

# 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.

Positions 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/>



**Australasian Neuroscience Nurses Association  
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 assists 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 subject is now available with two intakes a year. Scholarships are available through various states' Parkinson's Associations.

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

### 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/>.

