

Oregon State University | College of Public Health and Human Sciences

NURSING

What does a nurse do?

Nurses work as part of the healthcare team to provide individualized care to patients. They develop and manage care plans, instruct patients and their families on proper care, help patients cope with illness, aid in disease prevention and promote healthy living. They provide support from basic triage to emergency surgery. The field has a wide range of career opportunities, ranging from entry-level practitioner to doctoral-level researcher.

What settings do nurses work in?

Nurses can work in a wide range of settings, including hospitals, doctors' offices, clinics, retirement homes and hospice facilities. They may also work in private homes, schools, occupational health settings and camps. Nurses can choose to work internationally, conduct research or act as consultants.

What type of degree do I need to become a nurse?

You can become a nurse by obtaining either a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) or an Associate's Degree in Nursing (ADN). A BSN is a four-year degree obtained at a college or university, while an ADN may be obtained through a community or technical college. Two-year institutions require completion of prerequisite coursework prior to entry into the nursing program. To become a registered nurse (RN), graduates must pass the NCLEX to become licensed through the State Board of Nursing. There is currently a large push to move ADNs to receive their BS degree.

How competitive is nursing school?

Nursing school is very competitive. For example, in 2015, OHSU and its partner universities received approximately 963 applications and accepted 144 students; the average prerequisite GPA of these students was 3.89. Many private nursing schools, such as Linfield College and the University of Portland, receive similar numbers of applications. The importance of exceptional grades and well-rounded work, volunteer or extracurricular experiences cannot be overemphasized. Range of acceptance rates to total applicants for 2014 was 28% (BSN); 19% (Accelerated), and ranged from 19% (Portland) to 60% (Klamath).

Schools in the Midwest and Eastern United States are more plentiful, and therefore see somewhat lower average GPAs and less competition for seats.

- Students must have a strong overall GPA.
- At least a 3.5 in prerequisites with no grade lower than a "B" in all courses.
- Well-rounded work, volunteer and/or extracurricular experience, including community service and health care-related experience.
- Strong teamwork and communications skills, alongside compassion and attention to details

Do I need experience or to complete a certified nursing assistant (CNA) program before applying to nursing schools?

Having medical experience, volunteer or paid, will strengthen your application. Nursing schools value applicants who have a clear idea of what it means to be a nurse and why the career is a good fit for them. It's important to check with every school you want to apply to about their CNA requirement. Some schools require that you have a CNA completed before you enter and some do not (more likely required with ADN than BSN programs).

Completing a CNA program may help you gain valuable medical related experience.

Where can I get my certified nursing assistant (CNA)?

Oregon State Board of Nursing CNA 1/CNA 2 /CMA Program List at osbn.oregon.gov/OSBOnlineReports/default.aspx?ReportName=OregonApprovedTrainingPrograms

If I complete my undergrad degree at OSU, can I apply to both direct-entry MSN and ABSN programs?

Yes, both a BSN and direct-entry MSN programs are appropriate for people with bachelor's degrees in other areas. The American Association of Colleges of Nurses (AACN) states that "the demand for nurses with a master's degree or doctoral degree is a great deal higher than the supply. As of 2008, 13% of nurses in the United States had a master's or doctoral degree." By not requiring a BSN be obtained first, more highly trained MSN nurses will be able to start working sooner.

How do direct-entry MSN programs work?

MSN programs are much like the BSN in that the emphasis in the first 15-16 months will complete the same clinical and nursing education. Students will take nursing boards (NCLEX-RN). Programs vary at this point, some requiring students to work in a clinical setting while taking courses for the MSN specializations (nurse practitioner, nurse anesthetist, pediatric nurse, nurse midwife, etc.). Some programs at this level are online. Other programs have students continue straight through academics and enter the work force after completing the entire program. Most all programs require a minimum of two years.

How long does it take to complete a nursing degree?

BSN programs will take you a minimum of four years to complete, and an ADN typically takes three years to complete including general education and nursing coursework. Accelerated and direct-entry master's nursing programs' completion timelines vary, typically 15-16 months.

What is the average salary of a nurse?

There is a nationwide shortage of nurses. It is not uncommon to find starting nursing salaries between \$45,000 and \$55,000 in the Portland area, plus overtime and benefits. Average salaries are around \$64,000. In some parts of the country, the starting salary may be even higher. Because of the acute nursing shortage, many employers are paying signing bonuses to new nurses or paying down a portion of the new nurse's nursing school loans.

What is the projected job outlook for nurses?

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment for nurses is expected to grow ~ 16% through 2024, much faster than average.

Oregon Nursing Program Requirements

Oregon Health & Science University (ohsu.edu/son)

Transfer

- > 45 credits completed
- Apply to program and rank five campuses (Portland, WOU, SOU, OIT and EOU)
- 3.0 min. GPA in prerequisites with no grade lower than a "C"
- Applications are only available online for Fall entry; deadline is typically February 15
- Application essay (proctored)

Accelerated (Portland/ Ashland only)

- 3.0 minimum GPA in prerequisites with no grade lower than a “B”
- Applications become available online in the Fall for a Summer entry
- Entrance Essay – part of the online application

OHSU Community College Pathway’s/ Associates Degree Program’s

- Enroll in community college and complete Associate’s Degree in Nursing
- Students in one of the community college OCNE programs are eligible to transition directly to OHSU to complete the bachelor degree in nursing
- OCNE Partners: Blue Mountain, Clackamas, Lane, Mount Hood, Portland, Rogue, South western and Umpqua Community College

Concordia (Transfer only) (cuportland.edu/hhs/undergraduate/nursing/index.cfm)

- Preference given to Concordia continuing students (TR must first be admitted to Concordia before applying to nursing program)
- High grades in anatomy and physiology; no grade lower than a “B” in sciences
- Two references from professionals such as professors, supervisors or clergy
- Proof of completion of CNA coursework or experience (not available through Concordia)
- Two-page Statement of Purpose

University of Portland (Transfer only) (www.nursing.up.edu)

- Apply to UP and School of Nursing with one application
- Seats in the fall semester are reserved for UP continuing students. Transfer students typically are accepted into the Spring semester only
- Must transfer at least 90 credits

George Fox (Transfer only) (georgefox.edu/catalog/undergrad/departments/nursing/index)

- Preference given to George Fox continuing students
- Test of Essential Academic Skills (TEAS)
- Two essays, two recommendation and appraisal forms

Linfield (Transfer and Accelerated) (linfield.edu/portland/)

- Preference given to Linfield continuing students for transfer program
- Summer term entry for students with bachelor’s degree
- Fall or Spring for students with and without a prior bachelor’s degree
- Apply through nursingcas.org
- Insight resume