

NURSING

What can I do with this major?

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

STAFF NURSING

Specialties by:

Work Setting or Type of Treatment, such as:

- Perioperative (operating rooms)
- Emergency/Trauma
- Critical Care
- Ambulatory Care
- Home Health Care
- Hospice and Palliative Care
- Occupational Health
- Radiology
- Psychiatric-Mental Health

Specific Health Conditions, such as:

- Oncology
- Diabetes Management
- Addictions Treatment
- HIV/AIDS Care

Organ or Body Systems, such as:

- Cardiovascular
- Gastroenterology
- Gynecology
- Dermatology
- Orthopedic
- Urology
- Respiratory

Well-defined Populations, such as:

- Neonatology
- Pediatrics
- Adults
- Geriatrics

Advanced Practice Nursing, such as:

- Clinical Nurse Specialist
- Nurse Anesthesiology
- Nurse Midwifery

Nurse Practitioner, including:

- Family, Adult, Women's Health, Pediatric, Neonatal, Geriatric, Mental Health

Hospitals

Clinics and medical centers

Physicians' offices and medical groups

Outpatient surgery centers

Ambulatory care centers

Home health agencies

Nursing care facilities

Rehabilitation centers

Hospices

Dialysis centers

Diabetes care clinics

Birth centers

Psychiatric hospitals and mental health agencies

Health maintenance organizations

Educational institutions

Summer camps

Large corporations

Correctional facilities

Work or volunteer in healthcare and medical settings during summers and breaks.

Shadow nurses in different settings to learn which ones hold the most appeal.

Gain experience through externship or internship programs.

Take electives in areas such as wellness, holistic health, medical ethics, and death and dying.

Get involved in student organizations and seek leadership roles.

Learn to be organized and to manage stress well.

Develop patience, the ability to work with both patients and families for long periods, and good listening skills. Learn to work effectively with people from different cultures, races, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Prepare to work nights, weekends, and holidays in a hospital setting.

Cultivate managerial skills for head nurse or other supervisory positions.

Many specialties exist and some nurses combine specialties, e.g. pediatric oncology.

Obtain a master's or doctoral degree for advanced practice nursing. Some specialties may also require certification.

Join relevant professional associations and plan to attend continuing education programs.

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EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Home Health
Rural Nursing
Health Education and Promotion

State and local health departments
Home healthcare agencies
Public schools
Daycare centers
Mental health facilities
Senior centers
Nurse-run clinics
Religious organizations
Social service agencies
Wellness centers
Community education programs

Develop knowledge and skills in management, decision-making, motivating, teaching, counseling, speaking, and writing.
Gain experience with handling emergencies, working independently, and demonstrating flexibility.
Expand knowledge of health issues related to age, cultures, religions, ethics, and government policies.
Learn to relate well with people from a variety of backgrounds.
Some positions may require a master's degree in nursing, public health, or a related field.
Take continuing education courses in topics such as smoking cessation, nutrition and fitness, and stress management.

INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

Temporary Staffing
Travel Nursing
Personal Services Contracting
Private Duty

Healthcare staffing agencies
Travel companies
Businesses and organizations with temporary needs
Private households

Gain years of experience in a hospital or other healthcare setting.
Learn to work autonomously and make decisions independently.
Be prepared to move frequently to various locations either locally or abroad.
Become flexible and adaptable.

GOVERNMENT SERVICE

Staff Nursing
Administration
Policy Development
Research

Government health agencies including:
Public Health Service
Indian Health Service
Veterans Affairs
Peace Corps
VISTA
Armed services
Prisons

Define an area of interest since government work offers a variety of practices.
Earn a master's or doctoral degree for positions involving research, policy development, or administration.
Become familiar with other cultures, languages, health systems, and beliefs.
Be prepared for combat nursing in armed services.

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STRATEGIES

TELEHEALTH

Provide care and advice through electronic communications media (phone, Internet).

Call centers
Private offices
Clinics
Health maintenance organizations
Hospitals

Work in other practices for five to ten years to gain the necessary experience.
Develop good communication skills and the ability to make important decisions quickly.
Earn the Telehealth Nurse Certification.

NURSING RESEARCH

Large hospitals and medical centers
Colleges and universities
Centers for nursing research
National Institute for Nursing
Pharmaceutical companies

Gain experience with research through supervised independent study or class projects.
Develop curiosity, analytical thinking, attention to detail, persistence, good writing skills, and an understanding of statistics.
Maintain a high grade point average and secure strong faculty recommendations.
Obtain a doctoral degree in nursing.

EDUCATION

Teaching
Educational Administration

Teaching hospitals
Colleges and universities
Schools of nursing

Develop patience, sensitivity to the needs of young adults as well as patients, and the ability to accept responsibility for the actions of others.
Take courses in the principles and practices of teaching.
Earn an advanced degree to teach at the college or university level.
Gain experience in public speaking.

INTERNATIONAL HEALTH

Clinical Nursing
Emergency Relief
Policy Development

Embassies
Military bases
National or international government agencies
Non-governmental organizations
Humanitarian organizations
Private voluntary organizations
Church-related mission services
World Health Organization

Consider advanced education as a clinical nurse specialist or nurse practitioner to be more marketable.
Learn a foreign language and an appreciation for other cultures. Study or volunteer abroad.
Participate in medical mission trips.
Inquire about the need for additional preparation in religious studies or similar courses.
Research nursing requirements in other countries.

AREAS

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STRATEGIES

OTHER AREAS

Insurance:

Underwriting and Claims

Sales

Product Management

Quality Assurance

Writing

Law

Forensic Nursing

Healthcare Administration

Information Management

Patient Advocacy

Case Management

Insurance companies

Hospitals

Health maintenance organizations

Business and industry:

Pharmaceutical companies

Medical equipment and supplies manufacturers

Medical marketing firms

Law firms

Medical and health publications

Healthcare websites

Healthcare advertising agencies

Public relations firms

Professional associations

Combine interest in nursing and healthcare with another field by earning appropriate graduate degrees or gaining relevant experience.

Minor in business or communications as an undergraduate.

Develop strong computer skills and an understanding of business practices.

Gain experience as a staff nurse before taking expertise in another direction.

Demonstrate initiative and effective leadership.

Get involved with relevant professional associations.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Nursing is the largest healthcare field. Three out of five nurses work in hospitals. Many nurses work part-time.
- Nursing combines science and technology with the desire to help people. One must enjoy helping people of all types and backgrounds.
- Nursing requires both physical stamina and emotional stability. Nurses must be able to follow orders and direct others.
- Other qualities important to the field include orientation to detail, sympathy and concern, responsibility, and the ability to handle stress and emergency situations.
- There are multiple educational paths to acquire the Bachelor of Science Nursing (BSN) degree and the Registered Nurse (RN) designation. Research alternatives such as accelerated BSN programs or Master's Entry programs.
- All states regulate nursing by requiring licensure. Investigate individual state requirements if planning to relocate.
- Earn a master's degree to prepare for advanced practice nursing including: clinical nurse specialist, nurse practitioner, nurse midwife, nurse anesthetist, and administration. Earn a doctoral degree for research or teaching at a university.
- Many opportunities outside of traditional nursing exist for RN's who want to work in non-clinical roles. Research the skills, experiences, and degrees necessary to attain these positions.