

# Pathway to Becoming a Parkinson's Disease & Movement Disorders Nurse Specialist

Author: David Tsui  
[David.Tsui@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:David.Tsui@health.nsw.gov.au)

## Inside This Document

- 1 Introduction
- 2 ANNA MDC
- 3 MDS Accreditation
- 4 ACN Parkinson's Care
- 5 For More Information...

---

*The aim of this document is to provide a guideline for the steps you can take to best prepare yourself to becoming a PDMDNS.*

---

## 1. Introduction

Parkinson's disease & Movement Disorders Nurse Specialists (PDMDNS) are nurses who work in a subspecialised field of neurology known as 'Movement Disorders'. The most common movement disorder is Parkinson's disease but working in the movement disorders field may also expose you to conditions such as Huntington's disease, progressive supranuclear palsy (PSP), multiple system atrophy (MSA) and dystonia.

The skill set required for working in this field is extremely specialised and even experienced neurological nurses may have a steep learning curve when they enter this field.

Jobs within this specialty may be based in the hospital setting, community setting, within non-profit organisations, within pharmaceutical companies as product specialists or support nurses and in private practice.

Currently in Australia, as of 2018, there are no accreditation processes in place to deem a nurse competent to be identified as a PDMDNS. The aim of this document is to provide a guideline for the steps you can take to best prepare yourself to becoming a PDMDNS.

## 2. Australasian Neuroscience Nurses Association - Movement Disorders Chapter

The Australasian Neuroscience Nurses' Association (ANNA), is the peak body for neuroscience nurses, facilitates and fosters the advancement of neuroscience nursing thus enabling optimal person-centred care.

The Movement Disorder Chapter of the Australasian Neuroscience Nurses' Association aims to provide clinical support and professional development opportunities for Parkinson's Disease and Movement Disorder Nurse Specialist's (PDMDNS). Collectively this will reduce the geographical isolation and promote a professional identity for movement disorder nurses.

There are five domains of focus

1. Education
2. Clinical Practice
3. Professional Development
4. Leadership
5. Research

When you become a member, you will find helpful education material and resources like this document on the website:

<http://www.anna.asn.au/category/movement-disorders-chapter/>



### 3. International Parkinson & Movement Disorder Society Accreditation

The International Parkinson and Movement Disorder Society (MDS) is a professional society of clinicians, scientists, and other healthcare professionals who are interested in Parkinson's disease, related neurodegenerative and neurodevelopmental disorders, hyperkinetic movement disorders, and abnormalities in muscle tone and motor control.

The MDS Unified Parkinson's Disease Rating Scale (MDS-UPDRS) is one of the most standardised tools in the assessment of Parkinson's disease. One of the first steps to becoming a PDMDNS is to be accredited at using the assessment tools. The MDS provides a video guided training program that will allow participants to learn how to administer the tools as well as receive an accreditation certificate on completion of the programs.

You can register for membership and/or this program using the link below:

<https://www.movementdisorders.org/MDS/Education/Rating-Scales/Training-Programs.htm>

*One of the first steps to becoming a PDMDNS is to be accredited at using the assessment tools.*

### 4. The Australian College of Nurses Parkinson's Care Subject

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) in association with Parkinson's WA have developed a Parkinson's Care post graduate unit of study. The subject is integrated within a graduate certificate of the ACN courses or can be enrolled as a stand-alone subject. The subject will help new Parkinson's nurses entering the field to have a good foundation to build on and for existing Parkinson's nurses to consolidate their knowledge.

Currently this course is the only formal post-graduate qualification available to PDMDNS. The course is expected to be available early in the 2nd half of 2018.

<https://www.acn.edu.au/education/single-unit-of-study/parkinsons-care>

**Parkinson's care**  
POSTGRADUATE UNIT OF STUDY

This postgraduate unit of study is designed for health professionals who care for people diagnosed with both typical and atypical Parkinson's Disease and provides students with the opportunity to extend their knowledge of this specialty area. The subject content explores:

- the epidemiology, aetiology, pathology, motor and non-motor clinical features of Parkinson's Disease
- interdisciplinary assessment and management techniques and therapeutic approaches to care at all stages, with reference to best practice guidelines
- relevant psychosocial issues arising from the care of a person diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease and their carers
- multidisciplinary consultation and referral pathways, legal and ethical issues and advances in care

**KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- Describe the (pathology and pathophysiology of the motor and non-motor clinical features associated with typical and atypical Parkinson's Disease
- Apply principles of atypical Parkinson's specific assessment to the care of persons diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease
- Examine the evolving therapeutic approaches to care and their effectiveness in meeting outcomes

For carers diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease and their carers

- Graciously engage the management of Parkinson's Disease on both individual and societal levels and current literature
- Reflect upon and evaluate the theoretical responses to clinical practice in relation to health education, rehabilitation and palliation of patients with Parkinson's Disease
- Articulate the multidisciplinary consultation and referral pathways and community support available for use when planning care for people with Parkinson's Disease
- Evaluate the effectiveness of evidence of providing care to the person with Parkinson's Disease

**POSTGRADUATE SINGLE UNITS OF STUDY**

ACN has developed subjects that can be taken as a single unit of study. This gives you the opportunity to complete single units for CEU or to expand their knowledge into other areas of interest. The single units are from the graduate certificate or the VET courses. Up to five CEU units can be obtained for the completion of each unit.

There are over 80 units to choose from, all of which are designed to meet contemporary industry needs and provide students with the knowledge, skills and attitude directly related to working in specialist areas of health care.

**WHY STUDY WITH ACN?**

ACN is a leading provider of postgraduate and vocational education for registered and allied health. When you study with ACN you can be confident that you have chosen a course that is recognised for providing outcomes with a strong clinical focus and evidence based practice.

Our comprehensive courses are designed and developed by more educationists to ensure that they build your clinical skills and advance your knowledge in your specialty area of practice.

With leadership and management skills embedded in your courses at all levels, when you start a course with ACN, you can be sure you are investing in the progression of your career.

ACN students receive 10% off their tuition fees.

For further information, please contact:  
Customer Services  
1800 055 534 (between 9am-5pm)  
enquiries@acn.edu.au

### 5. For more information...

If you would like more information on becoming a PDMDNS, please feel free to contact us. You can find us via the link below:

<http://www.anna.asn.au/contacts/>.



**Australasian Neuroscience Nurses Association  
Movement Disorders Chapter**