

Yale University School of Nursing

Change in Specialty Policy and Process

Admission into a clinical specialty at the Yale School of Nursing is contingent upon a student's qualifications and fit within the specialty, and is dependent upon available clinical sites, preceptors and other factors. Switching specialty during a student's enrollment is a rare occurrence but may be granted in a limited capacity for extraordinary reasons. Decisions are also based on consideration of the suitability of the student to the new specialty and if resources and space permit the transfer. Should a student request to change their specialty, the following procedure will be followed:

1. The student must meet and discuss any potential changes with the Specialty Director for the program in which the student is enrolled and the Specialty Director of the preferred specialty. These meetings can happen separately or together. Once the meeting(s) have occurred, and if the decision is that the student cannot switch specialty, the process ends at this point. The preferred Specialty Director will write a summary that includes the decision and rationale to be submitted in the student's file. If all parties agree that a specialty change could be considered, the Specialty Director for the program in which the student is currently enrolled, will contact the Enrollment Management Office (EMO) to initiate the application process and include a summary of the meeting indicating the outcome and rationale for the final decision.
2. The student will complete an application to the new specialty, including an essay detailing the rationale for the change and knowledge of and commitment to the specialty. This form includes a signed disclosure, by the student, acknowledging that they understand that a switch may extend their time in the program, subject them to additional tuition/fees, impact scholarship funding, and affect their immigration status.
3. The Specialty Director of the preferred program, in collaboration with the specialty faculty, will review the student's application. Their recommendation, along with all documentation related to the student's application, will then be forwarded to the MSN Chair.
4. The Chair may meet with the student before making the final decision about the switch. The Chair will then notify Specialty Directors, EMO, Office of Student Life and Belonging (OSLB) and other offices as needed of the final decision.

Considerations for students in the process:

- Students are encouraged to discuss their career goals with their academic advisor.
- Students are required to meet with the EMO regarding possible implications for financial aid, visa status or other issues related to switching to a new specialty. See [additional implications](#) for help navigating Federal Student Aid (FSA) and scholarship information.
- Student must demonstrate interest (example: shadowing experience with a practicing NP in the area of specialization or certified midwife) to assure they have a full understanding of the new specialty.
- If granted, specialty switches may require a 'step out' year, change in status from full-time to part-time, need to complete additional semesters or delayed progression in the program which may have financial ramifications.

Deadlines:

Applications will be considered on a first come, first serve basis. It is strongly advised that changes in specialty be attempted prior to the start of the specialty years and those applications must be made by April 1. Changes in specialty after it has begun are considerably less likely to occur and may result in any of the consequences named in item 2 of this policy.

Revised and Approved by Academic Leadership: November 30th, 2021

Approved by Executive Committee: July 9th, 2021

Approved by BPO: July 14th, 2021