I want to become a Nurse... where do I start?

A career in nursing can be extremely rewarding and fulfilling. Like many professional career tracks, admission to nursing programs is competitive. As such, students should prepare to apply to multiple nursing programs. Healthcare related work or volunteer experience is essential; many nursing programs require or strongly recommend that you have some prior health-related experience before you apply.

Check with your nursing program of interest for exact prerequisites. Other common admission requirements include:

- a 3.0 or higher GPA
- TEAS test
- immunizations, background checks, and AIDS/CPR Health Care Provider Card
- Nursing Assistant Certification (NAC or CNA)

Application deadlines can vary, and some colleges accept applications for more than one quarter of entry per year. Additionally, ladder (or step) programs are offered at some colleges, meaning students can complete their nursing in steps such as CNA→ LPN→ ADN→ BSN, pro-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAC /CNA (Nursing Assistant - Certified)</th>
<th>LPN (Licensed Practical Nurse)</th>
<th>ADN (Associate Degree in Nursing)</th>
<th>BSN (Bachelor of Science in Nursing*)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education: Some post-High School classes and pass the NAC exam.</td>
<td>Education: One year approved training program and pass State licensure exam</td>
<td>Education: 2-3 year training in associate program and pass State RN licensure exam</td>
<td>Education: 4-5 year training, completed at a university Bachelor program, and pass State RN licensure exam (NCLEX)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duties: give patient baths, check vital signs, make beds, transfer patients</td>
<td>Duties: hands-on patient care, give shots and medications, keep medical charts, supervise NACs. LPNs should consider pursuing an RN ladder program after licensure. (LPN to RN)</td>
<td>Duties: daily patient care, give shots and medications, keep medical charts, supervise LPNs, NAC, and entire nursing units. RNs with an ADN should consider pursuing an RN to BSN program after licensure.</td>
<td>Duties: daily patient care, give shots and medications, keep medical charts, supervise LPNs, NACs, and entire nursing units.</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Program not intended for those already possessing RN license</td>
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BSN or ADN? Bachelor’s or Associate degree program?

Several universities in the state offer the Bachelor of Science in Nursing: UW, Seattle U, Seattle Pacific, Northwest University, WSU, Pacific Lutheran, Gonzaga, and Walla Walla.

Students who choose this option should follow the Associate in Arts and Science Direct Transfer Degree (AAS-DTA) for the first two years of study. This will prepare students to transfer to a four-year university program in nursing.

Students pursuing the ADN should consider completing a BSN through BC, UW Bothell or Tacoma, Western Washington University, or other accredited institution after licensure. These programs are designed for a licensed RN with an associate degree to complete a BSN while working as an RN.

For a comprehensive list of nursing programs in the state, follow this link: www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/669080.pdf

Career Outlook and Salary Information

Registered nursing is one of the fastest growing careers today. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), advancements in medical technology and an aging population will help create an estimated 711,900 new registered nursing jobs from 2010-20 (www.bls.gov). This is a growth rate of 26% for the period. Registered nurses who have earned a BSN degree will enjoy the greatest demand for their knowledge and skills. RNS will be in high demand in underserved healthcare areas, such as inner cities and rural areas.

The BLS notes that as of 2010, the mean annual salary for registered nurses was $64,690 or $31.10 hourly. Nurses in the top 10% in yearly earnings made $95,130 or more. Hospitals, health clinics and home health care facilities are popular employment opportunities for nurses.
What prerequisites will I need to take before applying to a typical nursing program?

Below is a general guide to the types of classes recommended for students interested in nursing (this is not an official list). This is not intended to replace the Bellevue College nursing guide. Rather, it is a general guideline for nursing programs across the state.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Associate in Nursing (ADN)*</th>
<th>Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)**</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL&amp; 101</td>
<td>ENGL&amp; 101,201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHEM&amp; 121 – prerequisite is Math 098</td>
<td>CHEM&amp; 121,131 – prerequisite is Math 098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSYC&amp; 100,200</td>
<td>PSYC&amp; 100,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATH130² or MATH 099 (check individual program prereqs)</td>
<td>MATH 130 and either MATH 107,138,141²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUTR&amp; 101 required by some ADN programs, not BC</td>
<td>NUTR&amp; 101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMST 280 - BC only, before program start</td>
<td>Completion of Associate in Arts and Sciences-DTA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAC (or CNA)³</td>
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</table>

Notes: ¹Prerequisite for a higher level course. Some colleges count the course grade in the admissions GPA, others may not. ²UW will accept Math 107. SU requires Math 138/141. BC requires Math 130. ³BC requires NAC training prior to beginning in the nursing program. License is required if training was not from a community college. Some colleges require the license and experience as an NAC prior to applying to nursing.

*All prerequisites for BC's nursing program must be completed by end of fall quarter to apply for the following fall quarter. Other programs vary.

**3-4 lab sciences must be completed by the end of fall quarter for most BSN programs in order to apply for the following fall quarter.

TIPS

- Students should register for CHEM& 121 as soon as possible, and take at least one lab science each quarter. Math 098 is a prerequisite for CHEM& 121. Summer classes may be necessary.
- Timing is very important. Applications are generally due between Dec. 10 (SU) – Jan. 31 for BSN programs.
  - UW requires completion of three of the prerequisite lab sciences (not including BIOL& 160) at the time of application with a min. GPA of 3.0 (or 2.8 if 4 courses are completed).
  - UW also requires a minimum 100 hours volunteer or paid health care experience in one setting within a period of 3 months by the application deadline.
- Many programs require the TEAS (Test of Essential Academic Skills.)
- Many programs have a time limit on science and math courses – usually 5, 7, or 10 years.
- Application deadlines for ADN programs vary widely. Many programs accept applications multiple times each year. Bellevue accepts applications once a year, usually by the first week of February, with all prerequisites completed by the end of fall quarter.
- Most nursing programs are full-time. Bellevue College also offers a part-time 10 quarter program every other year. Tacoma, and Shoreline community colleges also offer part time programs. It is highly recommended that you speak with a representative at the target college/university in conjunction with an academic advisor here at BC to ensure that you are taking the proper course sequence.

GPA

The average GPA for entering nursing students at the University of Washington is approximately 3.5. Students should strive to maintain a strong GPA with limited withdrawals, incompletes, repeated courses and non-graded options.

Who To Contact for more Information:

*Note: Prior to meeting one-on-one with an advisor, you’ll be required to attend an information session (on BC Nursing website)

Locate Academic Advisors: Contact (425) 564-2212 or drop by B232, Advising Center

This is an unofficial guide only, designed to prepare students for entry into Washington State Nursing programs. It is the student’s responsibility to research and communicate with all community college and university programs to which he/she intends to apply to establish prerequisites and admission requirements, as they vary and are subject to change without notice

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