

NURSING FORENSICS, CERTIFICATE

Requirements for an undergraduate certificate may be completed at any campus location offering the specified courses for the certificate.

Program Description

This 12-credit certificate introduces students to forensic health sciences, forensic nursing, and the nursing role in the scientific investigation of violence. Through this course series, nurses gain foundational forensics knowledge and skills, including evidence collection and preservation; forensic documentation; recognition of domestic violence, assault, and stalking; related public policy and regulatory guidelines; and legal and ethical issues. This program prepares nurses to provide care that is more specialized for victims and perpetrators of physical, psychological, and social violence or abuse.

What is Nursing Forensics?

Violence impacts our communities at a local, national, and global level. It's an unfortunate reality that a high number of patients who access healthcare services are the victims of violence, abuse, or neglect. When these victims enter the healthcare system, professionals trained in forensic nursing are often their first line of defense. In addition to providing routine medical care, forensic nurses must understand the legal and ethical implications of treating victims of violence and abuse. Forensic nurses must be skilled at injury identification, evaluation, and documentation. Proper observation, collection, and preservation of evidence is often critical in determining the legal outcome of traumatic events. Penn State's Nursing Forensics certificate provides nurses with the knowledge and skills to effectively help these patients.

You Might Like This Program If...

You are interested in working with victims who have experienced violence or trauma. Forensic nurses are vital in bridging the gap between medical care and the legal system. Students will learn to identify signs of violence, understand the resources and interventions available to help, and provide compassionate care while preserving physical evidence that may assist in criminal investigations. Enrollment in this certificate allows Nursing students to gain an additional area of concentration while pursuing their degree. This certificate introduces forensic nursing and may serve as a starting point for SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner) certification (<https://www.forensicnurses.org/page/aboutSANE/>).

Program Requirements

To earn an undergraduate certificate in Nursing Forensics, a minimum of 12 credits is required.

Code	Title	Credits
Prescribed Courses		
NURS 245	Violence and the Impact on Society	3
NURS 409	Introduction to Forensic Nursing	3
NURS 410	Forensic Evidence Collection and Preservation	3
NURS 411	Seminar in Forensic Nursing	3

Prerequisites Required.

Certificate Learning Objectives

- Identify and analyze current forensic science and nursing issues and trends.
- Verbalize the complicated issues and variables surrounding violence in societies.
- Identify the role of the forensic nurse in the multidisciplinary team, providing service from initial contact through courtroom adjudication.
- Critically analyze the role of the forensic nurse in healthcare and private industry, criminal justice, community organizations, and law enforcement entities.

Academic Advising

University Park

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World Campus

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Schuylkill

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Career Paths

Forensic nurses connect the medical and legal communities by completing medical assessments and providing treatment, as well as collecting evidence and giving expert testimony to support criminal investigations. A general understanding of nursing forensics can support any nurse working in their traditional role in community and emergency services. Nurses may also pursue more specialized forensic nursing roles or pursue graduate degree programs and board certification.

Careers

Graduates of the Nursing Forensics Certificate Program obtain positions in hospitals, community anti-violence centers, medical examiners/coroner offices, corrections institutions, public health departments, and psychiatric hospitals. Typical roles could include:

- medical examiner nurse investigator
- forensic clinical nurse specialist
- correctional facility nurse
- emergency room forensic nurse
- nurse coroner

- assault or abuse nurse examiner
- legal nurse consultant

Nurses interested in earning the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE), or Advanced Forensics Nursing Board Certification, may use the undergraduate Forensic Nursing Certificate Program as a starting point for meeting eligibility requirements, though the certificate program will not fulfill all criteria. Additional information about these certifications can be found on the International Association of Forensic Nurses website (<https://www.forensicnurses.org/>).

Opportunities for Graduate Studies

Nurses interested in advancing their education in forensics nursing can pursue graduate-level forensic Nursing certificates and degree programs. Additionally, to apply for Advanced Forensics Nursing Board certification, a graduate degree in nursing is required. Although Board Certification is not a requirement to practice in most areas, certification demonstrates expertise and a commitment to excellence in the area of forensics nursing. More information can be found on the International Association of Forensic Nurses website (<https://www.forensicnurses.org/>).

Professional Resources

- International Association of Forensic Nurses (<https://www.forensicnurses.org>)

Contact

University Park

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<https://www.nursing.psu.edu/undergraduate-certificates/>

World Campus

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<https://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/degrees-and-certificates/penn-state-online-nursing-forensics-undergraduate-certificate> (<https://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/degrees-and-certificates/penn-state-online-nursing-forensics-undergraduate-certificate/>)

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