A comparison

**DNP**

**Focus**
Nursing practice

**Goal**
To perform at the highest level of nursing practice; assume leadership roles in healthcare delivery systems; critically appraise existing literature and evidence to determine and implement best practices; and improve patient outcomes by expanding knowledge of evidence-based practice.

**Focus of courses**
- Expanding practice expertise to the highest level
- Theory related to practice
- Health care delivery systems
- Quality improvement methods
- Health policy
- Advanced nursing practice leadership

**Point of entry**
- BSN pathway (student earns a master’s degree)
- MSN with specialty focus

**Length of program**
3 to 7 years

**Clinical requirements**
500 clinical hours post-MSN (1,000 post-BSN)

**Scholarship opportunities**
- Some partial scholarships available
- Loan forgiveness programs for those who become full-time nursing faculty after graduation

**Job prospects after graduation**
- APRNs with an enhanced skill set
- Academic and leadership positions emphasizing evidence-based clinical practice and teaching
- Leadership positions in health organizations
- Directors of clinical nursing at health facilities and systems

**PhD**

**Focus**
Nursing research

**Goal**
To prepare scholars with expertise in selected substantive areas to contribute to nursing theory and practice through systematic inquiry.

**Focus of courses**
- Philosophy of science
- Theory construction & analysis
- Statistics
- Research methods, qualitative and quantitative
- History of health care and historical methods
- Instrumentation and measurement

**Point of entry**
- BSN
- MSN

**Length of program**
3 to 7 years

**Clinical requirements**
none

**Scholarship opportunities**
- Some partial scholarships available
- Loan forgiveness programs for those who become full-time nursing faculty after graduation

**Job prospects after graduation**
- Academic faculty positions
- Primary investigator for research grants
- Director of research at health systems
- Leadership positions in health organizations
- Academic and leadership positions emphasizing research and teaching

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