



Nursing (NURS) 518

Advanced Health Assessment for Nurse Practitioners (Revision 2)

Status: Replaced with new revision, see the [course listing](#) for the current revision ❌

Delivery mode: [Paced study](#). Delivered via Brightspace.

Credits: 3

Area of study: Health

Prerequisites: [NURS 000](#) and [NURS 516](#) and [NURS 517](#)
NURS 517 can be taken as a co-requisite

Precluded: [NURS 520](#)

Faculty:**Faculty of Health Disciplines** [↗](#)

Overview

Nursing 518: Advanced Health Assessment for Nurse Practitioners is part of a program of study leading to a Post-Masters Diploma: Nurse Practitioner or the Master of Nursing Degree.

In *NURS 518*, students review the principles of physical examination and introduce concepts and principles on which the NP's role is based. These include advanced physical assessment techniques, clinical decision-making principles, communication, client education and documentation. In addition, NURS 518 has a mandatory three-day residency component that provides students with an intensive health assessment practicum in a group setting offered near the end of the course at various locations across Canada.

Outline

NURS 518 is an asynchronous, paced online course. Students must connect to an Internet Service Provider at their own expense.

NURS 518 consists of 13 weeks grouped into four themed units:

Unit 1: Clinical Decision Making

This unit synthesizes health assessment information using critical inquiry and clinical reasoning to diagnose health risks and states of health/illness. Students will learn to apply decision-making frameworks and skills to provide clinical services to individuals of all life stages. The unit focuses on providing the students with the fundamentals of clinical decision-making to build a successful personal clinical decision-making framework. Students will learn the processes of formulating differential diagnoses and incorporating epidemiological and health promotion principles. Students will gain an understanding of behavioural sciences and the health/illness experience.

Unit 2: Health History and Documentation

This unit focuses on the essential elements required for history taking and documentation. Students will apply advanced knowledge and skills to collecting appropriate health history (focused vs. complete) and completing client documentation using the SOAP format.

Unit 3: Physical Examination Principles

This unit focuses on physical examination techniques. Building on the competencies of a registered nurse, NP students will review basic health assessment principles. Students will learn advanced techniques and select diagnostic tests. Students will be introduced to complete vs. focused physical examinations and identifying and interpreting normal and abnormal findings. Using problem-based learning, students will gain an understanding of the physical examination and special tests required to assess and diagnose common conditions seen in primary care accurately.

Unit 4: Communication and NP Standards

The final unit focuses on collaboration, consultation, and referral principles. Interprofessional consultation and referrals will be introduced along with topics in client communication.

Learning outcomes

At the end of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Apply principles of evidence-based practice to collect, organize, interpret, and document comprehensive and focused health assessment data (i.e., health history, physical exam, laboratory assessments).
2. Applying epidemiologic principles, synthesize health assessment data to formulate and document differential diagnoses.
3. Organize and write client consultations/referrals to other healthcare providers.
4. Use client-centred and relational interviewing and communication skills to assess, support, educate, coach, and counsel clients.
5. Apply federal and provincial/territorial legislation, policies and standards related to privacy, documentation, and information management (including electronic medical records) as they pertain to NP practice.

Evaluation

Activity	Weight
Problem-Based Learning Exercises	10%
Assignment 1 - Health History and Documentation – Verbal Case Presentation	15%

Activity	Weight
Assignment 2 - Case Study	25%
Exam 1	25%
Exam 2	25%
Student Physical Assessment Residency – In-person	Pass/Fail
Total	100%

To pass NURS 518, you must achieve a minimum mark of 70% on conference participation, a minimum average mark of 70% on the two written assignments, and a minimum average mark of 70% on the two written examinations and pass the Student Physical Assessment Residency.

If the minimum mark is not achieved on any element of the assessment structure (conference participation, written assignments, exams, or student physical assessment residency), then a failing grade will be assigned for NURS 518. If the student fails or withdraws and then re-registers in NURS 518, all course elements must be repeated (conference participation, written assignments, examination, and student physical assessment residency).

Problem-Based Learning Exercises (10%)

Feedback regarding problem-based learning exercises will be ongoing, and quality of input (not quantity) is the goal. Feedback will focus on the student's ability to provide organized and original contributions that reflect analysis and synthesis of the material presented.

Assignment 1 – Health History and Documentation (15%)

Assignment 2 – Case Study (25%)

Exam 1 (25%)

Exam 1 is a multiple-choice examination at midterm using **ProctorU** [↗](#). This examination focuses on the principles of a complete physical examination, including abnormal findings and special tests.

Exam 2 (25%)

Exam 2 is a multiple-choice examination written in the course's final week using **ProctorU** [↗](#).

Student Physical Assessment Residency (Pass/Fail)

The Student Physical Assessment Residency is in-person and marked on a pass/fail basis. Students must pass this component to pass NURS 518.

Materials

Digital course materials

Links to the following course materials will be made available in the course:

Goolsby, M.J., & Grubbs L. (2022). *Advanced Assessment Interpreting Findings and Formulating Differential Diagnoses* (5th Ed). F.A. Davis.

Technical Requirements

In order to successfully complete this course, you must own or have ready access to certain computer hardware and software programs. For complete and up-to-date information on the

minimum computer requirements required to complete the graduate nursing courses, visit the **Centre for Nursing and Health Studies** [↗](#) technical site.

Important links

- › [Student services in FHD](#) [↗](#)
- › [Support services at AU](#) [↗](#)
- › [Faculty of Graduate Studies](#) [↗](#)
- › [Faculty of Health Disciplines](#) [↗](#)
- › [Graduate Calendar](#) [↗](#)

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery modes may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

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