">NUR9008</a> Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) for mental health professionals	12 credit points
Semester 2	Credit for successful completion of an approved graduate nurse program (GNP) in mental health or equivalence based on previous clinical experience in mental health <b>OR</b> Research or Elective unit as approved by the course coordinator	12 credit points

***Exit point number 2 Graduate Diploma in Nursing (Mental Health) 48 credit units***

#### **Year 3**

**Semester 1 & 2** Masters coursework units x 2 as approved by the course coordinator OR Research Project  
(Students wanting to complete a 36cp research minor thesis, please contact the course coordinator for advice.)

***Exit point number 3 Master of Nursing (Mental Health) 72 Credit points***

\* Core unit

For further information, please contact:

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