

**Development and Implementation of a Clinical Nurse Specialist Master's Program
Using Evidence-Based Practice as the Framework**
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Background, Context, Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) Framework, and Level of the Educational Program:

Development of our master of science program in nursing to prepare Adult Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNSs) began in 1999. The first students were admitted in 2001. Because CNSs are “clinical experts in the diagnosis and treatment of illness, and the delivery of evidence-based nursing interventions” (ANA, 2004), EBP was chosen as the framework for the program. No single EBP model is designated as the “one”, rather students are encouraged to investigate all leading models and to choose one that fits their needs.

Intended Outcomes:

Each course in the graduate program is designed to allow students to grow in EBP expertise. The intended outcomes at program completion are that students will be able to:

- Effectively search for evidence using a variety of methods and databases.
- Accurately analyze available evidence.
- Translate the analysis of available evidence into recommendations for practice change or for further research.
- Assist staff in the implementation of EBP change.
- Evaluate the effects for an EBP change and adjust guidelines as needed.
- Mentor others in the use of EBP.

Activities:

Each course has an activity to build skills in EBP. It begins with a written assignment using the AHRQ Evidence-Based Practice site in the first course, Advanced Practice Roles. It culminates with the final professional project, an evidence-based literature review and a recommendation for implementation in practice.

Evaluation:

There are graded assignments in each course related to EBP. The final summative evaluation is the oral defense of the professional project. An external method for evaluation is the pass rate on a national CNS certification exam. Our program has maintained a 100% pass rate since inception.