



COLLEGE OF HUMAN ECOLOGY

Careers in Nursing

Overview

Nursing is a field long recognized for its social usefulness, wide range of career options, and job security. Nurses support patients both physically and emotionally by protecting them from the risks created by illnesses and vulnerability. Nurses also assist patients and their family members with recovery, coping, and healing. Options in nursing include direct care, independent practice, specialization, research, public policy, administration, the military, and education. Nursing can also be combined with degrees in public health, and administration.

Academic Pathways for Non-Nurses

Accelerated Bachelors/Masters Programs

Program Basics:

- Accelerated baccalaureate programs offer the quickest route to licensure as a registered nurse (RN) for adults who have already completed a bachelor's or graduate degree in a non-nursing discipline.
- Fast-track baccalaureate programs take 11 – 18 months to complete, including prerequisites.
- Master's degree programs generally take about 2 – 3 years to complete.
- Accelerated nursing programs are available in 43 states plus the District of Columbia and Guam.

Fast Track Nursing Education

- Accelerated baccalaureate programs accomplish academic objectives in a short time by building on previous learning experiences. Instruction is intense with courses offered full-time with no breaks between sessions. Students receive the same number of clinical hours as their counterparts in traditional entry-level nursing programs.
- Admission standards for accelerated programs are high with programs typically requiring a minimum of a 3.0 GPA and a thorough pre-screening process. Identifying students who will flourish in this environment is a priority for administrators. Students enrolled in accelerated programs are encouraged not to simultaneously have a job outside of their academic program given the rigor associated with completing degree requirements.
- Accelerated baccalaureate and master's programs in nursing are appropriately geared towards individuals who have already proven their ability to succeed at a senior college or university. Having already completed a bachelor's degree, many second-degree students are attracted to the fast-track master's program as the natural next step in their higher education.

Resources: www.aacn.nche.edu/media-relations/fact-sheets/accelerated-programs
www.aacn.nche.edu/publications/issue-bulletin-accelerated-programs

For more information on accelerated programs and a list of schools offering programs go to:
<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/>

Advanced Practice: Nursing Fields

A master's degree in nursing prepares an advanced practice nurse to work as a nurse practitioner, clinical nurse specialist, certified nurse anesthetist, or certified nurse midwife. Descriptions of these four advanced practice nursing fields follow. As of 2015, it has been recommended that all advanced practice nurses be prepared at the clinical doctorate, in addition to the masters level.

Advanced Practice Nursing Fields:

- Clinical Nurse Specialist
- Nurse Practitioner
- Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist
- Certified Nurse Midwife
- Doctor of Nursing Practice

Clinical Nurse Specialist

Career Description:

- Registered nurses specialize in specific fields of clinical practice such as community health, critical care, neonatal health, oncology, psychiatric-mental health, among several others.
- Primary roles include being a patient advocate, as well as, clinical resource, educator, and consultant for generalist nurses.
- Graduation prepares one to take a national examination for certification as a certified school nurse (CNS).

Work Environment:

Hospitals, doctors' offices, schools, occupational settings, independent practices, nursing homes, rehabilitative facilities, and maternity centers.

Education/Licensure Requirements:

- Masters (2 – 3 years)

Salary Median: \$66,640

Resources: American Nurses Association, National League for Nursing, Peterson's Nursing Programs, Discovernursing.com, Study.com

Nurse Practitioner

Career Description:

- Registered nurses who provide patient services to maintain health, prevent illness, or deal with acute or chronic health problems.
- Similar role as doctors when it comes to giving preventive care and treatment.
- Order and interpret x-rays and laboratory data, and prescribe medications.
- There may be variations from state to state, but generally, nurse practitioners work as independent entities or collaborate with a physician.
- Specialize by patient category in areas such as adult health, family health, pediatric health, gerontological health, and women's health.

Work Environment:

Hospitals and doctors' offices, community centers, public health departments, managed-care organizations, schools of nursing, women's health centers, clinics, and government agencies (frequently in underserved urban and rural settings).

Education/Licensure Requirements:

- Masters (2 – 3 years)
- Work experience in chosen specialty (1 – 2 years)

Salary Median: \$95,350

Resources: American Academy of Nurse Practitioners, American Health Care Association, American Association of Colleges of Nursing, National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties, Study.com

Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist

Career Description:

- Administer anesthetic agents, provide pre- and post-anesthesia care, acute and chronic pain management, and perform emergency resuscitation.
- Graduates of a CRNA program take a national exam to qualify for certification and complete biannual continuing education credits for recertification.

Work Environment:

Traditional hospital surgical suites and obstetrical delivery rooms; dental and medical offices; ambulatory surgical centers; managed-care organizations; and U.S. Military, Public Health Service, and Veterans Administration medical facilities.

Education/Licensure Requirements:

- Masters (1.5 – 2 years: 1 year must be work experience in critical care)
- Licensed as registered nurse (RN)
- Pass National Council Licensing Exam for registered nurses (NCLEX-RN)

Salary Median: \$153,780

Resources: American Association of Nurse Anesthetists, Study.com

Certified Nurse Midwife

Career Description:

- Registered nurses provide a range of clinical services for women, including prenatal care, labor and delivery care, neonatal care, family planning, and well-woman care.
- Collaborate with obstetricians in managing high-risk patients. Other duties include preventive health care, counseling, prescribing medication (most states), conducting clinical research, and teaching.
- Established high rate of successful births handled by CNMs has also led to their growing credibility and popularity.

Work Environment:

May have their own private practice or may be employed in hospitals, independent birthing centers, or clinics. Hours will vary as to place of employment, although CNMs are usually on call and must be available to expectant mothers at all times.

Education/Licensure Requirements:

- Masters (1 – 2 years) or Doctorate (see Doctoral Degrees section)
- Licensed as registered nurse (RN)
- Midwifery experience (1 – 5 years)

Salary Median: \$96,970

Resources: American College of Nurse Midwives, Maternity Center Association, Study.com

Doctoral Degrees

Doctor of Nursing Practice or PhD in Nursing

Career Description:

The two types of doctoral programs differ in their goals and the competencies of their graduates. However, they both represent complementary, alternative approaches to the highest level of educational preparation in nursing.

- Practice-focused doctoral programs are designed to prepare experts in specialized advanced nursing practice. They offer the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree. The programs focus heavily on innovative and evidence-based practice that reflect the application of credible research findings.

- Research-focused programs grant the Doctor of Philosophy degree (PhD), while a small percentage offers the Doctor of Nursing Science degree (DNS, DSN, or DNSc). Designed to prepare nurse scientists and scholars, research-focused programs focus heavily on scientific content and research methodology. All require an original research project and the completion and defense of a dissertation or linked research papers.

Through the doctoral programs graduates are prepared to:

- Integrate nursing science with knowledge from ethics and biophysical, psychosocial, analytical, and organizational sciences as the basis for the highest level of nursing practice.
- Use science-based theories and concepts to determine the nature and significance of health and health care delivery phenomena; describe the actions and advanced strategies to enhance, alleviate, and ameliorate health and health care delivery phenomena as appropriate; and evaluate outcomes.
- Develop and evaluate new practice approaches based on nursing theories and theories from other disciplines.

Education/Licensure Requirements:

- Accelerated Baccalaureate BSN (12 – 18 months) or Masters (2 – 3 years)
- DNP (2.5 – 3 years); PhD (5 years)

Salary Median: \$100,402

Salary Resources:

- www.onetonline.org/find/quick?s=nursing
- learn.org/articles/What_is_the_Average_Salary_for_a_Nursing_Graduate_with_a_BSN.html
- www.payscale.com/research/US/Degree=Doctor_of_Nursing_Practice_%28DNP%29/Salary

Resources: American Association of Colleges in Nursing