

# NURSING

**THE NATION'S LARGEST HEALTH CARE PROFESSION**

# A LOOK AT THE FACTS

With more than 3.1 million registered nurses practicing nationwide, nursing is the nation's largest health care profession. Despite this, many more nurses are needed into the foreseeable future to meet the growing demand for care. As you consider a career as a registered nurse, you should know these facts:

- The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that employment for registered nurses will grow much faster than average through 2024.
- 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.
- Most health care services involve some form of care by nurses.
- Nursing roles range from direct patient care to case management, establishing nursing practice standards, developing quality assurance procedures, and directing complex nursing care systems.
- 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.

# WHAT DO NURSES DO?

## Responsibilities:

- Perform physical exams and health histories
- Provide health promotion, counseling and education
- Administer medications, wound care, and numerous other personalized interventions
- Interpret patient information and make critical decisions about needed actions
- Coordinate care, in collaboration with a wide array of healthcare professionals
- Direct and supervise care delivered by other healthcare personnel like LPNs and nurse aides
- Conduct research in support of improved practice and patient outcomes

*According to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), the median pay for a masters level nurse in 2016 was \$100,910 annually.*

## Settings:

RNs practice in all healthcare settings: hospitals, nursing homes, medical offices, ambulatory care centers, community health centers, schools, and retail clinics. They also provide health care in more surprising locations such as camps, homeless shelters, prisons, sporting events and tourist destinations.

# PRACTICE SETTINGS



**62.2%**  
HOSPITALS



**10.5%**  
AMBULATORY  
SETTINGS



**7.8%**  
COMMUNITY &  
PUBLIC HEALTH  
CENTERS



**6.4%**  
HOMES



**5.3%**  
LONG-TERM  
CARE FACILITIES



**3.8%**  
SCHOOLS

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



**DIRECT PATIENT CARE,**  
teach and counsel patients



**COORDINATE CARE**  
and advocate for patients



**RESEARCH AND EVALUATE**  
more effective ways  
of caring for patients



The majority of nurses' time is being consumed by documentation, medication administration, and communication regarding the patient, and yet, **LESS THAN 20%** of nursing practice time was developed specifically to direct patient care.

# YOU MIGHT BE A NURSE IF...



You can drink a pot of coffee and still go to sleep in the morning.  
You think it is acceptable to use "penis" and "vagina" in a normal conversation.

You believe not all patients are annoying. Some are dead.

**You see stress as a normal way of life.**

You've ever been telling work stories in a restaurant and had someone at another table throw-up.

You notice that you use more four-letter words now than before you became a nurse.

You look in your closet and can't find anything non-medical to wear.

**You believe all bleeding stops...eventually.**

You don't get excited about blood loss unless it's your own.

You believe the pain will go away when it stops hurting.

You've ever thought, "As long as he's got a pulse, I don't care about the rhythm."

You firmly believe that "too stupid to live" should be a diagnosis.

**You've ever said, "Why am I here?"**

You have encouraged obnoxious patients to sign out AMA.

You've ever had a patient with a nose ring, a brow ring and twelve earrings say, "I'm afraid of shots."

You believe a good tape job will fix anything.

# **ADVANCED PRACTICE REGISTERED NURSES (APRN)**

**Advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) is an umbrella term given to a registered nurse who has at least a Master's educational and clinical practice requirements beyond the basic nursing education and licensing required of all RNs and who provides at least some level of direct care to patient populations. Under this umbrella fit the principal types of APRNs:**

**Nurse practitioner (NP) – Working in clinics, nursing homes, hospitals, or private offices, nurse practitioners provide a wide range of primary and preventive health care services, prescribe medication, and diagnose and treat common minor illnesses and injuries.**

**Certified nurse-midwife (CNM) – CNMs provide well-woman gynecological and low-risk obstetrical care in hospitals, birth centers, and homes.**

**Clinical nurse specialist (CNS) – Working in hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, private offices, and community-based settings, CNSs handle a wide range of physical and mental health problems. They also work in consultation, research, education, and administration.**

**Certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNA) – The oldest of the advanced nursing specialties, CRNAs administer more than 65 percent of anesthetics given to patients each year.**

# ACCELERATED MASTER'S DEGREE IN NURSING



A master's degree in nursing is the educational core that allows advanced practice nurses to work as nurse practitioners, certified nurse midwives, certified clinical nurse specialists, and certified nurse anesthetists.

Some schools offer accelerated master's degree programs for college graduates with non-nursing degrees. There are also joint degree programs, combining Nursing with a Master of Business Administration, Master of Public Health, Master of Hospital Administration or Master of Divinity, among others.

For more information about accelerated programs to pursue a career in nursing, read the recent article from the American Association of Colleges of Nursing: [aacn.nche.edu/media-relations/AccelProgsGlance.pdf](http://www.aacn.nche.edu/media-relations/AccelProgsGlance.pdf).

# APPLICATION TIMELINE

Most nursing programs participate in the Nursing Centralized Application Service (NursingCAS): <http://www.nursingcas.org>

The application opens in the August prior to desired matriculation date. For example, if you want to start in Fall 2018, you would apply as early as Summer 2017. Deadlines and entry terms vary by program.

Use the programs list provided by the AACN to research specific programs:  
<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/education-resources/nursing-education-programs>



# ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The admission requirements for master's programs in nursing vary a great deal and may include:

- Bachelor's degree
- Coursework including anatomy and physiology, microbiology, psychology, statistics
- Graduate Record Examination (GRE) or the Miller Analogies Test (MAT)
- Letters of reference
- Resume
- Personal statement
- Minimum GPA (often 3.0)

It is important to remember that admission officers look at a student's transcripts, clinical work, and letters of reference together holistically. Some specialties require specific courses. Students in the nurse anesthetist program, for instance, must have an upper-level college course in biochemistry.



# MASTER'S CURRICULUM

Full-time master's programs consist of eighteen to twenty-four months of uninterrupted study. Many graduate school students, however, fit their master's-level studies around their work schedules, which can extend the time it takes to graduate.

Master's-level study incorporates theories and concepts of nursing science and their applications, along with the management of health care.

Classroom and clinical work are involved throughout the master's program. In class, students spend less time listening to lectures and taking notes and more time participating in student- and faculty-led seminars and roundtable discussions. Extended clinical work is generally required.

Graduate-level education in many programs includes courses in statistics, research management, health economics, health policy, health-care ethics, health promotion, nutrition, family planning, mental health, and the prevention of family and social violence.



# SAMPLE MASTER'S PROGRAMS

Johns Hopkins BS to MSN

<http://nursing.jhu.edu/academics/programs/pre-licensure/masters-entry/>

Yale graduate nursing programs for non-nurses

[nursing.yale.edu/](http://nursing.yale.edu/)

Penn BSN Second Degree and BSN/MSN programs

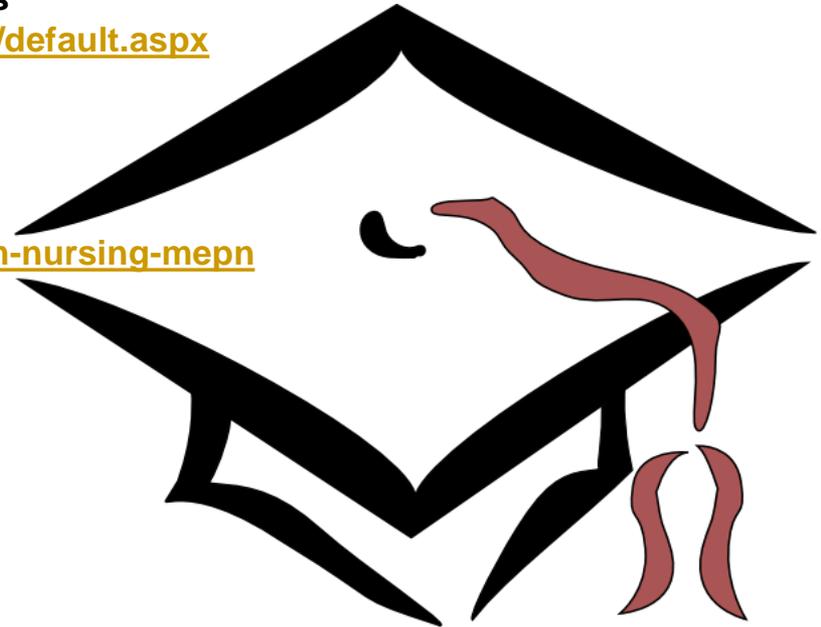
[nursing.upenn.edu/admissions/accelerated/Pages/default.aspx](http://nursing.upenn.edu/admissions/accelerated/Pages/default.aspx)

MGH Institute (Boston) Accelerated BSN and MSN

[mghihp.edu/academics/nursing/degree-options/](http://mghihp.edu/academics/nursing/degree-options/)

University of California San Francisco

[nursing.ucsf.edu/programs/masters-entry-program-nursing-mepn](http://nursing.ucsf.edu/programs/masters-entry-program-nursing-mepn)



# SAMPLE CURRICULUM

## Johns Hopkins MSN

Semester 1 Professionalism for Nursing in Health Care; with Hopkins Nursing Seminar-Ethics and Cultural Humility  
Foundations of Nursing Practice  
Integrated Clinical Management: Common Health Alterations  
Health Assessment I  
Pathophysiology I

Semester 2 Integrated Clinical Management: Chronic Health Alterations  
Pharmacology  
Biostatistics for Evidence-Based Practice  
Promoting Health in Older Adults  
Health Promotion and Risk Reduction Across the Lifespan

Semester 3 Integrated Clinical Management: Complex Health Alterations  
Leadership for Professional Nursing; with Hopkins Nursing Seminar – EBP and Quality  
Psychiatric Mental Health  
The Research Process and its Application to Evidence-Based Practice

Semester 4 Maternal and Newborn Health  
Child Health  
Public Health; with Hopkins Nursing Seminar – Global Nursing and Infectious Diseases  
Philosophical, Theoretical and Ethical Perspectives of Advanced Nursing Practice  
Leadership for Population Health Management

Semester 5 Context of Health Care for Advanced Nursing Practice  
Integrated Clinical Management: Synthesis Practicum  
Nursing Specialty Elective(s)

# FOR MORE INFORMATION

American Association of Colleges of Nursing [AACN.NCHE.edu](https://AACN.NCHE.edu)

Centralized Application Service for Nursing Schools [NursingCAS.org](https://NursingCAS.org)

The Honor Society of Nursing [NursingSociety.org](https://NursingSociety.org)

The American Nurses Association [NursingWorld.org](https://NursingWorld.org)

Explore Health Careers: Nursing [ExploreHealthCareers.org](https://ExploreHealthCareers.org)

Nurse Journal [NurseJournal.org](https://NurseJournal.org)

Nursing Times [NursingTimes.net](https://NursingTimes.net)

