Planning for Nursing School

Nursing Education Options in Texas

BSN ACCELERATED (FOR NON-NURSE COLLEGE GRADUATES)
- Baylor University, Dallas
- Concordia University, Austin
- Midwestern State University, Wichita Falls
- Texas A&M Health Science Center College of Nursing, Bryan (extension campuses in McAllen and Round Rock)
- Texas A&M Corpus Christi
- Texas Christian University Harris College of Nursing, Ft. Worth
- University of Houston College of Nursing, Sugarland
- Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso
- Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center School of Nursing, Lubbock (online, with clinical hours in a variety of locations)
- UT Health Science Center at San Antonio
- UT Tyler

ALTERNATE ENTRY MSN AND PHD (FOR NON-NURSE COLLEGE GRADUATES)
- The University of Texas at Austin

Since these programs change from year to year, please see the Texas Board of Nursing’s website https://www.bon.texas.gov/education_programs.asp for approved RN education programs and contact individual institutions to verify the type of programs available.

The Nursing Profession

Nursing is the nation’s largest health care profession and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that employment for registered nurses will grow 7 percent from 2019 to 2029, faster than the average for all occupations.

Most health care services involve some form of care by nurses. Nurses comprise the largest single component of hospital staff, are the primary providers of hospital patient care, and deliver most of the nation’s long-term care. Although 60 percent of all employed RNs work in hospitals (2019), many are employed in a wide range of other settings, including private practices, public health agencies, primary care clinics, home health care, outpatient surgicenters, health maintenance organizations, nursing-school-operated nursing centers, insurance and managed care companies, nursing homes, schools, mental health agencies, hospices, the military, and industry. Other nurses work in careers as college and university educators preparing future nurses or as scientists developing advances in many areas of health care and health promotion.

Though often working collaboratively, nurses do not simply “assist” physicians and other health care providers. Instead, they practice independently within their own defined scope of practice. Nursing roles range from direct patient care to case management, establishing nursing practice standards, developing quality assurance procedures, and directing complex nursing care systems.

With many more RNs in the U.S. than physicians, nursing delivers an extended array of health care services, including primary and preventive care by advanced, independent nurse practitioners in such clinical areas as pediatrics, family health, women’s health, and gerontological care. Nursing’s scope also includes care by clinical nurse specialists, certified nurse-midwives and nurse-anesthetists, as well as care in cardiac, oncology, neonatal, neurological, and obstetric/gynecological nursing and other advanced clinical specialties.

The Registered Nurse is trained to select and apply theory and research findings to nursing practice in a variety of patient situations and settings; to identify and respond to acute and chronic health problems; to promote health and prevent illness; to evaluate completed nursing research; to participate in professional and community organizations relevant to nursing; and to provide leadership as an essential member of the healthcare team. Nurses are needed in acute care hospitals, community health agencies, homes, outreach programs, public schools, HMOs, and clinics serving poor and rural populations. Career opportunities are particularly good for bilingual persons or minority members. Upon completion of additional academic and practical training, RNs may serve as surgical nurses, psychiatric nurses, public health nurses, nursing administrators, nurse educators, or researchers. The median annual wage for registered nurses was $75,330 in May 2020. The lowest 10 percent earned less than $53,410 and the top 10 percent earned more than $116,230.

Advanced Practice Nurses are RNs with graduate (post-baccalaureate) academic preparation and advanced clinical skills qualifying them as experts in a defined area of knowledge and practice. Graduate academic preparation in nursing is at the master’s and doctoral level. Advanced practice roles include nurse practitioner (NP), clinical nurse specialist (CNS), certified nurse midwife (CNM), and certified registered nurse anesthetist (CRNA).
Nursing Degrees

The primary pathway to professional nursing is the four-year Bachelor of Science degree in nursing (BSN). The professional nurse is a "registered" nurse (RN) who has completed a college-level program of coursework and clinical training and has passed a licensing exam required for practice in all states.

Registered nurses are prepared either through a baccalaureate program, an associate degree in nursing program, or a hospital diploma program. Graduates of all three programs take the same state licensing exam, the NCLEX-RN. BSN coursework can be completed at a four-year college that offers a traditional program (MSN or PhD). Graduate-level programs are well-positioned to pursue advanced practice nursing, as those roles require a greater level of scientific knowledge than provided by BSN degrees alone.

ALTERNATE ENTRY MSN AND DOCTORAL PROGRAMS FOR NON-NURSE COLLEGE GRADUATES

These programs also prepare students to earn the RN license after the first 12 months of education and training. Master’s programs then require another one, two, or sometimes three years depending on specialty area. Doctoral programs require another three years beyond the first year needed to prepare for RN licensure. These programs are typically designed for students who have decided on an advanced practice specialty area in nursing before applying to nursing school. Individuals who are not already RNs have a lot to explore and learn before making such a decision. Some programs require only a B or BA, a minimum GPA of 2.75 or 3.0, GRE scores, and just a few courses (e.g. a lecture course and lab in biology and in chemistry, a course in statistics, and course in psychology). Others require coursework in anatomy, physiology, and biochemistry. Admission prerequisites may include additional courses and recommendation letters. It is critical to review each program’s specific admission information. Application deadlines vary but can be as early as October 1 for a program starting in June.

Choosing to Become a Nurse

Learn as much as you can about nursing. There is no one career path in this field; career opportunities for nurses are rich and varied. A flight trauma nurse, a pediatric nurse practitioner, a forensic nurse, a psychiatric nurse, an academic nurse, an infection control nurse, a nurse anesthetist—the list is long and possibilities are everywhere. Learn as much as you can about the distinction between BSN-prepared nurses and master’s-prepared nurses. Learn about advanced practice roles and about the many areas of specialization. Web sites, such as www.registerednursing.org, are good places to start. Check out job postings on the website of the National League for Nursing (www.nln.org) to further your knowledge of the variety of nursing roles available. Talk to nurses. Volunteer in a healthcare setting where there are nurses. Do your research to be sure about your decision to pursue a nursing career.

For More Information, Visit:

- Occupational Outlook Handbook: Registered Nurses
  http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/registered-nurses.htm
- Occupational Outlook Handbook: Nurse Anesthetists, Nurse Midwives, and Nurse Practitioners
- American Association of Colleges of Nursing:
  https://www.aacnnursing.org/Students/Find-a-Nursing-Program

*(Adapted from Career Services Center, UC, San Diego)*