

Pre-Nursing Preparation at UH Mānoa

*Text compiled from the American Nurses Association website at <http://nursingworld.org>,
the American Association of Colleges of Nursing website at www.aacn.nche.edu/Education.htm,
the UHM School of Nursing website at www.nursing.hawaii.edu,
the Top 100 Health-Care Careers, and the UHM 2010-2011 Online Catalog,
Peterson's Nursing Programs 2011.*

The American Nurses Association's website describes nursing as: "The essence of nursing is that nurses combine the art of caring with the science of health care. Nursing places its focus not only on a particular health problem, but on the whole patient and his or her response to treatment. Care of the patient and a firm base of scientific knowledge are indispensable elements.

"Nursing is the protection, promotion, and optimization of health and abilities, prevention of illness and injury, alleviation of suffering through the diagnosis and treatment of human response, and advocacy in the care of individuals, families, communities, and populations."

Nurses work in many different areas, but the common thread of nursing is the nursing process – the essential core of how a registered nurse delivers care.

This process involves 5 steps:

- **Assessment:** collecting and analyzing physical, psychological and sociocultural data about a patient.
- **Diagnosis:** making a judgment on the cause, condition and path of the illness.
- **Planning:** creating a care plan, which sets specific treatment goals.
- **Implementation:** supervising or carrying out the actual treatment plan.
- **Evaluation:** continuous assessment of the plan.

There is a wide variety of nursing specialty areas; examples include surgery, emergency room (ER), pediatrics, psychiatric, public health, nurse-midwifery. Note: some specialty areas may require additional experience, study or certification.

Nursing Degrees

As a career, nursing offers great flexibility, allowing early entry into the workforce, continued professional development, and advancement through retraining and attaining higher degrees. Consequently, there is no "typical" timeline: students can combine education and work into unique paths that suit their lives. Students can complete one degree, work, and then return to complete a higher degree.

Over a lifetime's career span, a student who began as a Nurses' Aide could eventually complete a Doctorate. And a nurse who, for example, began in family medicine could choose later to switch to surgery, internal medicine, or geriatric nursing. Each degree level allows greater opportunities for new assignments, promotion, administrative/managerial work, responsibility, and higher salaries.

The most widely available nursing degrees include:

- CNA, Certified Nurse Aide or Nursing Assistant (8-12 weeks)
- LPN, Licensed Practical Nurse (1-1 ½ years)
- RN, Registered Nurse (2-5 years)
- APRN, Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (Master level)
 - Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS)
 - Nurse-Midwife
 - Nurse Practitioner (NP)
 - Nurse-Anesthetist
- Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)
- Ph.D. (Doctorate level)

CNAs, sometimes called hospital attendants, work under the direct supervision of an RN and assist with the routine daily care of patients, making beds and maintaining patients' environments; helping patients eat, bathe, dress, and walk; responding to patients' calls for assistance; collecting samples for testing; taking vital signs; and transporting patients.

LPNs, sometimes called licensed vocational nurses (LVNs), work under the supervision of an RN and provide bedside care, such as taking vital signs, feeding and bathing patients, dressing wounds, changing intravenous fluids (IVs), preparing patients for medical examinations, collecting samples for testing, and assisting physicians or nurses in those examinations. LPNs also carry out a variety of administrative chores.

RNs are vital members of the health care team. They are responsible for providing direct patient care and for carrying out treatments ordered by physicians. They take medical histories, help perform diagnostic tests and analyze results, administer treatments and medications, assist physicians with medical procedures, educate and provide support for patients and their families, and help with patient follow-up and rehabilitation. RNs also supervise staff. RNs work in all areas of health care – family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, surgery, geriatrics, and so on. Consequently, there are many different types of nurses as well: private duty nurses, operating room nurses, critical-care nurses, office nurses (who work for physicians, dental surgeons, etc.), school nurses, community health nurses, occupational health nurses, public health nurses, nurse educators, and so on.

Advanced degrees. RNs who have completed Bachelor degrees can earn advanced degrees at the Master or Doctorate levels, which bring increased opportunities, responsibilities, and higher salaries. Advanced degrees also allow RNs to work as **Nurse Administrators** or **Nurse Educators**. **APRNs** (Advanced Practice Registered Nurses) are highly trained nurses specializing in one of four areas: CNS, Nurse-Midwife, NP, or Nurse-Anesthetist. Advanced degrees are usually required for college teaching and research.

CNSs (Clinical Nurse Specialists) complete advanced training in specific areas of expertise: cancer, cardiac, neonatal, mental health, etc. CNSs also train and mentor nursing students, perform research, practice in a clinical setting, and provide consultation and management. The

advanced education requirements of a clinical nurse specialist better equip them to diagnose and provide treatment for a wide range of illnesses.

Nurse-Midwives, or midwives, care for women throughout pregnancy, labor, delivery, and post-delivery. They also provide routine gynecological care and counseling on family planning. Midwives serve only carefully screened women whose pregnancies are unlikely to present complications and work closely with obstetricians and other specialists to provide a wide net of support for their patients. Midwives focus on maintaining the well-being of mother and child and educate patients on nutrition, exercise, breastfeeding, childcare, and family care. Midwives are usually in private practice but are often affiliated with a hospital.

NPs (Nurse Practitioners) handle a wide range of activities, including taking medical histories, conducting physical exams, diagnosing and treating common injuries and illnesses. NPs order and interpret laboratory tests, advise patients, and perform routine procedures such as injections, immunizations, and wound care. The duties of a NP are similar to those of a Physician Assistant, but NPs are more autonomous, working independently or cooperatively with physicians.

Nurse-Anesthetists administer anesthesia to patients under the general supervision of an anesthesiologist, who is a physician. Nurse-anesthetists differ from anesthesiology assistants in that assistants work under the direct supervision of an anesthesiologist whereas nurse-anesthetists work independently. They select and administer the appropriate anesthetic and dosage for each procedure and monitor patients under anesthesia. They may also assist in the surgical, obstetric, or dental procedure.

DNPs (Doctor of Nursing Practice) are prepared in “curricula that build on traditional Master’s programs. It is an alternative to research-focused doctoral programs. These nurses are well-equipped to fully implement the science developed by nurse researchers prepared in PhD, DNSc, and other research-focused nursing doctorates.” DNP programs were created because at many institutions, “advanced practice registered nurses are prepared in master’s-degree programs that often carry a credit load equivalent to doctoral degrees in other health professions.”

Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing) degree holders focus on generating the knowledge base of nursing discipline through teaching or conducting clinical research. Doctoral programs prepare students for positions as nursing faculty members, leaders in application of technology to nursing education and clinical care, leaders in healthcare systems, and scientists who contribute to the body of nursing knowledge through their research.

Nursing Programs in Hawai‘i

A wide variety of nursing programs are available in Hawai‘i. UHM offers nursing degrees at the Bachelors, Masters, and Doctorate levels, and for students interested in nursing that have a non-nursing Bachelors degrees can apply to the Masters Entry Program in Nursing (MEPN). It is a three-year intensive program that culminates in APRN degrees. UHM has discontinued its RN-to-BSN program.

CNA	Nurse Aide or Nursing Assistant	Kapi‘olani Community College Kaua‘i Community College Maui College
LPN	Practical Nurse	Kapi‘olani Community College Kaua‘i Community College Maui College
RN (ASN/ADN)	Registered Nurse (Associate of Science in Nursing or Associate Degree in Nursing)	Hawai‘i Community College Kapi‘olani Community College Kaua‘i Community College Maui College
RN (BSN)	Registered Nurse (Bachelor of Science in Nursing)	Chaminade University UH Mānoa UH Hilo Hawai‘i Pacific University
MS (MSN)	Master of Science in Nursing	UH Mānoa Hawai‘i Pacific University
Ph.D.	Doctorate in Nursing	UH Mānoa
DNP	Doctor of Nursing Practice	UH Mānoa

In Hawai‘i, there are 11 pathways to a nursing degree. Please refer to the chart on the following page.

- ASN/ADN
- High School Direct Entry to BSN
- BSN
- RN to BSN
- RN to MSN
- MEPN
- MSN to PMC (certificate)
- MSN to Ph.D in Nursing
- MSN to DNP
- PMC (certificate) to Ph.D
- PMC (certificate) to DNP

UHM's School of Nursing (SON) has recently entered into the Hawai‘i State Nursing Consortium with Kaua‘i Community College, Maui College, and Kapi‘olani Community College starting Fall 2012. *Note: Each program has its own specific admissions requirements.* Upon

completing the ASN program at Kaua‘i or Maui, the student is guaranteed admission to UHMSON to complete the final year of the BSN program via distance learning.

UHMSON has also recently started a new High School Direct Entry Program for academically talented high school seniors interested in pursuing a career nursing. This program provides entry into the nursing program upon admission to UH Mānoa. For more information, refer to the brochure or website: www.nursing.hawaii.edu/

All RNs, whether at the Associate or Bachelor level, take the same licensing test, work in the same jobs, and receive similar salaries. The main differences with RNs with BS degrees are

- are more competitive for hiring and promotion,
- are more flexible in being reassigned,
- are more eligible for administrative positions,
- can change specialties more readily,
- have background in research,
- are eligible to work in the military, and
- are eligible to pursue advanced degrees.

Prerequisites for Admission

Prerequisite coursework for nursing programs vary from school to school, so it is important to identify as early as possible, which schools you hope to attend. Some nursing schools accept students directly from high school; others accept students at the sophomore or junior level; others accept students only after they have completed a set number of credits or course prerequisites.

PHYL 141 + Lab	Human Anatomy and Physiology I
PHYL 142 + Lab	Human Anatomy and Physiology II
MICR 130 + 140 (Lab)	Biology of Microorganisms
CHEM 151	Survey of Chemistry
PHRM 203	General Pharmacology
Various General Education or “Core” Requirements	

Beginning with students entering in nursing for Fall 2010, UHM's School of Nursing will accept applications from students who have finished the prerequisites according to those listed below:

PHYL 141/141Lab and PHYL 142/142Lab	Human Anatomy and Physiology I and II
MICR 130/140Lab	Biology of Microorganisms
1 FW course	Eng 100
1 FS course	(e.g. Math 100)
1 FG course	(e.g. HIST 151, REL 150, etc.)

2 DS courses (from different departments)	(e.g. PSY 100, FAMR 230)
1 DP course	(e.g. CHEM 151, ASTR 110, PHYS 101)
1 General elective	(e.g. DA/DH/DL, CHEM 152, 2 nd FG)

UHM's School of Nursing accepts students through a competitive application process. Students must receive grades of 'C' or higher in all prerequisites. Additional requirements may include courses in biology, certification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), cultural anthropology, English composition, history, human development, medical terminology, nutrition, or statistics. UHM's Pre-Health and Pre-Law Advising Center (PAC) offers a recommended academic plan for pre-nursing majors.

What makes a strong candidate?

Admission committees for RN nursing programs are looking for students who have

- completed all the prerequisites,
- a high GPA for the nursing prerequisites,
- a high overall grade point average (GPA), and
- a strong score on the entrance exam (e.g., NLN).

Some nursing programs also look for relevant healthcare experience.

Almost all nursing programs require a minimum grade point average (GPA), usually between 2.5 and 3.0. The published national average for a GPA cutoff is 2.8. Some programs, however, are "impacted," which means they receive far more applications than they can accept. Students accepted into impacted programs usually have a much higher GPA than the published cutoff. We recommend you contact the Admissions Offices of programs you plan to apply to, and request information about the GPAs (cumulative and prerequisite) for the most recently admitted class.

Pre-nursing students should talk to an academic advisor before deciding whether to repeat courses. *For admission to UHM's School of Nursing, students may only repeat a maximum of six (6) prerequisite credits; only the most recent grade is used to calculate the prerequisite GPA.*

Researching Schools

There are over 1000 nursing programs in the United States at the baccalaureate and masters levels. There are also currently 160 programs that have RN-to-MSN options, and 205 accelerated baccalaureate programs in the U.S.; all of which are accredited programs. There are also a number of online programs for students who want the distance learning option.

"To find a programs that is a good fit for you consider your personal needs. Is it best for you to work in a heavily structured environment or one that offers more flexibility (part-time)? Do you need to stay close to home? Do you prefer working in a large health-care system or a medical center, or do you prefer smaller, community-based operations?"

For nursing programs, ask how involved the faculty is in developing students for health care? How strong is the school's affiliation with clinics and hospitals? Are a variety of care settings available? What are the program's resources in terms of computer and science laboratories? And what kind of counseling from faculty members and administrators is available to help students develop well-rounded, effective progress through this program?"

Using the <http://www.allnursingschools.com/> website, you can search the different schools by degree level and view their listings in the directory. You can also use Peterson's Nursing Programs 2011 book found in our office to look through the profiles of different nursing programs in the U.S. and Canada.

Entrance Exam

Admissions. Many RN nursing programs require applicants to take a standardized test such as the National League of Nursing Pre-Admission Examination (NLN, or NLN-PAX), in addition to the SAT or ACT required for admission to the university. Others may require the Nursing Entrance Test (NET) or the Test of Essential Academic Skills (TEAS) for admission. International students will also need to submit scores for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).

To take the NLN at UHM or Maui, go to www.nlnonlinetesting.org and create an account to register online. To take the test at KCC, contact Kapi'olani's Nursing program at (808)734-9305 or go down in person. Students should register *at least* five weeks in advance.

The NLN assesses basic skills – skills underlying not one specific field, but all fields of study. These skills are acquired over a long period of time, primarily through liberal arts courses. Preparation consists of doing well in general education courses, becoming familiar with the test, and reviewing verbal and math skills.

For more information, a copy of *Nursing School Entrance Examinations* is available in UHM's Pre-Health/Pre-Law Advising Center. Study materials for the NLN are available in Sinclair Library on the UHM campus.

Licensing. Upon graduating from an accredited nursing program, students become eligible to take the National Council Licensure Examination: NCLEX-LN for Licensed Practical Nurses and NCLEX-RN for Registered Nurses, administered by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN). For more information, visit the NCLEX website at www.ncsbn.org.

UHM's School of Nursing **NLN-PAX [Test Dates](#)**

Official Test Preparation Material: *Review Guide for RN Pre-Entrance Exam*

[Click here for the NLN-PAX Breakdown.](#)

The Application Process

When applying to nursing programs, check to see whether they participate in the Nursing Centralized Application Service (NursingCAS) or not. For programs that do not use NursingCAS, students will need to contact the programs Admissions Offices directly for information on applying and for the application forms. Contact information for all U.S. and Canadian nursing programs can be found in Peterson's Nursing Programs 2011.

NursingCAS is the national centralized application service for students applying to registered nursing programs of all levels in the U.S. It offers applicants a convenient, web-based application service that allows you to apply to any number of participating programs by completing a single online application. Prior to beginning the application, carefully read the Instructions and all Frequently Asked Questions, as well as the tab titled 'Before You Apply.'

After submitting your NursingCAS application, some nursing programs may require applicants to submit supplemental applications or materials.

Not all, but a few programs may require an interview. *Applicants are responsible for all costs incurred while interviewing, including airfare, lodging, ground transportation, professional attire, and meals.*

If applying to nursing programs in Hawai'i, refer to the school or program websites for applications, contact information, and instructions.

Tips:

- The more you know about the school, the better your chances of being accepted.
- Most application questions can be answered by reading the instructions found on the NursingCAS website.
- Contact individual schools' Admissions Offices to find out how they handle:
 - Advanced Placement (AP) credits
 - International Baccalaureate (IB) credits
 - College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) credits
 - military credits
 - courses taken at a community college
 - non-U.S. coursework
 - courses taken for credit/no credit instead of a grade
 - residency issues
 - time limits on prerequisite science courses

Contact Information

Students interested in UHM's School of Nursing should attend an informational session; a schedule of sessions is available on its website: www.nursing.hawaii.edu. For general advising,

contact PAC at (808) 956-4045, after having attended an informational session.

For specific questions, contact the Office of Student Services:

School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene
 Webster Hall 201
 2528 McCarthy Mall
 Honolulu, HI 96822
 Telephone: (808) 956-8939

Additional Information

UH Mānoa's Pre-Health/Pre-Law Advising Center (PAC) has reference books, academic planning worksheets, and one-on-one advising by peers who can help you prepare for your Nursing program.

American Nursing Association	http://nursingworld.org/
American Association of Colleges of Nursing	www.aacn.nche.edu
National League of Nursing	www.nln.org
NLN-PAX	www.nlnonlinetesting.org
All Nursing Schools Website	www.allnursingschools.com
National Council of State Boards of Nursing	https://www.ncsbn.org
Hawaii State Licensing Board	www.hawaii.gov/dcca/areas/pvl/boards/nursing
UHM's School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene	www.nursing.hawaii.edu
UH Hawai'i's Nursing Program	www.hawaii.hawaii.edu/nursing/HawCC
UH Hilo's Nursing Program	www.uhh.hawaii.edu/depts/nursing
UH Kapi'olani Nursing Program	http://kapiolani.hawaii.edu/object/adn.html
UH Kaua'i Nursing Program	http://info.kauai.hawaii.edu/nursing/hed/index.ht
UH Mau'i Nursing Program	http://maui.hawaii.edu/nursing
Hawai'i Pacific University Nursing Program	http://www.hpu.edu/CNHS/BSN/index.html
Chaminade Nursing Program	http://www.chaminade.edu/health-sciences/nurse-education.php