

# PSYCHIATRIC NURSING DIPLOMA

## Overview

*Faculty of Nursing*

MacEwan.ca/PsychNursing (<http://MacEwan.ca/PsychNursing/>)

MacEwan University's Psychiatric Nursing diploma prepares graduates for a professional career as a registered psychiatric nurse (RPN). This 28-month program is designed for full-time studies and comprises 84 credits of coursework distributed over 2.5 academic years. The program has intakes at two sites: the City Centre Campus in Edmonton and the Centennial Centre for Mental Health and Brain Injury in Ponoka.

The curriculum helps students develop the professional competencies to care for people experiencing mental and physical health problems. Graduates are ready to promote optimal wellness for patients/clients and provide holistic, client-centred nursing care across the lifespan. The Program of Study incorporates extensive theory, laboratory, and clinical practice. It builds on nursing and psychiatric nursing knowledge, as well as the biological, health, and social sciences. Concentrated blocks of nursing practice experiences, scheduled in a variety of settings, are strategically positioned within each academic year.

Starting in Fall 2025, all applicants who wish to study psychiatric nursing must enroll in the Bachelor of Psychiatric Nursing (BPN) degree program.

Students can choose to complete either a 123-credit Bachelor's degree or exit with an 84-credit Diploma in Psychiatric Nursing. Graduates of this program receive a diploma in Psychiatric Nursing and are eligible to write the Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Canada Examination (RPNCE), which is required for registration as an RPN.

## Career Potential

RPNs play an integral role as members of the inter-professional healthcare team. They are employed in such areas as community mental health, acute and sub-acute psychiatry, palliative care, rehabilitation, continuing care, correctional services, crisis intervention, mental health and addictions, education, research, and private practice. Psychiatric nurses bring an important mental health perspective to the delivery of health services through their employment in such roles as staff psychiatric nurses, addictions counsellors, therapists, community mental health workers, case managers, educators, administrators, researchers, and self-employed practitioners. Psychiatric nursing is recognized as a distinct profession in the Yukon, throughout the Western Canadian provinces, and in numerous other countries.

## Contact Information

E: [psychnurseinfo@macewan.ca](mailto:psychnurseinfo@macewan.ca)

## Program Requirements

For students starting the program prior to Fall 2025, please refer to the academic calendar specific to year of entry for program requirements.

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Year 1</b>		
HLSC 120	Human Anatomy for Healthcare Professionals <sup>1</sup>	3
HLSC 126	Human Physiology I for Healthcare Professionals <sup>1</sup>	3

HLST 133	Foundations of Indigenous Peoples' Health and Well-Being in Canada	3
PNRS 150	Introduction to the Discipline of Psychiatric Nursing <sup>1</sup>	3
PNRS 154	Developing Therapeutic Relationships for Mental Health Nursing <sup>1</sup>	3
PNRS 152	Foundations of Health for Psychiatric Nursing Practice <sup>1</sup>	6
PNRS 156	Mental Health Nursing I <sup>1</sup>	4
HLSC 124	Microbiology for Healthcare Professionals <sup>1</sup>	3
HLSC 128	Human Physiology II for Healthcare Professionals <sup>1</sup>	3
PNRS 256	Mental Health Nursing Practice I <sup>1</sup>	5
<b>Year 2</b>		
NURS 234	Integrated Health Assessment and Pathophysiology in Nursing <sup>1</sup>	5
NURS 251	Nursing Care, Diverse Populations <sup>1</sup>	4
HLSC 220	Pharmacotherapeutics for Healthcare Professionals <sup>1</sup>	3
English (100 to 400 level) <sup>1,2</sup>		3
PNRS 257	Mental Health Nursing Practice II	7
NURS 243	Nursing Practice I	7
PNRS 310	Mental Health Nursing II <sup>1</sup>	3
PNRS 311	Individual and Group Counselling for Mental Health Nursing <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>Year 3</b>		
PNRS 353	Mental Health Nursing Practice III	3
PNRS 356	Psychiatric Nursing Practice Preceptorship	10
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>84</b>

<sup>1</sup>

The minimum passing grade for this course is a C-.

<sup>2</sup>

A three-credit university English course at the 100, 200, 300, or 400 level is required as a prerequisite for program completion; ENGL 102 is recommended. ENGL 111 cannot be used to meet the English course requirement for this program.

The minimum passing grade for a course at MacEwan University is a D or CR unless otherwise noted next to the appropriate course in the program of study.

## Course Substitutions

Credit Earned in:	May Be Substituted for Credit in Program Course:
PEDS 100	HLSC 120
PEDS 101	HLSC 126
PEDS 102	HLSC 126 & HLSC 128
PEDS 103	HLSC 128

## Program Regulations

### Program Regulations

Students are strongly encouraged to seek advice from a Faculty of Nursing Academic Advisor related to any aspect of these program regulations.

## Diploma Exit

Students can apply to exit the Bachelor of Psychiatric Nursing (BPN) program after completing the first five terms of the BPN program to complete a Psychiatric Nursing Diploma. Students can apply to diploma exit the Bachelor of Psychiatric Nursing Program at the end of Year 1. Available seats may be limited for the diploma exit option and eligibility will be determined on a first-come, first served basis.

## Program Time Limit

A student in the BPN program has six years from the first day of the term of acceptance to complete all requirements to be eligible for the credential.

## Credit Load Maximums

The maximum credit load for each term for students in the BPN program is equal to the credit load indicated in the program of study. Students cannot take more credits per term than the number of credits planned in their program of study. Additional credits in a full clinical practice term are not permitted.

## English Course Requirement

A three-credit university-level English course at the 100, 200, 300, or 400 level is required as a prerequisite for Year 2; completion of ENGL 102 is recommended. ENGL 111 and ENGL 211 cannot be used to meet the English requirement for the BPN (Required English Course Policy).

## Elective and Statistics Course Requirements

The Open Elective and Open Senior Electives requirements are required for program completion. The Open Elective (100 to 400 level) and Open Senior Electives (200 to 400 level) are university-level theory courses, excluding subject codes PNRS and NURS, that extend knowledge within an area of interest. The Open Elective may also be chosen to satisfy a prerequisite requirement for Open Senior Electives.

A 100 or 200 university-level Statistics elective is also required for program completion.

## Progression of Studies

Course registration is required for attendance in all program courses. Students are responsible for ensuring they meet the prerequisite and/or co-requisite requirements noted in program courses. In accordance with the Academic Standing policy, a student who fails to complete a prerequisite or co-requisite course designated as being required for progression in the program (or for program completion) may be Required to Withdraw (RTW) from the program.

Students who have had a break in the continuity of their program may have additional course requirements to establish course currency.

Course currency is required for program completion. All PNRS, NURS, and HLSC equivalent courses must have been completed within the ten years immediately preceding a student's program start date. The decision to award transfer credit rests with the program and cannot be appealed. Program regulations require coursework completed either at MacEwan University or externally at another institution to meet currency requirements for transfer credit(s).

For courses taken outside of MacEwan University, students must follow the External Course Taking policy and Inter-Institutional Transferability policy to ensure courses meet equivalency for graduation.

## Professional Conduct

Students must adhere to the current Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses, Code of Ethics and Standards of Psychiatric Nursing Practice, and College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses, and confidentiality agreements signed with MacEwan University and clinical placement/other external agencies.

## Program Standards

Students admitted to this program are presumed to be capable of fulfilling the academic requirements of their program with, if applicable, provision of reasonable accommodation. The reasonable accommodation of students with disabilities shall not require the University to lower its standards, academic or otherwise, nor shall it relieve a student of the responsibility to develop and demonstrate the essential skills and competencies expected of all students pursuing this program (Students with Disabilities procedure).

Students require the requisite skills and abilities for entry-to-practice as Registered Psychiatric Nurses (RPNs) in Alberta, as outlined by the College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Alberta (CRPNA). All students must meet the physical and mental attributes that will support success in a registered nursing education program. Students must participate in lab and clinical practice courses requiring the performance of physically and mentally challenging activities that may include cognitive, behavioural, communication, interpersonal, physical, sensory-perceptual, and environmental requirements.

## Regulations Governing Clinical Courses

Students must achieve satisfactory performance in all clinical courses in accordance with the course/clinical criteria and outcomes. Clinical course hours may include days, evenings, nights, and weekends. Students are to arrange their own transportation for required program activities, and any costs incurred for meals, travel, uniforms, equipment, and accommodation are the student's responsibility. Students will require daily access to a vehicle for any practice experience not accessible through public transportation. Required nursing practice placements will generally be within 150 kilometres of the program site. Rural and remote placements beyond 150 kilometers may be offered.

To meet clinical placement requirements, students may be required to attend agency-related training outside of regular session classes. Students cannot be in attendance at clinical agencies as MacEwan University nursing students except at times and locations authorized by the clinical course instructor for the course in which the student is currently enrolled. Students must comply with applicable work integrated learning policies regarding clinical and/or nursing practice placements.

Students must have completed all prerequisite courses as well as all program and agency pre-clinical requirements prior to the start of any clinical course. In accordance with work integrated learning policies, the University reserves the right, at any point during the clinical placement, to remove a student from the clinical placement for serious performance issues (i.e., engaging in behaviour that places the client and/or others at risk or that is contrary to the professional or safety requirements of the placement). In such cases, the Chair, through consultation with the Dean, may assign a grade of NCR in the course.

## Police Information Check

A current, clear Police Information Check (PIC) that includes a Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC) is required for program admission. These checks must be completed no earlier than 90 days prior to the program start date.

and submitted no later than the published document deadline. A pardon in progress does not meet the admission requirement for a clear check.

Students are responsible for obtaining a PIC and VSC at intervals specified by clinical agencies and for making these available, upon request, to their clinical agency representative. Students may also be required to obtain a Child Intervention Record Check for some clinical placements. Students must be able to satisfy agency requirements prior to the start of clinical placements. Students whose PIC status changes following program admission must self-report this change in status; this may compromise their ability to complete the program requirements as they may be denied required clinical placements and, therefore, be unable to meet program completion requirements.

## Immunization Status

Program students may be required to care for patients/clients with infectious diseases such as Hepatitis B or other blood-borne pathogens. Students must meet agency requirements for immunizations prior to the start of all clinical or practice placement courses. Current immunization against specified communicable diseases is required as a prerequisite for practice placements and, thus, for continued enrolment in the program.

## N95 Mask

Program students must be fitted for an N95 mask as a prerequisite for clinical experiences and refitted in accordance with health authority requirements. It is the responsibility of the student to meet the required timelines for mask fitting.

## Basic Life Support Certification

A BLS provider (CPR-HCP) card from the Heart and Stroke Foundation is required prior to the start of the clinical placement in the first year of the program. The BLS provider portion (CPR-HCP component) must be updated every 12 months throughout the program prior to starting any clinical placement. No grace period is provided.

## Agency-Specific Certifications

Program students may be required to complete additional agency-specific certifications and training as a prerequisite for clinical experiences.

## Program Learning Outcomes

Psychiatric Nursing Diploma graduates will possess the professional competencies for entry to practice as a Psychiatric Nurse, including the requisite knowledge, skills, attributes, and behaviours to promote optimal mental, physical, and psychosocial health for clients across the lifespan in diverse settings.

Upon completion of the Psychiatric Nursing Diploma program, graduates will:

1. Practice within the boundaries of the Registered Psychiatric Nurse Regulators of Canada Entry#Level Competencies, the Professional Code of Ethics, the Standards of Psychiatric Nursing Practice, agency policy, and the legislated scope of practice of the Registered Psychiatric Nurse.
2. Integrate theoretical frameworks and strong foundational knowledge from general and psychiatric nursing and the health, biological, and social sciences into psychiatric nursing practice.
3. Employ problem-solving, critical thinking, clinical judgment, and reasoning within psychiatric nursing practice.

4. Provide safe, competent, evidence-informed, client-centred, ethical care in situations of health and illness, working with individuals, families, groups, and communities within diverse practice settings.

5. Utilize a holistic approach in working with persons, families, groups, and communities, with consideration of the interrelationships among psychological, physiological, socio-cultural, developmental, and spiritual variables.

6. Convey caring behaviours for clients through empathy, respect, unconditional positive regard, genuineness, cultural sensitivity, and therapeutic use of self.

7. Communicate, collaborate, and advocate with clients within the context of families, the interprofessional healthcare team, and the community, to promote the mental, physical and psychosocial health of clients, continuity of care, and optimal client outcomes.

8. Foster best practices and responsible use of resources within a complex healthcare environment.

9. Recognize and initiate action related to societal factors that may impact the mental health of individuals, families, groups, and communities.

10. Demonstrate professional leadership and excellence in psychiatric nursing practice through accountability, responsibility, mentorship, role modelling, and commitment to life-long learning.

## Admission Requirements

Through a competitive admission process, applicants may be admitted to one of the following:

### Regular Admission

*To be evaluated through the Office of the University Registrar*

Applicants must have a minimum overall average of 65 percent, with no course grade lower than 50 percent, in the following high school courses:

1. ELA 30-1
2. Biology 30
3. Chemistry 30 or Science 30
4. Mathematics 30-1, Mathematics 30-2 or Mathematics 31
5. One subject from Group A, B, C or D course

### Notes:

- A maximum of one Group D subject may be presented. Group D subjects used for admission must be 5-credit or any credit combination of at least 5 credits (e.g., two 3-credit subjects).
- Applicants with nine to 23 university-level credits must also present a minimum Admission Grade Point Average (AGPA) of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale. Applicants with 24 or more university-level credits will be considered under Previous Post-Secondary Work.

### Mature Admission

*To be evaluated through the Office of the University Registrar*

Applicants must be 20 years of age or older and have been out of full-time high school at least one year by the beginning of the intake term. Applicants must have a minimum overall average of 65 percent, with no course grade lower than 50 percent, in the following high school courses:

1. ELA 30-1
2. Biology 30
3. Chemistry 30 or Science 30
4. Mathematics 30-1, Mathematics 30-2 or Mathematics 31

**Note:**

- For Mature Admission only, another Group C course grade could be used to replace the Mathematics 30-1 or Mathematics 30-2 or Mathematics 31 grade in the calculation of the competitive average.

Applicants with nine to 23 university-level credits must also present a minimum Admission Grade Point Average (AGPA) of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale. Applicants with 24 or more university-level credits will be considered under Previous Post-Secondary Work.

## Previous Post-Secondary Work

*To be evaluated through the Office of the University Registrar*

Admission in this category does not imply or guarantee the transfer of any coursework and/or credential unless a block transfer agreement (internal or external) is in effect and published in the calendar by the Office of the University Registrar. In addition, transfer of coursework does not imply or guarantee that an applicant will be admitted.

Applicants must have successfully completed the following from a recognized institution:

- A minimum of 24 university-level credits with a minimum Admission Grade Point Average (AGPA) of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale and must have completed the required core courses listed under the Regular or Mature Admission category.

## Additional Admission Criteria

### 1. English Language Proficiency

*To be evaluated through the Office of the University Registrar*

#### Applicable to All Admission Categories

All applicants must meet an acceptable level of English language proficiency. We will require official documents such as high school or post-secondary transcripts or proof of successful completion of standardized language evaluation. Full details are available in MacEwan University's academic calendar or online at [MacEwan.ca/ELP](http://MacEwan.ca/ELP).

Applicants must meet university-level requirements for English language proficiency.

### 2. Spoken English Proficiency

*To be evaluated through the Office of the University Registrar*

#### Applicable to All Admission Categories

Applicants who speak English as a second language – regardless of citizenship – are required to submit official documents such as high school, post-secondary transcripts or proof of successful completion of standardized language evaluation. Full details are available in MacEwan University's academic calendar or online at [MacEwan.ca/ELP](http://MacEwan.ca/ELP).

### 3. Other Admission Criteria

*To be evaluated through the Office of the University Registrar*

#### Applicable to All Admission Categories

Applicants who have had one or more unsatisfactory academic records from any post-secondary program or institution must meet the admission requirements under the Previous Post-Secondary Work admission category.

Applicants who have two or more unsatisfactory academic records within the past 10 years from any post-secondary program or institution will not be considered for admission or re-admission to the Program until a minimum five years from the date of assignment of the last unsatisfactory record. For the purpose of admission or re-admission, an unsatisfactory record is defined as a transcript with the notation 'required to withdraw' or equivalent.

*To be evaluated through the Program*

#### Applicable to All Admission Categories

Applicants offered admission to the program are required to present a clear Police Information Check (or equivalent from another policing agency) that includes a Vulnerable Sector Search. The Police Information Check must be submitted by the published document deadline and have been issued within three months of the start of the program intake term.

Conditionally accepted applicants who have had a break in the continuity of their nursing program or who completed a portion of a nursing program through another institution may have to meet additional course requirements to establish course currency and/or course equivalence.

#### Equity Admissions

The Faculty of Nursing at MacEwan University is committed to facilitating an equitable, diverse, and inclusive educational environment. The Faculty of Nursing recognizes there are underrepresented groups in nursing and nursing education, therefore reserves up to 10% of admission spaces for applicants to the Diploma in Psychiatric Nursing, who self-identify as Indigenous. MacEwan University defines Indigenous as First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples in Canada.

In order to be considered for admission under the Equity Admission criteria, candidates must still meet the minimum admission criteria for the program.