

USCDornsife

Dana and David Dornsife
College of Letters, Arts and Sciences

Office of Pre-Health Advisement

NURSING

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

ADVISING SHEET

Nurses promote health, prevent disease, and help patients cope with illness. They have a unique scope of practice and can practice independently, although they also collaborate with all members of the healthcare team to provide the care needed by each patient. Nurses also serve as advocates for patients, families, and communities. They develop and manage nursing care plans; instruct patients and their families in proper care; and help individuals and groups take steps to improve or maintain their health.



The nursing field has a wide range of career pathways, from entry-level practitioner to doctoral-level researcher. The primary pathway to nursing is the four-year Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN). Registered nurses (RN) are prepared either through a four-year baccalaureate program; a two-to three-year associate degree in nursing (ADN); or a three-year hospital diploma program. Post-licensure programs admit only students who are already RNs. However, there are additional ways of obtaining a BSN or MSN besides the traditional 4-year route which include: **1) Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (A-BSN) programs, which are geared for those *without* previous nursing preparation, but who hold a baccalaureate/bachelor's degree in a major field *other than nursing*.** An Accelerated second degree BSN program is a full time commitment, which generally takes 12-18 months to complete (depending on the program); and **2) Entry-level Nursing Masters programs, also accelerated in nature, are geared to non-nursing graduates, generally take three years to finish.**

Nurses who graduate with an MSN are called advanced practice nurses (APNs). These nurses deliver health care services that were previously delivered by physicians, and they typically focus on one of four advanced practice areas: Nurse Practitioner (NP); Certified Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA); Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS); or Certified Nurse Midwife (CNM). Both A-BSN and Direct Entry MSN programs qualify students to sit for the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-RN exam), which one must pass to obtain a nursing license.

COMMON PRE-NURSING PREREQUISITES COURSES (FOR A-BSN & MSN)

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| <u>Anatomy</u> | One semester with lab is required | HBIO 301L |
| <u>Microbiology</u> | One semester with lab is required | BISC 300L |
| <u>Physiology</u> | One semester with lab is required | BISC 307L |
| <u>Chemistry</u> | One semester with lab is generally required, yet recommended by other schools. Some schools may require one year. | CHEM 105aL and/or CHEM 105bL |
| <u>Mathematics</u> | One semester of Math is required. Statistics is the typical requirement. Some schools may require only college algebra. | MATH 208x OR BISC 305or PSYCH 274g OR HP 340L |
| <u>English</u> | One year is required | WRIT 150 and WRIT 340 |
| <u>Psychology</u> | One semester is generally required | PSYC 100g |
| <u>Lifespan or Developmental Psychology</u> | One semester with lab is generally required, yet recommended by other schools. Note: Contact individual schools for specific requirements as some schools may require a lifespan course that covers from birth to death. | PSYC 336L may or may NOT suffice. Check with individual school |
| <u>Sociology</u> | One semester is generally required, yet recommended by other schools. | SOCI 200gm (Some schools may accept Cultural Anthropology, Contact individual school for specific requirements). |
| <u>Nutrition</u> | One semester is generally recommended yet required by other schools. | Varies according to the institution you are applying to. Contact individual schools for specific requirements. |
| <u>Public Speaking/ Communication</u> | One semester is generally recommended yet required by other schools. | Varies according to the institution you are applying to. Contact individual schools for specific requirements. |
| <u>Philosophy/ Critical Thinking</u> | One semester is generally recommended yet required by other schools. | Varies according to the institution you are applying to. Contact individual schools for specific requirements. |
| <u>Epidemiology</u> | One semester is generally recommended yet required by other schools. | Varies according to the institution you are applying to. Contact individual schools for specific requirements. |

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Graduate Nursing Preparation

If you decide to obtain your master's in nursing degree, you can become eligible for certification in an advanced practice specialty, which you must renew regularly. **Note:** You should make sure to learn which MSN tracks/specializations are available to direct entry students. Some MSN-level specialties have more rigorous application requirements, including specific kinds of work experience, so they may not be open to direct entry MSN students.

Though there is a great demand for nurses to provide direct patient care at the bedside, nurses with graduate preparation are also in high demand as advanced practice specialists, researchers, healthcare administrators, policy analysts, educators, and nurse executives. For those interested in pursuing graduate nursing education, examples of these programs include:

Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNSs) - provide care in a range of specialty areas, such as cardiac, oncology, neonatal, and obstetric/gynecological nursing, as well as pediatrics, neurological nursing, and psychiatric/mental health.

Nurse Practitioner (NPs) - conduct physical exams; diagnose and treat common acute illness and injuries; provide immunizations; manage high blood pressure, diabetes, and other chronic problems; order and interpret x-rays and other lab tests; and counsel patients on adopting healthy lifestyles and health care options. NPs can prescribe medications in all states, while many states have given NPs authority to practice independently without physician collaboration and supervision.

Certified Nurse Midwives (CNM's) - provide prenatal and gynecological care to normal healthy women; deliver babies in hospitals, private homes, and birthing centers; and continue with follow-up postpartum care.

Certified Registered Nurses Anesthetists (CRNAs) - administer anesthesia for all types of surgery in settings ranging from operating rooms and dental offices to outpatient surgical centers.

RESOURCES

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| American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) | www.aacn.nche.edu |
| National League of Nursing (NLN) | http://www.nln.org/ |
| American Nurses Association (ANA) | http://nursingworld.org/ |
| National Student Nurses Association | www.nсна.org |
| Nurse Source | www.nursesource.org |
| California Board of Registered Nursing (BRN) | www.rn.ca.gov |
| All Nursing Schools | www.allnursingschools.com |
| List of Accelerated BSN programs | www.aacn.nche.edu/Media/FactSheets/AcceleratedProg.htm |
| Discover Nursing | www.discovernursing.com |
| American Nurses Credentialing Center | www.nursecredentialing.org |
| Centralized Application Service for Nursing Programs (NursingCAS) | http://nursingcas.org/ |
| Graduate Record Examination (GRE) | www.ets.org/gre |
| Test of Essential Academic Skills (TEAS) | www.atitesting.com/Solutions/PreNursingSchool/TEAS.aspx |
| National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN) | www.ncsbn.org/nclex.htm |

This information is not comprehensive and should not be used as your only advising tool. Research each school for a complete listing of requirements.