

*PROPOSAL FOR THE RECONFIGURED
MASTER OF NURSING PROGRAM*

*FACULTY OF NURSING
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO*



Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies

September 13, 2001

University of Toronto
Faculty of Nursing
Proposal for the Reconfigured Master of Nursing Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For eighty years, the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Toronto has stood at the forefront of nursing education and scholarship in Canada. To maintain this edge and remain competitive, this document outlines a proposal for a reconfiguration of the existing Master of Nursing Program to: a) clarify and define areas of study within the field of "Clinical Nursing" and b) streamline the program in all three fields to insure students have the required substantive knowledge required for advanced nursing practice. The overall program will be reduced by one term (see Part I).

There are no changes in the current three fields within the Master of Nursing Program which include: Nursing Administration, Clinical Nursing, and Acute Care Nurse Practitioner. The reconfigured Master of Nursing Program was approved by our Faculty Council on May 31, 2001.

More specifically, the objectives of the proposed reconfiguration are to:

- a) describe more clearly the foci and substantive content within the "Clinical Nursing" field by identifying two areas of study within this field as "Health in the Community" and "Special Populations",
- b) insure completion of essential content required for advanced nursing practice roles by prescribing the required courses within each selected field and area of study, and
- c) streamline the program, based on faculty and students' evaluations, to reduce the number of open electives for a total program requirement of one term less (9 courses vs 12).

There are no resource implications for this proposed reconfiguration. It is expected that the streamlined courses will both decrease faculty workload related to advising and attract a greater number of full-time students into a more focused and shorter program. A transition plan has been included to demonstrate how all students registered in the Master of Nursing Program prior to September 2002 will complete their degree.

NOTE:

This proposal also includes a plan to change the mode of delivery for the Acute Care Nurse Practitioner field from classroom-based to e-learning (see Part II).

Program Start-Date: September 2002

**University of Toronto
Faculty of Nursing**

Proposal for the Reconfigured Master of Nursing Program

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PART I: Proposal for the Reconfigured Master of Nursing Program

INTRODUCTION

The Department has offered a graduate program leading to a Master's degree since 1970. Initially, the only program offered was a thesis program leading to the degree of Master of Science in Nursing (MScN). In 1991 the degree designation was changed to Master of Science (MSc). Students are currently not being admitted to this program.

In April 1993 the Department received OCGS approval to offer a non-thesis Master's program leading to the degree of Master of Nursing (MN). The first regular admission to the program was in September 1994. Students were offered two fields of concentration: nursing administration and clinical nursing. Students in clinical nursing were expected to build a program of studies from a set of specialized courses related to acute or chronically ill adults or children; parent-child, perinatal, psychiatric, gerontological, or community nursing. The Acute Care Nurse Practitioner MN field, with a focus on either adult or child, was approved in 1997.

Over the past 20 years, the environment in which nurses work and deliver care has changed dramatically. As recently as the 1970s, the majority of nursing care was delivered in hospital settings, but that is changing. Nurses now work in a wide variety of settings, including people's homes, neighbourhood clinics, community centres, long-term care settings and hospitals. Depending on their education, skills and interests, they may work in a street clinic serving people who are socially or economically disadvantaged or in a sophisticated, high-tech critical care unit.

The opportunities for nurses with advanced preparation are expanding rapidly and, at the same time, the practice of nursing is becoming more demanding and more complex. More nurses are being asked to lead care teams, and to supervise a range of other health care providers. Their responsibilities can include administrative duties, highly skilled tertiary care (acute care nurse practitioners), partnerships with populations or groups in the community to maintain or improve individual or community health, and complex clinical care designed to help people with complex care needs either regain their health or manage a persistent illness.

In all their roles, nurses are expected to understand theory and evidence-based practice. Therefore, advanced practice nurses need to have the skills and knowledge to provide complex care, work effectively in different settings, and help coordinate care as people move from one setting to another. Students entering our reconfigured program can expect to receive the knowledge and clinical expertise to meet this challenge. At this time, we propose a reconfiguration of the Master of Nursing Program as described below.

PURPOSE/ OBJECTIVES

For eighty years, the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Toronto has stood at the forefront of nursing education and scholarship in Canada. To maintain this edge and remain competitive, this document outlines a proposal for a reconfiguration of the existing Master of Nursing Program to: a) clarify and define areas of study within the field of “Clinical Nursing” and b) streamline the program in all three fields to insure students have the required substantive knowledge required for advanced nursing practice. The overall program will be shortened by one term. This document outlines these changes and has been prepared with the assistance of Jane Alderdice (July 2001). There are no changes in the current three fields within the Master of Nursing Program which include: Nursing Administration, Clinical Nursing, and Acute Care Nurse Practitioner.

Beginning in September 2000, the Curriculum Committee undertook the task of reviewing its existing Master of Nursing Program with the three fields of study of advanced nursing practice (i.e. Nursing Administration, Clinical Nursing, and Acute Care Nurse Practitioner). Faculty, students, and representatives from clinical agencies contributed to the work of the committee through Faculty and Faculty Council meetings, and email and face-to-face discussions. The reconfigured Master of Nursing Program was approved by our Faculty Council on May 31, 2001 (see Table 1).

More specifically, the objectives of the reconfiguration are to:

a) describe more clearly the foci and substantive content within the “Clinical Nursing” field by identifying two areas of study within this field as “Health in the Community” and “Special Populations”. Currently it is left to the students and their advisors to define the population and selection of courses that allow students to claim specialization.

b) insure completion of essential content required for advanced nursing practice roles by prescribing the required courses within each selected field and area of study. Currently there is no formalized plan of courses developed by every student to support clinical specialization.

c) streamline the program to reduce the number of open electives for a total program requirement of one term less (9 courses vs 12). Currently students select five open electives that do not consistently encompass their clinical specialization. In the reconfiguration, all courses are prescribed except for one guided elective to support their chosen specialization in the Nursing Administration and Clinical Nursing fields.

Therefore, a description of the current Master of Nursing Program and the proposed reconfiguration follows. Table 2 outlines a comparison made between the existing program and the reconfigured program.

Table 1.
Template for the Reconfigured Master of Nursing Program

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS - Effective SEPTEMBER 2002

Fields of Study in the MN Program	NURSING ADMINISTRATION	CLINICAL NURSING						ACUTE CARE NURSE PRACTITIONER			
		Health in the Community	Special Populations			Critical or Persistent Illness	Adult Acute Care	Child Acute Care			
			Mental Health	Women's Health	Children and Youth						Adults
Foundation Courses	NUR1016H NUR1017H NUR1022H									NUR1016H NUR1017H NUR1022H	
Required Courses	NUR1072Y NUR1064H NUR1034H	NUR1072Y NUR1032H NUR1034H*		NUR1072Y NUR1032H** NUR1034H						NUR109Y NUR110Y NUR1034H	
Specialty Courses	NUR1059H NUR1060H 1 guided elective	NUR1047H NUR1055H 1 guided elective	NUR1033H NUR1065H 1 guided elective	NUR1039H NUR1040H 1 guided elective	NUR1042H NUR1044H 1 guided elective	NUR1048H NUR1051H 1 guided elective	NUR1056H NUR1057H 1 guided elective			NUR1101H NUR1102H	NUR1103H NUR1104H

* With approval, selected students may replace NUR1034H with NUR1035H

** With approval, selected students may replace NUR1032H with NUR1043H

FIELDS IN THE MASTER OF NURSING PROGRAM

The **current Master of Nursing (MN)** program has three fields of study. They are:

- a) Nursing Administration
- b) Clinical Nursing
- c) Acute Care Nurse Practitioner
 - i) Adult
 - ii) Child

Areas of study within the field of Clinical Nursing currently are not specified.

The **reconfigured Master of Nursing (MN)** program also has the same three fields of study. However, in the reconfigured program, the areas of study within the Clinical Nursing field are prescribed as “Health in the Community” and “Special Populations” to reflect the complexity of advanced nursing practice within the health care environment. However, only the field will be recorded on the transcript. Therefore, the fields in the reconfigured program are:

- a) Nursing Administration
- b) Clinical Nursing
 - i) Health in the Community
 - ii) Special Populations
- c) Acute Care Nurse Practitioner
 - i) Adult
 - ii) Child

A description of each field follows.

a) *Nursing Administration.* The nursing administration field focuses on developing administrative science skill and knowledge related to advanced nursing practice. The courses examine the political, social, economic and environmental issues that affect nursing management as well as the work environment for nurses. Organizational theories, research methods and conceptual frameworks relevant to nursing management and administrative practice are critically analyzed as a basis for understanding issues related to nursing human health resources planning, nursing leadership, quality improvement, and nursing systems.

b) *Clinical Nursing.* The Clinical Nursing field includes two areas of study which are Health in the Community and Special Populations. The Special Population areas of study will relate to: i) Critical or Persistent Illness (children/youth, adults, older persons), ii) Mental Health, or iii) Women’s Health.

Health in the Community focuses on the dynamics of promoting and achieving health with diverse individuals, groups, communities and populations. The emphasis is on advanced nursing practice skills and knowledge required to develop collaborative partnerships with people and groups to maintain and improve health, within the context of the community. This area of study

examines the social, cultural, economic and environmental factors that affect human health states, and how nursing practice can influence those factors. Students will develop an understanding of theory, research and practice about power, the politics of the determinants of health (e.g., gender, age, class, immigration), healthy public policy, and community development. They will also develop an understanding of the impact of relationships on health.

Special Populations focuses on the care of individuals and families who experience variations in health and well-being because of illness, disease, trauma, life stage or gender. Students will critically examine theory and research to develop an in-depth understanding of human health states, the interface between caregiving and place, responses to complex illness, and the appropriateness of therapeutic interventions. They will also develop an understanding of the impact of relationships on health, illness and caregiving. Students will acquire advanced nursing practice skills related to providing complex care for special populations, developing programs/interventions that reflect the diverse needs of people and place, and understanding and influencing the policies/politics that affect caregiving.

c) *Acute Care Nurse Practitioner*. The acute care nurse practitioner (ACNP) field of study is designed to prepare nurses as advanced practitioners who provide direct care to clients and families with complex, acute or chronic health needs. Students will focus their learning on the adult or child population. This area of study fosters development of knowledge, skill and judgment in the domains of practitioner, leader, researcher, educator and change agent inherent in the Canadian Nurses Association's Framework of advanced nursing practice.

The reconfigured program is aligned with the research expertise in our Faculty. Students in our graduate programs have the opportunity to learn from our nationally and internationally recognized clinical and research experts. For example:

a) The first nursing research chair in Canada was established in 1996. This is the Heather M. Reisman Chair in Perinatal Nursing Research which is a joint undertaking of Mount Sinai Hospital and the University of Toronto. The holder of the Chair, Professor Ellen Hodnett, is responsible for establishing Mount Sinai Hospital and the University of Toronto, Faculty of Nursing as international leaders in perinatal nursing research and for championing perinatal nursing research locally, nationally and internationally. Excellent opportunities are provided for graduate students interested in working in the area of children/infant and women's health..

b) The Nursing Effectiveness, Utilization, and Outcomes Research Unit, is a collaborative project between the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Toronto and the School of Nursing at McMaster University and is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health. The Co-director is Professor Linda O'Brien-Pallas, and faculty researchers include Professors Diane Irvine Doran, Linda-McGillis-Hall, and Souraya Sidani. The clinical and organizational research relates to nursing effectiveness, utilization, and human resources management and provides a rich substantive base for students in the nursing administration field.

c) The Long Term Care Collaborative Research Program is a joint effort of the Faculty of Nursing, Sunnybrook and Women's College Health Science Centre, Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care and the Rehabilitation Institute of Toronto. Research focuses on the care of individuals with long term health problems who are institutionalized and includes work by Professors Dorothy Pringle and Donna Wells. The four major research themes relate to: 1) care of demented individuals, 2) maintaining mobility, 3) relationship development and 4) resident choice. Graduate students are well integrated into this program.

d) The University of Toronto Centre for the Study of Pain (UTCSP) is an interdisciplinary collaboration of the Faculties of Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, and Pharmacy. Four funded research programs include: 1) peripheral and central pain mechanisms, 2) integrative neurobiology, 3) clinical management of pain and 4) epidemiology of pain. Graduate students will be included in all the programmatic areas as well as a clinical scientist training program across the four disciplines. Nursing will focus on the third programmatic area, and graduate students from nursing have received clinical scientist training awards. Professors Bonnie Stevens and Judy Watt-Watson are the nursing faculty who are involved in the UTCSP Centre and the Pain Research Centre within the Faculty of Nursing. Professor Bonnie Stevens also holds the first Signy Hildur Eaton Chair in Pediatric Nursing Research at the Hospital for Sick Children.

e) The Centre for Home Care Evaluation and Research is a joint development of the Faculty of Nursing and the Department of Health Administration with participation of the Departments of Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy and the Institute of Biomedical Engineering. Seven programs of research are pursued: 1) Population based patterns of Home Care Service Utilization, 2) Funding schemes for home care service delivery, 3) Human resource implications of home care service provision, 4) Diffusion of medical and communication technology into the home, 5) The home as the environment for health care service delivery, 6) Evaluation of the cost and consequences of home care service delivery, 7) Home care policy design issues. Professor Patricia McKeever is co-director of the Centre and several of the Faculty participate (Jan Angus, Denise Gastaldo, Linda O'Brien-Pallas, Diane Irvine Doran, and Dorothy Pringle). Graduate students are being integrated into all the programs.

Table 2.

Course Requirements for the Current MN Program and Reconfigured MN Program

Degree Requirements	Current MN 3 Fields: <i>Administration, Clinical Nursing, ACNP (Child, Adult)</i>	Reconfigured MN 3 Fields: <i>Administration, Clinical Nursing (Health in Community, Special Populations), ACNP (Child, Adult)</i>
Foundation Courses	1016 Social & Political Issues in Health Care 1017 Theoretical Developments in Nursing 1022 Critical Appraisal of Research	1016 Health Systems, Policy & the Profession 1017 History of Ideas in Nursing Practice 1022 Research Design, Appraisal, and Utilization
Required Courses	<p>Clinical courses ADMINISTRATION & CLINICAL: 1069 Advanced Nursing Practice 1070 Integration of Theory/Research in Practice ACNP: 3 clinical courses 1106, 1107, 1108</p> <p>Communication elective {All fields} [ACNP: 1101/2]</p> <p>Health Care Delivery elective [ADMINISTRATION, CLINICAL]</p>	<p>Clinical course ADMINISTRATION & CLINICAL: 1072Y Advanced Nursing Practice with Comprehensive Paper¹</p> <p>ACNP: 2 clinical courses, final with comprehensive paper: 1109, 1110</p> <p>Relationship course [All fields] a) ADMINISTRATION: 1064 Behaviour in Health Care Organizations b) ACNP: 1101/2 Advanced Health Assessment & Clinical Reasoning c) CLINICAL: i. Health in Community 1032 Group Process & Professional Practice ii. Special Populations: 1032 Group Process & Professional Practice</p> <p>Research course [All fields] 1034 Program Planning and Evaluation in Nursing</p>

<p>Elective and/ or Specialty Courses</p>	<p><u>Elective and Specialty Courses</u> ADMINISTRATION & CLINICAL: 5 electives (minimum of 2 from Department of Nursing Science)</p> <p>ACNP: 1103 Pathophysiologic concepts (.5) 1104 Therapeutics (.5) 1105 Advanced Practice Roles (.5) 2 electives from Department of Nursing Science</p>	<p><u>Specialty courses:</u> ADMINISTRATION & CLINICAL: 2 required and 1 guided elective ACNP: 2 required, no elective</p> <p>a) ADMINISTRATION: 1059 Informatics: Theory & Application in Nursing 1060 Management of Nursing Services Guided Elective</p> <p>b) CLINICAL: i. Health in Community 1047H¹ Program & Community Development 1055H Politics of Health in the Community Guided Elective ii.) Special Populations: <u>1. children/youth</u> 1042 Responses of Children & Families to Illness in Childhood 1044 "Thinking" About Children: Implications for Health Care Research, Practice, and Policy Guided Elective <u>2. adults</u> 1048H¹ Complexity of Persistent Illness: Health Care Transitions & Interpersonal Challenges 1051 Common Responses to Illness Guided Elective <u>3. Older persons</u> 1056 Places, Programs, & People Who Provide Care 1057H¹ Interventions to Enhance Health, Abilities, and Well-being Guided Elective <u>4. Mental Health</u> 1033 Current Mental Health Issues and their Implications for Practice 1065 Mental Health & Illness as a Community Issue Guided Elective <u>5. Women's Health</u> 1040 Issues in Women's Health 1039H¹ Women's Health Across the Lifespan Guided Elective</p> <p>e) ACNP: 1103 Pathophysiologic concepts 1104 Therapeutics</p>
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¹new course

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Impact on Existing Faculty

There is no impact in terms of faculty course responsibilities. Some courses will need to be revised and a few new courses need to be developed (see Table 2).

Impact on Physical and Financial Resources

There is no impact on library, laboratory and computer facilities or space. There may be an impact on financial support of graduate students. Almost all fellowships require students to be registered full-time. There has been a decrease in the number of full-time students from 1991 resulting in fewer students being eligible for financial support. The impact of a reconfigured program permits completion of course work in one less term which will encourage more students to consider full-time enrolment and increase their eligibility for financial assistance.

PROGRAM AND ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Admission requirements

Admission requirements do not change with the reconfiguration of the MN program.

Program course requirements

Table 1 outlines the template for the reconfigured program:

1. In all three fields, students begin with three foundation courses (NUR1016, 1017, 1022).
2. Within each field there are required courses, to include three courses for Nursing Administration (NUR1072, 1034, 1064) and Clinical Nursing (NUR1072, 1034, 1032), and four courses for Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (NUR1109, 1110, 1034, 1101[Adult]/1102[Child]).
3. Within the Nursing Administration and Clinical Nursing fields, students must complete two prescribed specialty courses and one guided elective. Two prescribed specialty courses must be completed for the Acute Care Nurse Practitioner field.

In Table 2, a comparison is made between the existing program and the reconfigured program.

1. Foundation courses:

The three foundation courses across all fields remain the same except for minor changes in title and content (NUR1016, 1017, 1022).

2. Required courses:

- i. The current clinical courses will be collapsed to one course for Nursing Administration and Clinical Nursing (from NUR1069/1070 to NUR1072) and two courses for Acute care Nurse Practitioner (from NUR1106/ 1107/ 1108 to NUR1109/ 1110). A comprehensive paper which is a synthesis of research, theory, and practice will be required in this course for all fields.
- ii. The current guided "Communication" elective becomes a prescribed "Relationship" course across all fields: Nursing Administration 1064, Clinical Nursing 1032, and ACNP 1101/2
- iii. A current research elective will be a prescribed course for all fields (NUR1034).

PART II

Proposal to Convert the Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Field of Study in the Master of Nursing Program to an e-Learning Format

**FACULTY OF NURSING
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iv. The current “ Health Care Delivery guided elective” will not be required in the reconfigured program.

3. Elective and/or Specialty courses:

Students in the Nursing Administration and Clinical Nursing fields will complete two prescribed specialty courses and one related guided elective instead of having the option of having five open electives.

Transition Plan

1. All *students entering the program in September 2001* will be transferred automatically into the reconfigured program in September 2002. Students will receive credit for courses taken to date and advisors will work with them to plan the completion of their program.

2. All *students who entered the program in September 2000 and are still registered in September 2002* will be transferred into the new program automatically, unless they petition otherwise. Students who have not completed the courses required in the previous program must complete the required courses in the new program. Students who have completed 9 courses, including the required courses, by August 2002 will be eligible to graduate in either the fall of 2002 or the following year. Advisors will work with students to plan the completion of their program.

3. All *students entering the MN program in 1999 or before*, will be eligible to reduce the number of electives if the required course work (i.e NUR1016, 1017, 1022, communication and health care delivery guided electives) and clinical courses (i.e. NUR1069, 1070) are completed. These students will not be eligible to take the new clinical course (NUR1072) as their substantive courses differ from those prescribed in the reconfigured program. Therefore, the last offering of the clinical courses NUR1069 and 1070 will be the summer of 2003. Advisors will work with students to plan the completion of their program.

Part II: e-Learning Proposal for the Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Field

The University of Toronto faculty of Nursing proposes to be the first in Canada to convert the Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (ACNP) field of study in the Master of Nursing Program, from classroom-based to an e-learning mode supplemented by a residency program. There continues to be a demand for ACNPs across Ontario and Canada and the Faculty is receiving an increasing number of requests to increase accessibility to the program through e-learning options. Please see Part II : Proposal to Convert the ACNP Field of Study in the Master of Nursing Program to an e-learning Format

Proposal to Convert the Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Field of Study in the Master of Nursing Program to an e-Learning Format

University of Toronto
Faculty of Nursing

Executive Summary*

Initiative:

The University of Toronto Faculty of Nursing proposes to be the first in Canada to offer the Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (ACNP) (adult and child) field of study to distance learners by converting the current program from the traditional on-campus, classroom delivery method to an e-learning delivery format¹ entirely replacing the existing on-campus program. The ACNP faculty is committed to this initiative, has experience in e-format and is well positioned to be successful in this next phase of development. The proposed start date is September 2002.

Rationale:

Improved quality: The e-tools will support the development and maintenance of a community of scholars enriching the learning experience by increased contact between teacher/learner and learner/learner. The larger number and variety of learners from varying health care settings and geographic locations will enrich the academic experience. The acquisition of technology skills necessary for participation in e-learning will prepare alumni for the university and health-care environments of the 21st century.

Improved access to meet demand: The reduced requirement for attendance on campus to three residency periods, will increase equality of access across the country overcoming the structural and geographic barriers that keep nurses from accessing advanced training and keep patients from benefiting from advanced nursing care. The e-learning format of program delivery will help meet the significant demand for the MN-ACNP program by both nurses and employers across Canada. It will play a major role in addressing critical gaps and shortages in the current health care system by creating a larger pool of acute care nurse practitioners, who are able to meet the growing demand from hospitals for specialized care. It will respond to the increasing requests to make the MN-ACNP program more accessible through e-learning options.

Working Prototype: Being the first complete graduate program to be delivered in an e-format at UofT, it will be a working prototype for other courses and programs across campus.

Academic standards and requirements:

Direction has been taken from numerous UofT reports as well as the guidelines provided by SGS and OCGS (see Appendices A and B). A Steering Committee, with diverse representation from across campus, and a Faculty of Nursing Project Committee are overseeing the measured

¹ Many terms are used in the literature to denote the delivery of educational programs where students and teachers do not meet face-to-face on a regular basis. The term that appears to be the least confusing as to its intent is e-learning and in our proposal is meant to embody the concept of supporting learning with the use of technologies so that it can be done at a distance.

deliberate change with consultation of outside project coordinators to support pedagogical, technical and training aspects (see Appendices E, F & G). All University of Toronto graduate program requirements and standards and teaching learning outcomes will continue to be met. The same faculty will teach in the e-format as are presently involved in the current program. Any additional faculty will meet the required standards of SGS. Learner evaluation measures and standards will remain the same except where ongoing evaluation determines better methods to be used for the new e-delivery. Ongoing course and program evaluation will monitor the quality of the program and opportunities for continuous quality improvement. Three required residency periods will support the formation and maintenance of a community of scholars and facilitate professional socialization. They will provide opportunity for supplementing e-learning and learner testing. FTE enrolment numbers will be maintained with a gradual increase over time.

Resource Implications:

In addition to resources currently required for the on-campus program, additional requirements include: faculty release time, project coordination and training, instructional design consultation, curriculum content expertise, support for technical aspects of program development, web builders, and technical support for faculty and learners for getting set up and using hardware and software. Negotiations are under way with the Resource Centre for Academic Technology for web hosting. Library supports are well established, however additional resources will be required to support the increased requests for preparation of materials/information. The expected resource implications are being evaluated and a business plan developed with the Office of the Vice Provost Planning and Budget.

Learner costs for accommodations during residency periods and for equipment/software will be kept to a minimum and will be the responsibility of the learner. Any additional costs incurred will be off set by ability of the learner to remain in their home communities for the majority of the program rather than undertaking relocation costs.

*Note: Appendices referred to in this executive summary are attached to the back of the proposal.

**University of Toronto
Faculty of Nursing**

**Proposal to Convert the Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Field of Study in the Master of
Nursing Program to an e-Learning Format**

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Introduction and Purpose

Introduction

The University of Toronto Faculty of Nursing proposes to be the first in Canada to offer the Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (ACNP) (adult and child) field of study to distance learners by converting the current program from the traditional on-campus, classroom delivery method to an e-learning delivery format.¹ The new e-MN – ACNP will entirely replace the existing on-campus program.

- The proposed start date is September 2002.
- All University of Toronto graduate program requirements and standards and teaching learning outcomes will be maintained.
- The learning experience will be enriched by the development of a community of scholars that will increase contact between teacher/ learner and learner/learner.
- The acquisition of technology skills necessary for participation in e-learning will prepare graduates for the university and health-care environments of the 21st century.
- The evolution into e-format will be consistent with the directions articulated in documents from university task forces related to technology assisted education at UofT² and the University and the Faculty of Nursing's documents Raising Our Sights, 2000/2004 Strategic Plans.

The Faculty of Nursing plans to sustain its leadership in the area of educating MN-ACNPs and is well positioned for this innovation. Through experience gained with e-learning in current ACNP courses, the Faculty is ready for the next step of delivering a complete graduate degree program by distance while maintaining and improving program quality (Ehrmann, <http://www.tltgroup.org/resources/or%20quality.htm>). We believe that the timing is both right and critical for this initiative. There continues to be a demand for ACNPs across Ontario and in other parts of the country, and the Faculty of Nursing is

¹ Many terms are used in the literature to denote the delivery of educational programs where students and teachers do not meet face-to-face on a regular basis – distance education, distributive learning, computer assisted learning, web-based learning, e-learning, etc. These terms are used interchangeably in this document. However, the term that appears to be the least confusing as to its intent is e-learning and in our discussion is meant to embody the concept of supporting learning with the use of electronic technologies so that it can be done at a distance.

² Task Force on Academic Computing and New Media <http://www.utoronto.ca/provost/tfacnm/report.htm>; Provost's Response to the Report of the Task Force on Academic Computing and New Media, <http://www.utoronto.ca/provost/tfacnm/response.htm>

receiving an increasing number of requests to make the program more accessible through e-learning options

Purpose

The purpose of this proposal is to provide key information with regard to the:

- Background, leading to our decision to convert the delivery method of the ACNP field of study in the MN program including: evolution of acute care nurse practitioner education, Faculty of Nursing experience with technology-assisted education, and applicant/learner profile;
- Rationale for the conversion;
- Objectives of e-learning format;
- Activities to date;
- Program description including: overview, enrolment projections, application procedures, admission requirements and standards, registration and records, curriculum requirements and standards, grading, course/faculty evaluation, academic rigor, sequence of study and length of program, residency requirements, library resources and information support, course/faculty evaluation, e-learning delivery methods, faculty qualifications, faculty preparation for teaching in an e-learning program, learner preparation for e-learning, transitional strategies, program level measurement and program evaluation, and policies and procedures;
- Resource implications: learners, faculty, technical requirements for both learners and faculty, additional implications;
- Technical support requirements;
- Budget projections.

The framework and development of the proposal have been guided by University of Toronto's School of Graduate Studies (Jane Alderdice, April 2001) and address the principles developed by Ontario Council of Graduate Studies with regard to "the distance delivery of graduate programs" (April 9, 2001) (See Appendices A & B).

Background

Evolution of Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Education at U of T:

Post Masters Nurse Practitioner Certificate Program (Fast Track) (1994-1998):

- Only available to nurses with masters preparation.
- Received approval of the Faculty of Nursing and U of T academic committees.
- Three month program duration.
- Self-funded on a cost recovery basis.

- Implemented in 1994 and offered seven times preparing 105 acute care nurse practitioners.
- Unique in Canada.
- Enabled the Faculty of Nursing to:
 - respond to its teaching hospitals' critical requirement for acute care nurse practitioners,
 - prepare faculty and preceptors for effective future program delivery, and
 - determine the essential content that learners require to function in ACNP roles.
- Results of formal evaluation indicated that additional content and clinical practice time would strengthen the program (Simpson, 1997).

Master of Nursing–Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (MN-ACNP) (1997-present):

- Established as a result of the Fast Track program, and guided by its evaluation.
- Received approval from the Faculty of Nursing and U of T academic committees.
- 136 students have been admitted to the program (see Table 1).
- Allows nurses to develop expert knowledge and advanced practice abilities in the care of acutely, chronically and critically ill children or adults with complex needs.
- Most well-established program of its kind: other NP programs in Canada at: i) McMaster University, which offers neonatal nurse practitioner education and, ii) Dalhousie University, which offers a small on-campus adult focused program.

Table 1

Admissions Statistics for the University of Toronto
MN-ACNP and the Post MN Dip Programs

PROGRAM		1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
MN-ACNP	Applications	57	41	45	52	54
	Admitted	36	30	25	23	22
	Completed			21	8	17 (to date)
Post MNP Dip	Applications			21	22	Due Sept 01
	Admitted			16	18	
	Completed			16		

Post Masters Nurse Practitioner Diploma Program (Post MNP Dip) (2000-2005):

- Based on the experience of the Fast Track program, and guided by its evaluation.
- Received approval from the Faculty of Nursing and U of T academic committees.

- Only existing program of its kind in Canada.
- Designed for clinical nursing leaders with masters preparation who wish to increase their abilities.
- 34 students have been admitted to this program (see Table 1).
- Slated to be integrated into the MN-ACNP in 2005-2006.

Faculty of Nursing Experience with Technology-assisted Education.

MN-ACNP field of study:

- In 1999/2000, using funds from the Information Technology Courseware Development Fund, materials in one of the MN-ACNP theoretical courses were placed on the internet. This on-line material was piloted in 2000/2001 and was supported by traditional on-campus teaching. Learner and faculty feedback will assist in the expansion of this course to a fully e-learning course.
- Another successful competition in 2000/2001 has provided funding from the same source that will support the conversion of one of the ACNP clinical courses to an e-learning format. Explorations are underway to determine the most appropriate e-learning technologies to deliver the seminars, which will be incorporated into the course.

Post MNP DipProgram:

- Further piloting of e-learning has been done in the Post MNP Dip program where some content for four of its courses is on-line. Three of the courses have content on course websites and the fourth additionally has used linkage and communication capabilities of e-learning. Evaluations from the learners will guide further planning for the e-MN-ACNP.

Ontario Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner Program (PHC NP)

- The UofT Faculty of Nursing has been involved in the delivery of this 10 university consortium program since its inception in 1995.
- The five core courses of this program all have used a strong component of distance/on-line learning using a variety of modalities since 1995.
- The UofT Faculty of Nursing is responsible for the delivery of one of the applied theoretical/clinical courses to all of the 10 consortium university's learners.
- Continuous evaluation and improvement of the distance education delivery methods has been undertaken. (Andrusyszyn et al., 1999; Andrusyszyn, 2001; Dicenso et al., 1996)

Six years of using distance technology in their courses, has resulted in the development of expertise in the Faculty of Nursing. It has provided opportunity to try various options and modalities. It has allowed experimentation with computer based learning augmenting

traditional on-campus approaches. This has well positioned the Faculty to take the next step and convert the program to a distance program ensuring the best fit of technology to the required learning outcomes.

Applicant/Learner Profile:

- The majority of applicants have personal and professional commitments that cannot easily be accommodated by traditional teaching/learning style programs.
- Learners currently in our programs are requesting more flexible methods of course delivery, particularly e-learning in order that they can study around work and family commitments.
- The e-learning modality of education lends itself very well to supporting adult learners.
- A significant percentage of the learners have internet access at home and/or work.

Rationale for Conversion to e-MN-ACNP

1. Converting the MN-ACNP program to an e-format will enrich the ACNP learning experience by:
 - i) development of a community of scholars that can be sustained by e-tools,
 - ii) increased interaction between learners from broader geographical areas and a variety of health care environments and,
 - iii) increased technology skill development used for program learning.

(Bates, 2000; Lavery, 2000 <http://stauffer.queensu.ca/inforef/tutorials/de/learning.htm>)

2. The newly acquired technical skill set will continue to be beneficial for life-long learning and will be transferable to employment settings for better consultation in the care of clients. The project will establish a permanent network with rural and remote areas, linking learners and experts in many different settings and providing opportunities for effective information sharing.
3. The reduced requirement for attendance on campus to three residency periods will increase equality of access across Canada. By making advanced, specialized nursing education available in communities across the country, the new delivery method will overcome the structural and geographic barriers that keep nurses from seeking advanced preparation and keep patients from benefiting from advanced nursing care.
4. By increasing both access to education and the number of students in the MN-ACNP program, the project will help meet the significant demand for the MN-ACNP program by both nurses and employers across Canada. It will play a major role in

addressing critical gaps and shortages in the current health care system by creating a larger pool of acute care nurse practitioners who are able to meet the growing demand from hospitals for specialized care.

5. The project will build on existing technological innovations in the MN-ACNP. By using well-developed technologies the project will integrate the best configuration of these technologies for supporting learning based on compatibility to the learner and the course. The e-learning technologies will be the primary support for learning rather than only augmenting or complementing the traditional university-based delivery methodology. The result will be a comprehensive, innovative, professional program offered by e-learning unencumbered by the limitations of a conventional teaching program.

6. The e-MN-ACNP will accelerate the adoption and implementation of advanced technological applications by making them an integral part of advanced nursing education enhancing the capacity of the university and teaching hospitals to use technology for the delivery of information and education, and for clinical consultation and care.

7. As the first MN-ACNP (adult and child) program to be offered electronically, it will be innovative and as a working prototype will help shape future professional education in the Faculty of Nursing, in the university, and across Canada.

Objectives of the e-Learning Format

The specific objectives of converting the MN-ACNP field of study to an e-learning format are to:

- Immediately increase equitable access to the University of Toronto's nationally recognized MN-ACNP program by making innovative and effective use of technology.
- Enrich the learning environment for ACNP learners.
- Maintain the rigor and quality of the MN-ACNP education.
- Increase the number of advanced practice acute care nurse practitioners to meet pressing health care demands.
- Increase the proportion of acute care nurse practitioners that are skilled in the use of the web-based and other technologies for continued life-long learning as well as the development of clinical consultative networks.
- Demonstrate within clinical settings the ability to use technology to support professional education and development.
- Support and encourage more effective use of technology in the delivery of health care services.

Activities to Date

In the fall of 2000, the Faculty of Nursing with the support of the School of Graduate Studies, made a commitment to convert the MN-ACNP field of study to an e-learning delivery method. A number of activities concerning this initiative have taken place.

1. March 2000. Applied to Information Technology Courseware Development Fund 2000-01.
2. May 2000. Awarded funding from Information Technology Courseware Development Fund, 2000-01 for developing on-line features for NUR1103 Pathophysiological Concepts.
3. November 2000. Attended one day SGS sponsored consultative meeting with Professor Raymond von Dran, Dean of the School of Information Studies at Syracuse University, NY.
4. February 2001. Submitted Letter of Intent (LOI) to Max Bell Foundation (Full proposal not requested/no reasons given).
5. March 2001. Applied to Information Technology Courseware Development Fund 2001-02.
6. April 2001. Established project office and hired project managers as consultants to oversee the project (Appendix C).
7. April 2001. Struck Project Committee to advise and guide the two project managers (Appendix D).
8. April 2001. Established Steering Committee with broad membership and expertise from the university community. The Steering Committee has met twice (Appendix E).
9. April 2001. Official launch of project at a faculty meeting.
10. April – September 2001. Six Project Committee Meetings
 - Determined scope of the project,
 - Established core principles (See section on Faculty Preparation for Teaching in an On-Line Program),
 - Identified resources for proposal writing and implementation of the initiative.

11. May 2001. Awarded funding from Information Technology Courseware Development Fund, 2001-02 for developing on-line features for NUR1109/10 Advanced Nursing Practice in the Care of Clients and Families.
12. July 2001. Conducted Faculty Workshop for all faculty that will be involved with the e- MN-ACNP program development and implementation. Purpose - to begin to demystify on-line teaching and learning, excite the faculty and begin to identify training and support needs.
13. July – September 2001.
 - Ongoing research into on-Campus resources: search for instructional design support, discussions with OISE Education Commons regarding on-line teaching including participation in the initial workshop, demonstration of My Library, discussions with Resource Centre for Academic Technology regarding server capabilities, UofT standardized supported and licensed software, and resources for web-building.
 - Ongoing fund raising efforts: financial support of eight teaching hospitals secured; Expression of Interest (EOI) to CANARIE submitted August 24, 2001; private and government sponsorship being explored.

Description of the e-MN-ACNP Degree Program

Overview

The MN-ACNP field of study will consist of 9 courses, which can be completed full time over a 16-month period or in 27 months part time. For the first two years of the planned conversion, we will strongly encourage learners to enroll full time so as to decrease the overall number of students and demand on the faculty in order to:

- i) ensure learners graduate or, are able to transition from the existing program to the e-learning program (transition plan detailed below).
- ii) allow teachers/learners to gain further expertise in web-based teaching/learning skills.

Enrolment Projections

The e-MN-ACNP degree program will ensure maintenance and an eventual increase in the numbers of FTE learners admitted. It is anticipated that enrolment numbers will be maintained at current levels in years one and two to enable faculty to adjust to the new education environment and to implement changes based on program evaluation. Subsequent intakes will be increased modestly. Full time study will be strongly recommended to incoming learners.

Table 2

e-MN-ACNP Program Enrolment Projections

Year	Intake (FTEs)	Total Enrolment (FTEs)
Current (2001)	9	
2002	10	19
2003	10	20
2004	15	25
2005	15	30
2006	20	35

Application Procedures

Applicants wishing to apply to the e-MN-ACNP Program will follow the same procedures used for applying to the current MN-ACNP Program. The application process and forms are now being placed on the Faculty of Nursing web page.

Admissions Requirements and Standards

Applicants seeking admission to the e-MN-ACNP Program will meet the same requirements as those admitted into the current program. Preference will be given to those interested in full-time study.

Registration and Records

Successful applicants will be registered through the School of Graduate Studies. Their records will be maintained by the Office of Statistics, Records and Convocation.

Curriculum Requirements and Standards

The current MN-ACNP field of study curriculum has been revised to reflect changes in the MN degree program overall. The revised MN-ACNP curriculum has been reconfigured from 12 to 9 courses with minimal reduction of academic content, and the time to completion from 2 years to 16 months resulting in a one-session reduction.

University Graduate Grading Policies

Course professors will employ the grading practices specified by the University Graduate Grading Policies.

Course/Faculty Evaluation:

As per the Faculty of Nursing's standard, each course and its instructor are assessed and evaluated by the learner. The criteria include: mode of delivery, methods of assessment/evaluation, and overall satisfaction.

For the initial e-course offerings, mid-course and final course evaluations will be completed by learners. For subsequent e-course offerings, course evaluations will be completed by learners at the end of the course.

Academic Rigor

A number of sources of information have been consulted for this project to ensure rigor is maintained.

- Framework for proposal from School of Graduate Studies (Appendix A).
- Draft Report of the OCGS Working Group on Distance delivery of graduate program (Appendix B).
- Relevant literature including: Carlton, et al, 1998; Garrison, et al, 2001; Green, 1999; Kooker, et al, 2000; Leasure, et al, 2000; Nesler & Hanner, 2001; Turoff, 1999; Redding, 2000.

The rigor of the new e-MN-ACNP program will be ensured by:

- Maintaining the same admission requirements, curriculum requirements and standards as in the current MN-ACNP program,
- Using multiple strategies in course delivery to support learning,
 - Textbooks, CD ROMs, course handouts and copyright journal articles, (Peterson, <http://www.petersons.com/dlearn/>; Moreland & Carnwell, <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/000000269.htm>)
 - Residency period with face-to-face interactions,
 - On-line delivery using multiple methodologies,
- Careful monitoring of the program through evaluation.

Sequence of Study and Length of Program

Table 3
Full Time Program

[Learners enrolled full time would complete the program over 16 months (4 sessions).]

Fall Session	Winter Session	Summer Session	Fall Session
NUR 1017H History of Ideas in Nursing Practice	NUR 1101/2H (B)) Advanced Health Assessment and Clinical Reasoning	NUR 1109Y Advanced Nursing Practice in the Care of Clients and Families I	NUR 1110Y Advanced Nursing Practice in the Care of Clients and Families II
NUR 1022H Research Design, Appraisal and Utilization	NUR 1103H Pathophysiological Concepts	NUR 1034H Evaluation of Programs and Interventions	NUR 1016H Health Systems, Policy and the Profession
NUR 1101/2H (A) Advanced Health Assessment and Clinical Reasoning	NUR 1104H Therapeutics		

Table 4
Part Time Program

[Learners enrolled part time would complete the program over 27 months (7 sessions)]

Fall Session	Winter Session	Summer Session	Fall Session
NUR 1022H Research Design, Appraisal and Utilization	NUR 1104H Therapeutics	NUR 1034H Evaluation of Programs and Interventions	
NUR 1016H Health Systems, Policy and the Profession	NUR 1101/2H (B) Advanced Health Assessment and Clinical Reasoning	NUR 1109Y Advanced Nursing Practice in the Care of Clients and Families I	NUR 1110Y Advanced Nursing Practice in the Care of Clients and Families II
NUR 1017H History of Ideas in Nursing Practice	NUR 1103H Pathophysiological Concepts		
NUR 1101/2H (A) Advanced Health Assessment and Clinical Reasoning			

The sequence of courses and residency periods is deliberate and is normally not flexible. Due to the fixed format of the program, the learner who misses a segment would normally be required to wait a year until it was once again offered in order to continue in the program.

Residency Requirements

There will be three required residency periods, 7-14 days in length, during the 16-month e-MN- ACNP program. During those residency periods, learners will be expected to come to the UofT campus to be involved in various program elements.

Table 5

Residency Requirements for e-MN-ACNP Program

Residency	Semester	Duration	Objectives
1	1 (early September)	10-14 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of the program • Orientation to web-based technology • Orientation to UofT learner resources, e.g. library • Establish networks among faculty and learners • Present introductory academic content • Provide opportunities to evaluate learning
2	2 (late April)	7-10 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include opportunities for learner presentations, laboratory experiences and clinical case discussion to optimize integration of theoretical content into clinical contexts • Evaluation of learning • Facilitate faculty/learner discussions to enhance professional socialization into advanced nursing practice • Evaluate web-based program • Offer face-to-face counseling/guidance for learners
3	4 (late November)	7-10 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer opportunities for learner presentations and seminar discussions to consolidate and integrate academic with clinical knowledge • Evaluation of learning • Facilitate discussions to enhance socialization of learners into advanced nursing practice • Evaluate web-based program • Offer face-to-face counseling/guidance for learners

Living accommodations for learners during the residency periods will be facilitated with emphasis on ease of access to the university campus and affordable living costs for learners.

Library Resources and Information Support

The University of Toronto Library (UTL) provides 24/7 web access to its catalogue and to a comprehensive collection of electronic indexes, full-text journals and reference resources in nursing. "MyLibrary", an application developed by the library, facilitates delivery of these resources through a portal, which can be customized to the e-MN-ACNP program or specific courses.

The Gerstein Science Information Centre of the UTL has expertise in nursing information resources and provides web and telephone reference assistance to support distance

learning. Web-based or on-site instruction focused on information literacy and the effective use of electronic information resources, can be provided by Gerstein librarians. Gerstein's extensive collection of print resources can be made available to remote learners through Document Delivery arrangements (courier, fax or desktop delivery).

e-Learning Delivery Methods

UofT reports on technology-assisted education and the principles in the Draft Report of the OCGS Working Group on Distance Delivery of Graduate Programs (Appendix B) have been used to develop the design of e-learning delivery methods. Several resources in the literature describing best practices concerning the choice of modalities and approaches and faculty training have also been consulted.

Guiding Principles:

The following principles were derived from UofT and OCGS guidelines for distance delivery and the framework developed by Brett (1999).

- Sustain and enhance academic rigor of the program.
- Select modalities to fit the required learning rather than the learning to fit the modalities.
- Provide course professors support in making decisions about modalities for their own course taking into account:
 - training and experience with modalities and instructional design consultation will precede modality selection,
 - strategic plan for implementation to allow time and expertise for this evolutionary process to occur in a methodical and well supported way,
 - decisions about methodologies taking into account the nature of the course, the experience and comfort of the course professor and learners.

(Andrusyszyn & Davie, 1995 <http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/~davie/reflecthtml>;

Collins. <http://star.ucc.nau.edu/~mauri/moderate/Ccpres1096.html>;

Davie, 1988; Davie, 1989; Davie & Inskip, 1992; Davie & Palmer, 1985;

Gifford, <http://www.academic.com/mireview/brgpaper.html>;

Greenhalgh, 2001, <http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/322/7277/40>;

Harasim, et al, 1995; McConnell & Hammond

<http://www.leedsac.uk/educol/documents/000000140.htm>).

- Proceed slowly and methodically and phase in the courses with ongoing evaluation to guide further development.
- Allow for individual learning styles (Frاند, 2000; Moreland & Carnwell, 1997).
- Ensure that adult learning principles are addressed (Davie & Wells, 1991).
- Ensure a rich interactive learning environment and community of (Bernard & Lundgren-Crayrol, 2000; Diekelmann, & Schulte, 2000; Frاند, 2000; Kirby &

Garrison, 1990; OKeohane, 2000; Report of the Investing in Students Task Force, 2001).

- Select technology that does not “distract” from the learning process.
- Implement commonly used technology rather than customized courseware or software.
- Use technologies that are as intuitive as possible and require the least amount of skill development in order to make use of them.
- Control the degree of complexity and difficulty by phasing in (Sinclair & Gardner, 1999).
- Build on previous experience in the Faculty of Nursing and at UofT.
- Stay abreast of emerging technologies for best solutions.
- Select modalities that are reasonable in cost for learners and faculty.
- Select modalities keeping in mind that access for all learners is necessary (ie. slow internet connections for learners living in areas without cable or high speed phone line connections).
- Provide early start-up technical support learners and faculty.
- Ensure the approach could be extended to include other programs and courses.

Program Web site Design

The ACNP Program web site will be embedded in the Faculty of Nursing web site. It will have some public pages but the largest component will be password protected with different levels of authorized access. This will restrict access to the courses to ensure appropriate learner/course professor ratios necessary for optimal scholarly interaction.

A working example of this type of framework can be found at Ontario Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner Program <http://np.village.ca/demonstration/index.htm>

Table 6
e-MN-ACNP Program Web Site Design

ADMINISTRATIVE ASPECTS	INFORMATION DISSEMINATION	INTERACTIONS
Structure and Function	Program Description Description of courses ie. info re: residency periods Policies and procedures ie. program policies re: grades Application – link to OUAC Registration – links to ROSI	Email Forms

e-MN-ACNP Program Web Site Design (cont'd)

ADMINISTRATIVE ASPECTS	INFORMATION DISSEMINATION	INTERACTIONS
Networking Support	Directories-program, course (Posted on-line) including name, town/city, email address of learners and faculty or linked to learner's own web page Professional documents such as College regulations or political reports affecting NPs Job postings	Welcome synchronous Chat Welcome asynchronous discussions Learner café discussions Faculty café discussions Email Asynchronous discussions for alumnus Asynchronous discussions shared by alumnus and learners
Technical Support	How-to documents (posted on-line and mailed) Getting Started CD (mailed)	Technical asynchronous discussions for problem solving and advice Email for technical person Interactive technical self tests Synchronous chats
Academic Support	Book/resource lists on-line Self assessment packages for assessing course readiness Course web sites - schedule - weekly objectives - links to pertinent sites for info/exercises Course evaluation form for anonymous learner input	Order forms for books Self tests can be structured to give immediate feedback Purpose-specific asynchronous discussions Email Synchronous chats Split screen web pages for debate and discussion

Course web site design

The process of designing each course is described under previous section entitled "*Guiding Principles*".

Each course will be divided into weekly modules with objectives, activities and supporting resources. Each week, learners will work through the activities and participate in planned interactions. On-line networking and interaction with the course professor and other learners will be supported in a variety of ways within both course websites and within the program website.

Following are samples of how two courses, very different in nature, could be structured to ensure both elements of Information Dissemination and Interaction.

Table 7

Theoretical e-MN-ACNP Course Web Site Design for Two Courses

COURSE	INFORMATION	INTERACTIONS	SUPPORTING NON-ELECTRONIC METHODS
NUR 1017H History of Ideas in Nursing Practice	Course Website. Links to other web sites. Video clips on CD ROM. PowerPoint and voice over.	Asynchronous discussions of issues among professors & learners. Asynchronous discussions for questions to/from prof – questions generated from postings to be used as foundation for a synchronous discussion with expert guest speakers.	Texts. Journal articles. Videos. Teleconferences. Seminars with visiting scholar during residency period. Classroom debate. On-campus exam.
NUR 1109Y Advanced Nursing Practice in the Care of Clients and Families I	Course Website. Course Outcomes, expectations and evaluation. Measures/assignments: - requirements for securing clinical placements - preceptor packages for students to download for clinical placement - evaluation forms learners take to preceptors - site to post links to pertinent sites. - assignments - presentation/facilitator schedule	Asynchronous newsgroup for learners' discussions of the issues that arise during clinical placement. Asynchronous newsgroup for questions to/from prof (learners could pose questions here for expert presenter that would be either answered by the guest directly or collated and emailed by theme to the guest for response back to be posted in newsgroup). Split screen discussion where learners present best therapeutic plan from clinical experience on left and fellow learners and prof critique on right allowing for synthesis of optimal therapeutic plan.	Preceptor interactions. Library (virtual or real). Course texts. Telephone support from course professor.

Faculty Qualifications

All faculty who will teach in the e-MN-ACNP meet OCGS requirements for core faculty of a graduate program.

Faculty Preparation for Teaching in an e-Learning Program

Workshops:

Mini-workshops will be required to promote a better understanding of e-learning modalities and best practices. Sessions may include:

- Further exposure to professors who are experienced in teaching e-learning courses,
- Instructional design,
- Hands-on technical skill development,
- Computer upgrading.

Individual course professor support:

- Support in the development of courses,
- Consultation regarding computer purchase or upgrade and internet service provider,
- Project Committee review of course content and delivery,
- Course web site to be constructed by web builders.

Resources for faculty support:

- e-MN-ACNP Steering and Project Committees,
- OISE/UT,
- RCAT,
- UTL.

Learner Preparation for e-Learning:

Support in making an informed decision:

- Information regarding e-delivery format will be broadly available so that potential learners can make an informed decision regarding applying to the program or accepting an offer into the program (ie. university calendar, Faculty of Nursing web site, letters of offer letters).

Orienting learners to the e-environment:

- Timely provision of technical information (equipment and software requirements),
- On-line pre-assessment exercises will be available (e.g. sending/receiving email, posting in asynchronous discussions, sending/receiving attachments),
- Practice sessions for on-line synchronous chats offered,
- On-site orientation session during first residency period.

Initial and ongoing technical support available by:

- Asynchronous postings,
- Email,
- Phone contact,
- Access to technical support person while on campus during residency periods.

Transitional Strategies

The e-learning MN-ACNP will completely replace the present on campus, classroom MN-ACNP program. However, starting in September 2002, approximately 80 students will still be enrolled in the on-campus program and will require a transitional plan.

The proposed transitional plan is as follows:

Learners Admitted September 2002:

All learners admitted to the ACNP area of study for 2002 will complete the e-MN-ACNP program.

Learners Admitted before September 2002:

Learners enrolled in the MN-ACNP program prior to the introduction of the e-learning version will be provided the opportunities to complete their degree in the present on-campus format. However, these learners will be informed that they must complete the on-campus program by Summer 2004. In Summer 2004, all remaining learners enrolled in the on-campus program will be integrated into the e-learning program to complete their degree requirements. These students will be counseled regarding the transitional plan throughout the period of Summer 2001 to 2004.

Program Level Measurement and Program Evaluation

A number of studies have evaluated e-learning and contributed to the understanding of how to provide effective e-learning. (Andrusyszyn, et al, 1999; Billings, 2000; Cragg, et al, 1999; Fraser & Haughey, 1999; Gilroy, et. al, 1998; Iwasiw, 2000; Johnson, 1994; Savage, 2000; Yucha, 2000). In collaboration with the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education, University of Toronto (OISE/UT) the e-MN-ACNP will be evaluated.

Outcomes will include:

- Establishment and maintenance of an Internet/web-based MN-ACNP program,
- Admission rates, time to completion, graduation rates and geographic base,
- Knowledge acquired via the e-learning approach versus the traditional program,
- Learners' satisfaction with e-learning, level of support (e.g. from course professor, technical support, etc), and course content,

- Faculty experiences with e-learning, level of support (e.g. learner feedback, comfort level with technology, etc.),
- Program graduates employment rates.

Policies and Procedures:

The Project Committee will consider various policies and procedures to augment existing UofT policies and procedures that arise as a result of the innovation to e-learning. Task Force reports have been consulted where available. For example:

- Intellectual Property: “Generally, the University does not claim copyright on course materials, course content or other copyright works created by University faculty staff or students. However, works created as part of the terms of the creator’s employment with the University or under a service contract, are normally owned by the University. Computer software, including multi-media works, created using University resources or funds administered by the University is owned by the creator until such time as commercialization is proposed. If commercialization is proposed, the University affirms its interest in the development and may elect to share in the financial rewards therefrom. The University’s policies with respect to rights in instructional media are currently under review by the Task Force on Intellectual Property Relating to Instructional Media, which is expected to table a report in the fall of 2001” (personal communication with Jason Bechtel, Sept. 11, 01).
- Plagiarism: Clarification is important regarding what constitutes plagiarism when in an electronic environment ie use of web-based materials from external websites and from learner exercise/assignments posted on the web (University of Toronto Faculty of Information Studies Copyright Guidelines <http://www.fis.utoronto.ca/resources/admin/copyright.htm> .
- Faculty concerns: Pertinent issues that might affect faculty with the intersection of ethics and/or professional matters with technology (Green, 1999, <http://www.campuscomputing.net/summaries/1999/index.html>); Gulstad, 2001; Hagner, 2000; Oblinger & Kidwell, 2000).
- Recruitment of learners (Fraser & Haughey, 1999).

Resource Implications

Learners:

Costs may be partially offset by reduced requirements for relocating expenses, regular travel to and from campus, and living expenses in Toronto.

Costs to the e-MN-ACNP learner include:

- Textbooks, course materials,

- Travel to clinical placements,
- Long distance phone connection charges,
- Living costs including accommodations and travel to attend residency periods and,
- Computing equipment and internet access. (Many will already have some of these resources.) See technical requirements below.

Every effort will be made to minimize learner costs.

Faculty:

Computer equipment and software will be provided for course professors at the Faculty of Nursing. However, faculty may incur personal costs for computer hardware and software if they elect to work on course development and delivery from their homes.

Technical Requirements for Both Learners and Faculty:

Mandatory Minimum Hardware Requirements:

Pentium 200 mhz or higher

32 MB RAM

3 GB hard drive with 500 MB free space

3.5 inch floppy disk drive

8X CD ROM drive

Mouse

56 KBPS V.90 modem (or equivalent cable TV modem or ADSL modem)

Windows 95B

Inkjet or laser printer

IBM PC compatible computers are the primary equipment supported by University of Toronto's Information Commons. Only limited assistance for other hardware and software platforms is offered.

Software:

Current anti-virus software

Word processing: Microsoft Word 97 or later

Internet: Netscape Communicator or Internet Explorer

Chat: mIRC

PDF reader: Adobe Acrobat Reader

Additional Resource Implications

Our experience with the Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner Program, <http://np.village.ca> and the Post Masters Nurse Practitioner Diploma Program

<http://acutecarenp.com> indicates that there will be additional resources required for development and ongoing operation.

Table 8

Additional Resources for e-MN-ACNP

Resource	Description
Faculty release	For course development.
Project management& coordination	Intensive in the first year of development, diminishing over the 2 nd year when much of the development is complete and program coordinator takes over operational aspects.
Program coordination	Begins in the second year and increases to .5FTE position for ongoing coordination.
Instructional design consultation	Spread evenly over the three years of course development - each professor may require one or two sessions of consultation for their course. Minimal, if any, after course development.
Curriculum content expertise	For development of modules – varies considerably with the course depending on the degree to which it is ready for adaptation to the web.
Web server to host web site	To house and store web site. Includes web hosting service 24/7 to ensure continuity in access to web site.
Technical support for faculty for program development	To learn about modalities, assistance in decisions about choice of modalities for their course, and skill development in modalities.
Web builders	Intensive need during development stage. Access to minimal web building will be required on an ongoing basis for updates.
Technical support for faculty and students getting set up and using hardware and software	Orientation of new students and faculty to required hardware and software: how to get set up and training in its use. Intensive at beginning of program and diminishes to trouble shooting and problem solving on an ongoing basis. Support service is required during office hours ³ .

Budget Projections (forthcoming)

The expected resource implications are being evaluated and a business plan developed with the assistance of the Office of the Vice Provost Planning and Budget.

³ It is of particular interest to note that in our experience in supporting over 200 students, technical support that was available only in office hours five days a week was satisfactory in meeting the students' support needs.

Appendix A

Framework for Proposal from School of Graduate Studies
(from Alderdice, Jane, School of Graduate Studies, email March 29, 2001)

Introduction

- introduce what you are planning
- explain that the learning outcomes, course requirements and all other program standards will be equivalent to the existing program (if anything is different, explain how it is equivalent)
- how have you ascertained the demand? what is it?

Objectives:

- Rationale
- explain that the entire option is switching over to DL
- content not changing
- objectives of existing program plus some, explain
- impact on the program of the change of format
- explain how will you handle students who are currently in stream
- clarify your proposed start date

Academic outline:

- append your brochure or other program outline material
- explain how you can meet all the objectives of the program via DL
- confirm that all the admission and program requirements will remain the same.

Distributed Learning Format:

- discuss the individual courses and how they will be delivered
- what will the class sizes be? (there is concern that instructors cannot handle as many students through DL as in normal on-campus courses)
- will the courses be open to non-program registrants?
- discuss the various components of the program
- discuss the on-campus portion/s
- how will placements be handled, and very importantly, supervised?
- how will all program requirements be evaluated?
- how will students access reference materials, conduct any research required?
- how will students experience themselves as part of a program at UofT?

Faculty:

- how will the role of faculty members in the program change with DL?
- are all faculty members committed to this mode of delivery?
- are the faculty members receiving any form of training for this kind of teaching?
- who will be the faculty teaching the program
- who will be supervising the placements? Conducting evaluations?

Technical Support:

- computer requirements of students

Faculty of Nursing e-MN-ACNP

-commitment by department to required technical support, provide some details

Enrolment Projections:

-will the DL delivery mode change your enrolment expectations?

-provide a projection for the next few years

Appendix B

Draft Report of the
OCGS Working Group on
Distance delivery of graduate programs
2001 April 9

The Working Group was charged with the task of developing a set of principles for OCGS to use in appraisal of the academic quality of graduate programs that are offered via distance education. From these principles, additions to the OCGS By-laws may be developed to deal with such programs. The Working Group met on November 30, held a teleconference on March 8, and met again on March 16. Additional discussion, and approval of the report, was conducted via e-mail. The following nine points capture the main principles that we believe should govern the appraisal of graduate programs that are offered via distance education. Extension of some of the principles to individual courses will be mentioned at the end of this discussion..

1. Where students may take the same program, or elements of a program, in an on-campus or distance format, the minimum admission requirements or equivalencies need to be consistent between the two, as do the intended learning outcomes, program requirements and standards. If requirements are different, then the submission would need to clarify how the outcomes can be equivalent.
2. Distance-delivered programs should be taught by faculty who have the same or similar qualifications as those teaching on-campus programs. In other words, they should meet OCGS requirements for core faculty of a graduate program.
3. It is important for a graduate program to bring the student into the environment and community of scholars. It is essential to promote the development of a high quality learning community in which students can interact with each other and with faculty. Consequently, it is expected that in every distance-delivered program there will normally be a face-to-face component. This face-to-face component may occur at the beginning, middle, or end of a course or of the program, and may take the form of an intensive "bootcamp" (to build community and establish the foundation for subsequent distance interaction among members of a cohort), one or more common introductory courses, presentation and critique of student work, a capstone experience, etc. Normally, one would expect this face-to-face component to occur on campus, and at the beginning of the program but there may be other acceptable ways to incorporate it. It is incumbent upon a university to provide a persuasive justification for any exceptional circumstances leading to the design of a program without any face-to-face component, and in particular to demonstrate how the benefits identified above might be achieved in the absence of an on-campus requirement. It is not normally appropriate for students to be awarded a graduate degree without ever having been seen in person by the faculty of the program.
4. A face-face component in the program can also be helpful to ensure that the registered individual is the one doing the work for the program. (This issue is

different only in degree, not in kind, from the problem of ensuring the academic integrity of students in on-campus programs.)

5. The university should ensure that appropriate and continuing training is available to faculty in distance delivered programs. In addition, it is important that there be continuing technical and budgetary support available for maintenance and upgrading of the mechanisms of distance delivery.
6. Class size is a potential issue for courses delivered at a distance. Experience to date has shown that instructors cannot deal with as many students through distance delivery as with on-campus classes. Regardless of the number of students in a given course, the maximum number of students in any distance interaction group (eg. Online chat group or email listserve) must be limited so as to be in keeping with pedagogical principles. If a course is open to non-program registrants, it will be important that mechanisms exist to ensure that such students do not overwhelm the resources or dilute academic content to the detriment of the program registrants.
7. The statement of the program's objectives is an important component of the Standard or Periodic Appraisal brief. In the case of distance-delivery, this statement of objectives should include the rationale for providing the program via distance delivery, as well as other goals and expectations for the program and its graduates.
8. There is a perception that distance-delivered programs have been primarily course-based. Consequently, the question arose as to whether the research requirements of thesis-based graduate programs can be satisfied effectively at a distance. The answer to that question needs to rely on the norms of the discipline, and it is therefore appropriate for the OCGS consultants to comment on this issue for any particular program. Nonetheless, two general principles can be identified. The first is that students feel themselves to be part of a community of scholars and not to be working in isolation. A crucial part of this is that regular and intensive communication with supervisors, and often other members of the supervisory committees, be possible. Communication with other students is also desirable. The second principle is that the research materials, equipment, or subjects be accessible to students so that they are able to gather the necessary data or information.
9. Although the mandate of OCGS is appraisal of programs, and not of individual courses, the latter may be the object of inquiry as part of the process. In the regard, it may be appropriate to extend some of the principles listed above to the consideration of individual courses. Campus-based programs that offer some courses via distance delivery can reasonably expect that the Appraisals Committee and Consultants might have an interest in items 2, 3, 6, and 7, which can apply equally to courses as to programs.

Appendix C

Project Managers

Dorothy Hammond RN, BScN and MSc

Consultant with Hammond Associates. Assistant Professor, School of Nursing, Queen's University; for 23 years; two years cross appointment with the Faculty of Medicine during which time she was involved in the implementation of the Regional Geriatric Program, Queen's Health Science Centre. For past five years employed at Ryerson University, as one of 4 provincial coordinators, responsible for the implementation and management of the Ontario Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner Program (a 10 university consortium delivering a standardized curriculum in two languages). During that time she was instrumental in developing and implementing distance education strategies, including strong web-based on-line delivery for all of the courses in this certificate program.

George Hammond BScEng, MSc, PEng, ISP

Consultant. Professional Engineer with 28 years of experience in the university environment with information systems and technology. He continues to be instrumental in the technical planning, web site development, and technical support for staff and students in the Ontario Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner Program.

Appendix D

Members of ACNP Project Committee

Marilyn Ballantyne, RN, MHSc, NNP

Program Director, Post Masters Nurse Practitioner Diploma Program at the Faculty of Nursing, University of Toronto since 1999. She was seconded part-time from the Hospital for Sick Children, and continues to split her time between the university and the hospital in her role of Nurse Practitioner – High-Risk Neonatal Follow-up Program

Lisa Cicutto, RN, BSN, MScN, PhD, ACNP

Assistant Professor and Co-Program Director of the Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Program at the Faculty of Nursing, University of Toronto since 1998. Dr. Cicutto practises as an ACNP in the respiratory clinic at the Toronto Western Hospital, University Health Network. She is cross appointed to the Division of Respiriology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto.

Mary McAllister, RN, BScN, MHSc, NNP, Doctoral Student

Assistant Professor and Co-Program Director of the Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Program at the Faculty of Nursing, University of Toronto. She has directed the ACNP Program since its inception in 1997. Mary is currently enrolled in doctoral studies at the Institute of Medical Science, University of Toronto and practises as an ACNP in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at the Hospital for Sick Children.

Donna Wells RN, BA, MHSc. PhD

Dr Donna Wells is Associate Professor & Associate Dean, Education and Chair, Graduate Department of Nursing Science. In these roles she is responsible for the development, maintenance and evaluation of all the educational programs in the Faculty of Nursing. As well, she is a member of the Institute of Human Development, Life course, and Aging and the Joint Centre for Bioethics in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Toronto. She is a teaching representative on the University of Toronto's Governing Council and Vice Chair of Academic Board.

Appendix E

Members of the ACNP Project Steering Committee

Joan Leishman

Director, Science Information Services, University of Toronto Library; responsible for the operation of the Gerstein Science Information Centre, the University's preeminent science and health science library and the largest holder of electronic journals in North America; extensive experience with electronic information, and with establishing links between the university library and 40 hospital member libraries.

Carl Corter

Associate Dean, Research at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/ University of Toronto and cross-appointed to the Department of Psychology. He is an expert in theory, research and education including the evaluation of internet based learning and distance education.

Jay Moonah

Academic Technology, Information Commons, University of Toronto; expertise in supporting faculty and students interested in using digital media tools in their teaching and research; assistance in identifying the technologies to meet the goals of the e-MN-ACNP.

Elizabeth Smyth

Associate Professor and Associate Chair of the Department of Curriculum Teaching and Learning, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto; member of the OISE/UT Working Group on Technology and Education; member of the OISE/UT Review of Distance Education Committee; expertise in developing, implementing, and delivering professional programs at a distance.

Souraya Sidani

Associate Professor, Faculty of Nursing, University of Toronto. Dr. Sidani is an expert in research methodology, measurement, and program evaluation. She co-authored a book on the theory-driven approach to intervention evaluation. She has particularly focused on refining research methods that are consistent with the theory-driven approach and are relevant and useful to clinical research. Dr. Sidani was a member of the Nurse Practitioner Evaluation Research Team responsible for evaluating the Primary Care Nurse Practitioner Program across the province of Ontario.

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