UniSC

COURSE OUTLINE

NUR306 Assessment and Diagnostic Reasoning

School: School of Health - Nursing

2027 | Session 2

UniSC Sunshine Coast
UniSC Moreton Bay
UniSC Caboolture
UniSC Fraser Coast
UniSC Gympie
SCHI

BLENDED LEARNING — Most of your course is on campus but you may be able to do some components of this course online.

Please go to usc.edu.au for up to date information on the teaching sessions and campuses where this course is usually offered.

1. What is this course about?

1.1. Description

Not offered until Session 2, 2027
This course prepares you to conduct advanced health assessments and apply clinical reasoning to complex patient presentations across diverse settings. You will develop skills in synthesising clinical data, forming differential diagnoses, and initiating evidence-informed care plans. Emphasis is placed on systems-based assessment, diagnostic interpretation, and collaborative decision-making in line with National Safety and Quality Health Standards and NMBA Registered Nurse Standards for Practice.

1.2. How will this course be delivered?

ACTIVITY	HOURS	BEGINNING WEEK	FREQUENCY
BLENDED LEARNING			
Learning materials – Online asynchronous learning and teaching materials.	1hr	Week 1	6 times
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – On campus tutorial	3hrs	Week 1	6 times

1.3. Course Topics

Foundations of Advanced Clinical Reasoning

- Principles of advanced assessment and diagnostic reasoning
- Clinical reasoning cycle in complex care

Rapid Recognition and Response

- A–E assessment in acute and deteriorating patients
- Primary survey
- Prioritisation, escalation, and rapid response systems
- Subtle changes in vital signs, pathology, and imaging trends

Focused System Assessments

Comprehensive Assessment

- Head-to-toe and functional assessment
- Integrating physical, cognitive, and psychosocial domains

Diagnostic Reasoning in Complexity

- Clinical deterioration (including sepsis)
- Multimorbidity, polypharmacy, frailty, and mental health considerations

Evidence-Informed Interventions

- Nurse-led interventions and care pathways
- Interprofessional collaboration and decision-making

2. What level is this course?

300 Level (Graduate)

Demonstrating coherence and breadth or depth of knowledge and skills. Independent application of knowledge and skills in unfamiliar contexts. Meeting professional requirements and AQF descriptors for the degree. May require pre-requisites where discipline specific introductory or developing knowledge or skills is necessary. Normally undertaken in the third or fourth full-time study year of an undergraduate program.

3. What is the unit value of this course?

12 units

4. How does this course contribute to my learning?

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES On successful completion of this course, you should be able to...	GRADUATE QUALITIES MAPPING Completing these tasks successfully will contribute to you becoming...	PROFESSIONAL STANDARD MAPPING * Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia
1 Perform comprehensive and structured health assessments using validated frameworks	Empowered	1.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3
2 Interpret clinical data to identify normal findings and early signs of deterioration	Empowered	1.1, 1.2, 4.2, 6.1
3 Apply diagnostic reasoning to inform nursing interventions and care planning	Empowered	1.1, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1
4 Demonstrate proficiency in patient assessment across diverse populations and settings	Empowered	1.3, 2.2, 4.1, 6.1
5 Integrate theoretical and clinical knowledge to support early and accurate nursing decisions	Empowered	1.1, 1.2, 6.1, 7.1
6 Synthesize and justify academic, professional, and digital communication choices to produce ethical, scholarly, and professionally accountable communication appropriate to the role and responsibilities of a graduate nurse	Ethical	1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 2.2, 2.6, 3.1, 3.3, 7.2, 7.3

* Competencies by Professional Body

CODE	COMPETENCY
NURSING AND MIDWIFERY BOARD OF AUSTRALIA	
1.1	The RN accesses, analyses, and uses the best available evidence, that includes research findings for safe quality practice
1.2	The RN develops practice through reflection on experiences, knowledge, actions, feelings and beliefs to identify how these shape practice
1.3	The RN 1.3 respects all cultures and experiences, which includes responding to the role of family and community that underpin the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and people of other cultures
1.4	The RN complies with legislation, common law, policies, guidelines and other standards or requirements relevant to the context of practice when making decisions
1.5	The RN uses ethical frameworks when making decisions
1.6	The RN maintains accurate, comprehensive and timely documentation of assessments, planning, decision- making, actions and evaluations
2.2	The RN communicates effectively, and is respectful of a person's dignity, culture, values, beliefs and rights
2.6	The RN uses delegation, supervision, coordination, consultation and referrals in professional relationships to achieve improved health outcomes
3.1	The RN considers and responds in a timely manner to the health and well being of self and others in relation to the capability for practice
3.3	The RN uses a lifelong learning approach for continuing professional development of self and others
4.1	The RN conducts assessments that are holistic as well as culturally appropriate
4.2	The RN uses a range of assessment techniques to systematically collect relevant and accurate information and data to inform practice

CODE	COMPETENCY
4.3	The RN works in partnership to determine factors that affect, or potentially affect, the health and well being of people and populations to determine priorities for action and/or for referral
5.1	The RN uses assessment data and best available evidence to develop a plan
5.2	The RN collaboratively constructs nursing practice plans until contingencies, options priorities, goals, actions, outcomes and timeframes are agreed with the relevant persons
6.1	The RN provides comprehensive safe, quality practice to achieve agreed goals and outcomes that are responsive to the nursing needs of people
7.1	The RN evaluates and monitors progress towards the expected goals and outcomes
7.2	The RN revises the plan based on the evaluation
7.3	The RN determines, documents and communicates further priorities, goals and outcomes with the relevant persons

5. Am I eligible to enrol in this course?

Refer to the UniSC Glossary of terms for definitions of "pre-requisites, co-requisites and anti-requisites".

5.1. Pre-requisites

NUR206 or NUR207 and enrolled in UB013, SC391 or SC392

5.2. Co-requisites

Not applicable

5.3. Anti-requisites

Not applicable

5.4. Specific assumed prior knowledge and skills (where applicable)

Not applicable

6. How am I going to be assessed?

6.1. Grading Scale

Standard Grading (GRD)

High Distinction (HD), Distinction (DN), Credit (CR), Pass (PS), Fail (FL).

6.2. Details of early feedback on progress

You will receive progressive feedback within the Canvas learning material and your weekly tutorials

6.3. Assessment tasks

DELIVERY MODE	TASK NO.	ASSESSMENT PRODUCT	INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP	WEIGHTING %	WHAT IS THE DURATION / LENGTH?	WHEN SHOULD I SUBMIT?	WHERE SHOULD I SUBMIT IT?
All	1	Written Piece	Individual	50%	2000 words	Week 3	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check
All	1	Oral and Written Piece	Individual	50%	5-7 minutes	Week 6	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check

All - Assessment Task 1: Patient Assessment and Clinical Reasoning Report

GOAL:	The goal is to develop diagnostic reasoning skills by analysing a structured A–E patient assessment and identifying priorities for care. This task provides the foundation for Task 2, where you will apply the same assessment and reasoning skills in a live, recorded discussion with a peer.
PRODUCT:	Written Piece
FORMAT:	Your report will include an analysis of the key A–E findings (Airway, Breathing, Circulation, Disability, Exposure), an explanation of the underlying pathophysiology. You will identify any signs of deterioration, and demonstrate initial application of clinical reasoning to inform potential nursing interventions. You will base your work on a patient case study provided in Canvas. You will need to focus on presenting clear, structured information that demonstrates your ability to interpret clinical data and apply diagnostic reasoning.

CRITERIA:	**No.**		**Learning Outcome assessed**
	1	Performs structured health assessment using validated frameworks	①
	2	Applies diagnostic reasoning to identify patient problems and guide care planning	② ③ ④
	3	Integrates evidence from the literature to support interventions	⑤
	4	Applies principles and practices of academic writing and referencing	⑥
	5	Demonstrates ethical use of intellectual property	⑥

GENERIC SKILLS:	Problem solving, Organisation, Information literacy

All - Assessment Task 1: Recorded Clinical Reasoning Discussion and Individual Reflection

GOAL:	The goal of this assessment is to demonstrate clinical reasoning and communication skills in a secure, authentic setting, while reflecting on your professional development.
PRODUCT:	Oral and Written Piece
FORMAT:	This task builds directly on the work you completed in Task 1, which helped you practise conducting a structured A–E assessment and applying diagnostic reasoning to planned care. Task 2 now allows you to apply those skills in a live, conversational format, demonstrating your ability to reason through patient problems collaboratively and communicate your decisions clearly. Working in pairs, record a discussion of a case study provided to you. You will work through subtle assessment changes, diagnostic reasoning, prioritisation, and escalation of care. You must also submit a 500-word individual reflection describing how this process developed your diagnostic reasoning and preparedness for professional practice.

CRITERIA:	**No.**		**Learning Outcome assessed**
	1	Demonstrates diagnostic reasoning in a structured, logical discussion	② ③ ⑤
	2	Communicates assessment findings and justifies clinical decisions clearly and professionally	① ③ ④
	3	Reflects meaningfully on personal learning and application of diagnostic reasoning	④
	4	Applies principles of academic writing and referencing in reflection	⑥
	5	Demonstrates ethical use of intellectual property	⑥

GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Collaboration, Problem solving, Applying technologies, Information literacy

6.4. Assessment to competency mapping

PROGRAMME DELIVERY MODE	ASSESSMENT TYPE	TITLE	COMPETENCY	TEACHING METHODS
REGISTERED NURSE STANDARDS FOR PRACTICE - 1 JUNE 2016				
All delivery modes	Oral and Written Piece	Recorded Clinical Reasoning Discussion and Individual Reflection	1.1	Assessed
			1.2	Assessed
			1.3	Assessed
			2.2	Assessed
			2.7	Assessed
			3.3	Assessed
			3.5	Assessed
			4.1	Assessed
			4.2	Assessed
			4.3	Assessed
			5.1	Assessed
			5.2	Assessed
			6.1	Assessed
	Written Piece	Patient Assessment and Clinical Reasoning Report	1.1	Assessed
			1.2	Assessed
			1.3	Assessed
			2.2	Assessed
			2.7	Assessed
			3.3	Assessed
			3.5	Assessed
			4.1	Assessed
			4.2	Assessed
			4.3	Assessed
			5.1	Assessed
			5.2	Assessed
			6.1	Assessed

7. Directed study hours

A 12-unit course will have total of 150 learning hours which will include directed study hours (including online if required), self-directed learning and completion of assessable tasks. Student workload is calculated at 12.5 learning hours per one unit.

8. What resources do I need to undertake this course?

Please note: Course information, including specific information of recommended readings, learning activities, resources, weekly readings, etc. are available on the course Canvas site– Please log in as soon as possible.

8.1. Prescribed text(s) or course reader

Please note that you need to have regular access to the resource(s) listed below. Resources may be required or recommended.

REQUIRED?	AUTHOR	YEAR	TITLE	EDITION	PUBLISHER
Required	Helen Forbes,Elizabeth Watt	2024	Jarvis's Health Assessment and Physical Examination	n/a	Elsevier
Required	Joy Higgs,Gail M. Jensen,Stephen Loftus,Franziska V. Trede,Sandra Grace	2024	Clinical Reasoning in the Health Professions	n/a	Elsevier
Required	n/a	0	LEWISS MEDICAL-SURGICAL NURSING	n/a	n/a

8.2. Specific requirements

Not applicable

9. How are risks managed in this course?

Health and safety risks for this course have been assessed as low. It is your responsibility to review course material, search online, discuss with lecturers and peers and understand the health and safety risks associated with your specific course of study and to familiarise yourself with the University's general health and safety principles by reviewing the online induction training for students, and following the instructions of the University staff.

10. What administrative information is relevant to this course?

10.1. Assessment: Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the ethical standard of university participation. It ensures that students graduate as a result of proving they are competent in their discipline. This is integral in maintaining the value of academic qualifications. Each industry has expectations and standards of the skills and knowledge within that discipline and these are reflected in assessment.

Academic integrity means that you do not engage in any activity that is considered to be academic fraud; including plagiarism, collusion or outsourcing any part of any assessment item to any other person. You are expected to be honest and ethical by completing all work yourself and indicating in your work which ideas and information were developed by you and which were taken from others. You cannot provide your assessment work to others. You are also expected to provide evidence of wide and critical reading, usually by using appropriate academic references.

In order to minimise incidents of academic fraud, this course may require that some of its assessment tasks, when submitted to Canvas, are electronically checked through Turnitin. This software allows for text comparisons to be made between your submitted assessment item and all other work to which Turnitin has access.

10.2. Assessment: Additional Requirements

Eligibility for Supplementary Assessment

Your eligibility for supplementary assessment in a course is dependent of the following conditions applying:
(a) The final mark is in the percentage range 47% to 49.4%; and
(b) The course is graded using the Standard Grading scale

Your eligibility for supplementary assessment in a course is dependent of the following conditions applying:

The final mark is in the percentage range 47% to 49.4%
The course is graded using the Standard Grading scale
You have not failed an assessment task in the course due to academic misconduct.

10.3. Assessment: Submission penalties

Late submissions may be penalised up to and including the following maximum percentage of the assessment task's identified value, with weekdays and weekends included in the calculation of days late:
(a) One day: deduct 5%;
(b) Two days: deduct 10%;
(c) Three days: deduct 20%;
(d) Four days: deduct 40%;
(e) Five days: deduct 60%;
(f) Six days: deduct 80%;
(g) Seven days: A result of zero is awarded for the assessment task.

The following penalties will apply for a late submission for an online examination:
Less than 15 minutes: No penalty
From 15 minutes to 30 minutes: 20% penalty
More than 30 minutes: 100% penalty

10.4. SafeUniSC

UniSC is committed to a culture of respect and providing a safe and supportive environment for all members of our community. For immediate assistance on campus contact SafeUniSC by phone: 07 5430 1168 or using the SafeZone app. For general enquires contact the SafeUniSC team by phone 07 5456 3864 or email safe@usc.edu.au.

The SafeUniSC Specialist Service is a Student Wellbeing service that provides free and confidential support to students who may have experienced or observed behaviour that could cause fear, offence or trauma. To contact the service call 07 5430 1226 or email studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au.

10.5. Study help

For help with course-specific advice, for example what information to include in your assessment, you should first contact your tutor, then your course coordinator, if needed.

If you require additional assistance, the Learning Advisers are trained professionals who are ready to help you develop a wide range of academic skills. Visit the Learning Advisers web page for more information, or contact Student Central for further assistance: +61 7 5430 2890 or studentcentral@usc.edu.au.

10.6. Wellbeing Services

Student Wellbeing provide free and confidential counselling on a wide range of personal, academic, social and psychological matters, to foster positive mental health and wellbeing for your academic success.

To book a confidential appointment go to Student Hub, email studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au or call 07 5430 1226.

10.7. AccessAbility Services

Ability Advisers ensure equal access to all aspects of university life. If your studies are affected by a disability, learning disorder mental health issue, injury or illness, or you are a primary carer for someone with a disability or who is considered frail and aged, AccessAbility Services can provide access to appropriate reasonable adjustments and practical advice about the support and facilities available to you throughout the University.

To book a confidential appointment go to Student Hub, email AccessAbility@usc.edu.au or call 07 5430 2890.

10.8. Links to relevant University policy and procedures

For more information on Academic Learning & Teaching categories including:

- Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs
- Review of Assessment and Final Grades
- Supplementary Assessment
- Central Examinations
- Deferred Examinations
- Student Conduct
- Students with a Disability

For more information, visit https://www.usc.edu.au/explore/policies-and-procedures#academic-learning-and-teaching

10.9. Student Charter

UniSC is committed to excellence in teaching, research and engagement in an environment that is inclusive, inspiring, safe and respectful. The Student Charter sets out what students can expect from the University, and what in turn is expected of students, to achieve these outcomes.

10.10. General Enquiries

In person:

- **UniSC Sunshine Coast** - Student Central, Ground Floor, Building C, 90 Sippy Downs Drive, Sippy Downs
- **UniSC Moreton Bay** - Service Centre, Ground Floor, Foundation Building, Gympie Road, Petrie
- **UniSC SouthBank** - Student Central, Building A4 (SW1), 52 Merivale Street, South Brisbane
- **UniSC Gympie** - Student Central, 71 Cartwright Road, Gympie
- **UniSC Fraser Coast** - Student Central, Student Central, Building A, 161 Old Maryborough Rd, Hervey Bay
- **UniSC Caboolture** - Student Central, Level 1 Building J, Cnr Manley and Tallon Street, Caboolture

Tel: +61 7 5430 2890

Email: studentcentral@usc.edu.au