

University of South Alabama, College of Nursing

Nursing Informatics

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Nurse Informaticist?

Nursing informatics is a nursing specialty that draws from computer science, information science, cognitive and decision sciences, and nursing science. Through our online program you will gain knowledge and skills to enhance patient-care delivery, promote consumer health, utilize nursing research, and provide education through information technology.

Quality care depends on effective communication among healthcare providers, and nursing informatics is becoming increasingly important in how that care is provided. Since healthcare providers communicate primarily through documentation, nurse informaticists seek to improve the speed and accuracy of patient charting through the use of technology, allowing for better decision making regarding patient care. Fieldwork experience also provides an opportunity to apply learning in a real-world environment.

Is the entire program online or do I have to come to campus for some classes?

The program is entirely online. There is a mandatory one day online orientation which will take place during the first semester of the program.

What type clinical preceptors and clinical sites do I need and how many clinical hours do I need?

Clinicals may occur in a variety of settings (vendors, hospitals, community agencies) and may be with a variety of informatics specialists. These informatics specialists could be in the following roles: Clinical Informatics manager, System Analyst, Product Manager, consultant, telehealth manager, decision support manager, web developer.

The number of clinical hours includes a total of 240 hours. These hours are broken down into two 120 hour semesters:

NU 557 – Spring – 120 hours

NU 559 – Summer – 120 hours

Can I complete clinical hours where I live and who arranges clinical sites?

The majority of Informatics students complete clinical hours in their home communities or within driving distance of their home communities. Students in remote areas have sometimes had to travel outside their communities to find clinical sites.

Students are responsible for finding appropriate clinical sites. If a student cannot locate a clinical site in their home area, faculty may be able to assist in providing contact information for a location that has been used in the past by other students.

Specialty tracks within the College of Nursing's graduate program require a practice component. Although faculty may assist students in locating appropriate practice/clinical sites, it is ultimately the student's responsibility to secure a site and preceptor if indicated. Students who are unsuccessful in being accepted by an agency in their home community may have to travel to another area to complete practice requirements. Please review the list of clinical affiliations found under the "Current Student" tab on the College of Nursing Web Site at <http://www.southalabama.edu/colleges/con/students/clinicalagencies.html>. If there is not a clinical site listed near you or you are interested in a site not listed, negotiations should be initiated as soon as you begin the program through the Track Coordinator for your specialty.