University of Massachusetts Amherst
School of Nursing

Undergraduate Program Assessment

Program Goals

The goal of the undergraduate nursing program is to provide students the opportunity to learn the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to become registered nurses. This program is approved by the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing and is fully accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), a national nursing education accrediting body. Completion of requirements qualifies the graduate to take the National Council Licensing Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN®), a prerequisite to working as a registered nurse.

The Nursing major builds on General Education requirements and courses that provide the foundation for an approach to nursing science that is humanistic and scientific. Faculty assists students in exploring new areas and in laying the foundation for a critical thinking and problem-solving approach to nursing practice and research.

Students are expected to assume increasing responsibility for their own education by choosing the learning options that best serve their individual abilities, needs, and interests. Under faculty guidance, students provide nursing care to clients of all ages and develop skills in critical thinking, leadership, and research utilization.

Objectives of the Bachelor of Science (BS) in Nursing Program

Students emerge from this program prepared for graduate study and able to:

1. Develop and sustain therapeutic and collaborative relationships that enhance health and healing.

2. Use assessment, communication, and technical skills to design, manage, and coordinate nursing care of clients in the context of environment.

3. Use critical thinking in creative problem solving and decision-making to provide competent nursing care to clients in the context of resources, current technologies, and outcome-based practice models.

4. Provide culturally competent nursing care to clients with diverse backgrounds.

5. Provide safe, competent nursing care to clients using the essential processes to promote, maintain and restore health and prevent illness within the context of environment.

6. Design, manage and coordinate nursing care of clients in collaboration with the interdisciplinary health care team using knowledge of health care systems and policy and global health care concerns.
7. Advocate for client, nurse, and profession incorporating ethical theory and professional values of altruism, human dignity, integrity, and social justice.

8. Assume the role of the professional nurse, valuing lifelong learning, continued professional growth and commitment to excellence.

(Approved by Faculty Assembly November 12, 2003; updated 4/11)

Assessment

Objectives of the program are evaluated routinely by faculty and students. During the last weeks of each course, students are asked to evaluate 1) the course and 2) the clinical and/or classroom instruction by the faculty. The End of Course Evaluation and the Student Response to Instruction (SRTI) are offered online two weeks before exam week.

The End-of-Course Evaluations ask students to respond to questions regarding the course objectives, teaching/learning environment, clinical experience (if appropriate), and the clinical preceptor (if appropriate). The course objectives are taken directly from the course syllabi, which are distributed at the beginning of each semester for each course. Course evaluation data are confidential and assist the School of Nursing in enhancing the quality and continued improvement of the curriculum and the Nursing programs.

The Student Response to Instruction (SRTI) presents general questions about the course and instruction. All responses are anonymous. Instructors receive feedback via a computer-generated report with a statistical summary of multiple-choice responses and photocopies of handwritten responses to open-ended questions. The SRTI gives students an opportunity to offer constructive suggestions and recommendations for the continued growth and development of the nursing program.

Students and clinical faculty are also asked to evaluate each clinical site in terms of quality of clinical experience, receptivity of the staff to students, physical facilities, congruence of learning opportunities with the course objectives, etc. This information is collected by the course coordinators and shared with the Clinical Placement Coordinator, Undergraduate Program Director and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. These data are used in making determinations regarding “fit” of clinical site with course objectives and in decisions regarding use of the clinical site in future semesters.

At the conclusion of a students’ program, an End of Program or Exit Interview Evaluation is conducted with all students by the Dean or a designee, which provides valuable information for School of Nursing program review. These data are collected by means of a short survey completed by each student individually as well as a 1-2 hour group meeting with the exiting students, the Dean and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

Additionally, the School of Nursing Administration receive the results of three UMASS Amherst-centrally-collected assessment tools: the Senior Survey, SRTI course evaluations (with cross-campus comparisons), and the National Survey of Student Engagement – NSSE, synthesized into an
“Instructional Benchmarks” report organized for comparison by department. This Benchmarks report makes it possible for SON Administration and faculty to understand more about the quality of the overall University experience for our nursing majors (Senior Survey and NSSE results) and the quality of instruction experienced by our nursing students, whether as majors, in General Education courses, or through other elective or gateway courses (SRTI). These data provide an opportunity to compare the experiences of nursing students on our campus to the experiences of students in other majors and thus to identify areas of strength and those areas needing some corrective attention. The Associate Academic Dean, the Undergraduate Program Director, and, in some cases, the Undergraduate Academic Matters Committee review all assessment data and make warranted curricular and/or administrative changes.