ExamSoft

University of California, Davis — Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing

Key Findings

Transitioned its MEPN to ExamSoft for assessment in just 5 days

Made the successful pivot to remote exams with ExamID and ExamMonitor

Launching Clinical Judgment Exams for NCLEX prep in 2021

Founded in 2009, the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing adopted ExamSoft as the assessment platform that could keep pace with its growing programs and aid in its mission to educate healthcare professionals. When the COVID-19 pandemic made remote assessment a priority, the School of Nursing managed the shift with the help of ExamID and ExamMonitor. Through key decision-making, tireless support, and commitment to excellence in assessment, the School of Nursing has continued to demonstrate its dedication to the success of students and faculty alike.

BACKGROUND

Established with a $100 million grant from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing opened its doors at the University of California, Davis in fall 2009. The School of Nursing is part of the academic health system UC Davis Health, a nationally recognized medical center and research facility based in Sacramento.

The School of Nursing offers one of the only Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) and Physician

Assistant (PA) co-educated master's-degree programs in the country. These programs share a curriculum, but clinical rotations are unique to each degree program.

In 2016, the school launched its Master's Entry Program in Nursing (MEPN), a prelicensure program designed for students with bachelor's degrees in other disciplines who want to become registered nurses. MEPN prepares these students to take the NCLEX, pursue public health nurse certification, and earn a Master of Science in Nursing.

The Master's Entry Program in Nursing (MEPN) is a prelicensure program for students with non-nursing bachelor's degrees who want to become registered nurses.

The School of Nursing adopted ExamSoft in 2008 for its longstanding certificate PA and FNP programs. The school was searching for an assessment solution with question-banking and item-tagging capabilities to streamline exam creation and allow faculty to thoroughly cover required content areas in their exams. Five years later, the School of Nursing transitioned the existing certificate PA and FNP programs into master's-degree programs and continued to use of ExamSoft to deliver assessments.

In March 2020, when COVID-19 cases first began to emerge in the U.S. and schools made the emergency pivot to remote learning, the School of Nursing quickly added ExamID and ExamMonitor — ExamSoft's auto-identity verification tool and A.I.-powered remote proctoring software — to deliver secure, off-campus assessments for its FNP and PA programs.

MEPN, unlike the FNP and PA programs, was still using a learning management system

Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing ExamSoft Implementation Dates

Program	Year
Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP)	2008 (Certificate) 2013 (M.S.)
Physician's Assistant (PA)	2008 (Certificate) 2013 (M.H.S.)
M.S.N. – Master's Entry Program in Nursing (MEPN)	2020
Doctor of Nursing Practice – Family Nurse Practitioner (DNP-FNP)	Planned for 2022

(LMS) for assessment when the pandemic hit. In the scramble to shift its programs from on-campus to off-campus learning, the program had no choice but to forego three major exams in spring 2020.

With the summer quarter just around the corner, MEPN was using Zoom to live proctor exams remotely and planning to use a proctoring tool offered by its LMS to deliver remote exams. But students and faculty found live proctoring sessions — which were hosted via student phone during exams — felt invasive.

In June 2020, the School of Nursing received a last-minute notification from its LMS provider that MEPN was not able to use the remote proctoring integration in the desired timeframe. Since MEPN had already been forced to cancel several exams the quarter before, it was imperative that the School of Nursing find a remote assessment solution to administer MEPN's upcoming finals.

The School of Nursing staff immediately began the process of transitioning its MEPN to a new assessment platform. Since the school had already built a solid foundation for assessment with ExamSoft and experienced recent success with ExamID and ExamMonitor for remote exams in its FNP and PA programs, staff were confident that the platform could meet the urgent needs of the MEPN.

> "It's been pretty smooth in terms of the ExamSoft implementation and usage; everyone's pretty happy and comfortable with it all. That's the main feedback I get."
>
> Joana Chavez
> Curriculum and
> Technology Manager

Dr. Sheri Kuslak-Meyer, Director of Education Programs at the School of Nursing, and Joana Chavez, Curriculum and Technology Manager, contacted ExamSoft to lay the groundwork for the implementation. As the central support team for all programs in the School of Nursing, Sheri, Joana, and staff in the Curriculum and Technology Department serve as the primary ExamSoft users.

Curriculum Operations Coordinator, Danielle Navarro, is the school's designated ExamSoft point-person. Among her various responsibilities, Danielle helps manage exam creation in the ExamSoft portal and provides resources to ensure a smooth assessment process for students and faculty. When the school launched ExamID and ExamMonitor in its FNP and PA programs, Joana, Danielle, and their colleagues hosted information sessions for students and faculty prior to exams, organized mock exams to help students become familiar with the software, and ran virtual support rooms to troubleshoot any student issues on exam day. With this rigorous support system in place, the school felt prepared to tackle the mid-semester switch to ExamSoft for its MEPN.

Just five days after the official decision to adopt ExamSoft for the MEPN, the School of Nursing began the implementation. It was easy for Joana's team to quickly import existing exam content from their learning management system into the ExamSoft portal, and the program's technology requirements ensured that students already had the devices they needed to run the Examplify testing application. With the help of ExamID and ExamMonitor, the School of Nursing was able to administer secure, remote exams for its MEPN successfully and on schedule.

Faced with months of volatility resulting from COVID-19, the School of Nursing has continued to reap the benefits of assessment flexibility and security. With the help of ExamID and ExamMonitor, the school has been able to successfully administer remote exams in its FNP and PA programs since the very beginning of the pandemic. When the school determined that it could no longer use its existing remote proctoring tool for the MEPN, School of Nursing staff had enough experience using the ExamSoft platform to make the transition seamless.

With the addition of ExamMonitor, the Curriculum and Technology team supports faculty by running reports of flagged exam files and forwarding them to instructors to review for possible instances of academic dishonesty. By gathering insights from past exams in the FNP and PA programs, the team has been able to identify the most common reasons for flagged exam files — like students using earphones during exams — to help their programs determine a set of best practices for exam day.

Having established a solution for delivering remote assessment in its programs, the School of Nursing has been able to dive into additional ExamSoft features. Using psychometric reporting to analyze exam item performance, faculty have been able to make adjustments to the exams or readdress certain topics in class in order to meet required learning objectives.

The ability to tag exam items with categories was a key aspect of the school's initial adoption of ExamSoft in 2008. After 12 years and many programmatic developments, the school is working to bring their category system into alignment with their current goals. These adjustments will help faculty provide more effective remediation to students with Strengths & Opportunities Reports that break down performance by category to help target specific areas of improvement.

"We had already successfully implemented ExamMonitor for our FNP and PA students. We all felt very comfortable with it. And our MEPN program director that joined us July 2019 used ExamSoft in her prior programs, so she was advocating to transition her program into ExamSoft as well."

Sheri Kuslak-Meyer
Director of Education Programs

While it's unclear whether the new modes of learning in higher education are here to stay, the School of Nursing has certainly discovered some unexpected benefits in the adjustment. Sheri suggests that a blend of synchronous and asynchronous testing could be useful in the school's classrooms moving forward, no matter the modality. The School of Nursing plans to keep both ExamID and ExamMonitor in place for the foreseeable future because it values the flexibility these solutions afford.

After spending the first part of the 2020-2021 academic year adjusting to remote instruction, faculty at the School of Nursing are looking forward to delving deeper into item analysis. Using ExamSoft's psychometric reporting tools, faculty plan to establish programmatic protocols for adjusting instructional methods in response to certain indicators of exam item quality, including difficulty index, discrimination index, and point-biserial.

To help prepare MEPN students for the NCLEX, the School of Nursing is set to begin incorporating Clinical Judgment Exam content into its curriculum in January 2021. Created by NurseThink® and powered by ExamSoft, Clinical Judgment Exams will give the school access to benchmarked assessments developed by experts in nursing education. Paired with ExamSoft, Clinical Judgment Exams can help MEPN faculty to increase student retention and readiness in any setting.

The School of Nursing seeks to launch a Doctor of Nursing Practice – Family Nurse Practitioner (DNP-FNP) program in 2022, a three-year degree program that will combine distanced-based education with on-campus learning experiences. Since remote assessment will be an essential component of this hybrid program, the school expects that ExamID and ExamMonitor will continue to play a vital role in exam security and flexibility.

"One of the areas that I know our faculty are interested in working on together as a group is item analysis — how the interpretation of results and actions taken after are handled at the instructor level. I think that will be something we'll dig into when we can take a deep breath."

Dr. Sheri Kuslak-Meyer | Director of Education Programs

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