



YOUR GUIDE TO **GRADUATE** **NURSING PROGRAMS**



American Association
of Colleges of Nursing

The Voice of Academic Nursing

YOUR GUIDE TO GRADUATE NURSING PROGRAMS

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Your Graduate Nursing Education

Nursing is a dynamic profession that brings many rewards and career advancement opportunities to those committed to lifelong learning. Today's nurses are expected to master an increasingly complex body of knowledge and attain clinical skills to effectively provide lifesaving and life-sustaining services. Though completing an entry-level registered nursing (RN) program and passing the NCLEX are important milestones in anyone's career, these are only the first steps in your preparation as a nursing professional. Throughout your career, you will continue to expand your knowledge base due to technological advances and cutting-edge nursing research. For those wishing to play a part in developing new scholarship and leading practice innovations, now is the time for you to consider graduate-level nursing education.

More education brings more opportunity, and many doors are open to nurses with master's and doctoral degrees. Nurses with graduate preparation provide direct patient care at an advanced level, conduct research, teach online and in the classroom, impact public policy, lead health systems, consult with corporations, and implement evidence-based solutions that revolutionize health care. These highly skilled providers are in great demand to fill established and emerging roles that allow nurses to focus on a variety of practice areas, such as geriatrics, pediatrics, public health, mental health, administration, informatics, forensics, systems improvement, and genetics/genomics.

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The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) encourages all nurses to strive for higher levels of education to advance their capacity to enhance the quality of care available to our nation's diverse patient populations.

With calls to transform health care growing louder, new models of care delivery are being introduced that place nurses in the driver's seat. As leaders of health/medical homes, nurse-managed health clinics, community health centers, and other settings, nurses are quickly becoming full partners in driving change in the healthcare arena. Given the aging population, the increasing incidence of chronic conditions, and the complexity of care, many more nurses will be needed to serve in primary care and specialty roles, as well as to lead independent practices.

Beyond the professional opportunities nurses gain through graduate education, there are some very tangible benefits to one's quality of life. Nurses with advanced preparation typically enjoy more opportunities to impact the overall design and implementation of care. As education increases, salaries follow suit. Nurses with doctoral preparation typically earn six-figure salaries and often rise to the top of healthcare's leadership ranks. With new practice opportunities emerging, and the demand for highly specialized nursing skills rising, the time is right for you to begin your graduate-level nursing education. The earlier in your career you complete your formal education, the better prepared you will be to navigate the ever-changing healthcare system and the higher your lifetime earnings will be.

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) encourages all nurses to strive for higher levels of education to advance their capacity to enhance the quality of care available to our nation's diverse patient populations. Calls for more nurses with graduate-level preparation are coming from both inside and outside of the profession from authorities as diverse as the National Academy of Medicine, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Now is the time to invest in your future and begin your journey into graduate nursing education.

Know Your Nursing Education Options

As you consider how best to continue your education, it's important to keep your career trajectory in mind and know your options. Today's health system needs nurses prepared at both the master's and doctoral levels, yet you do not need to take a "stepped" approach to your education if your ultimate goal is the doctorate. Progressing seamlessly from baccalaureate to doctoral preparation is often more efficient, requiring less time in class and educational expenses. Of course, many choose to complete a master's degree followed by a doctorate later in their career. This well-established educational pathway provides additional career options and may be necessary when family, work demands, and finances are considered.

Once you determine your degree of choice, you must select the program type that is right for you. More than 650 nursing schools nationwide offer a menu of more than 2,000 graduate programs tailored to the needs of nurses with varying levels of education as well as non-nurses looking to enter the profession at an advanced level. The following section features a snapshot of commonly available graduate nursing programs.

Master's Nursing Programs

Master's nursing programs prepare individuals for a variety of advanced roles in administration, teaching, research, informatics, and direct patient care. Nurses at this level are in high demand as Clinical Nurse Leaders, nurse managers, clinical educators, health policy consultants, research assistants, public health nurses, and in many other capacities. Individuals looking to earn a master's degree may choose from these options:

Master's nursing programs prepare individuals for a variety of advanced roles in administration, teaching, research, informatics, and direct patient care.

Though most programs are offered in classroom settings, many are delivered largely online or in a blended classroom/online format.

- **Entry-Level Master's Degree:** Developed for those with a bachelor's or graduate degree in a discipline other than nursing, entry-level master's degrees are also referred to as generic or accelerated programs. These offerings take approximately 2 to 3 years to finish with baccalaureate-level content and initial RN licensure completed during the first year. These programs are paced for students who have proven their ability to succeed at a four-year college or university. More than 90 entry-level master's programs are available at schools nationwide.
- **RN to Master's Degree:** Designed for nurses with associate degrees, RN to MSN programs take 2 to 3 years to complete with specific requirements varying by institution and based on the student's previous coursework. Though most programs are offered in classroom settings, many are delivered largely online or in a blended classroom/online format. The baccalaureate-level content missing from associate degree curricula is built into the front-end of these degree-completion programs. The number of RN to MSN programs has more than doubled in the past 20 years with more than 175 programs available today.
- **Baccalaureate to Master's Degree:** The traditional post-baccalaureate master's is the most prevalent option offered to those seeking graduate preparation. Coursework builds on undergraduate competency and allows students to concentrate their learning in a focus area. Program requirements and credit load vary by institution, though most programs may be completed in 18-24 months of full-time study. Though the majority of schools grant the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) degree, some offer the Master of Nursing (MN) or MS in Nursing in keeping

with university policy. The MSN, MN, and MS in Nursing are comparable degrees and prepare students at the same level of competency.

- **Dual Master's Degree Programs:** Nurses seeking a graduate degree with an in-depth concentration in a related field of study often choose a dual MSN program. Nationwide, more than 80 dual master's degrees are available that combine nursing course work with business (MSN/MBA), public health (MSN/MPH), health administration (MSN/MHA), and other content areas.
- **Post-Master's Certificate Programs:** Certificate programs also are available to master's program graduates looking to sharpen their clinical skills and nursing knowledge in a number of focus areas, including nursing education, leadership, informatics, and specialty practice among many others.

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Doctoral and Post-Doctoral Nursing Programs

For nurses looking to assume leadership positions and specialist roles, a doctorate is the appropriate credential. Today's nursing student can choose from doctoral programs focused on either research (PhD) or practice (Doctor of Nursing Practice or DNP). Given the need for more nurses to serve as Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRN), assume faculty positions, embark on careers as research scientists, and pursue leadership roles, nursing schools are moving quickly to increase the number of students entering both practice-focused and research-focused doctoral programs. Those seeking a terminal nursing degree should consider these offerings:

Today's nursing student can choose from doctoral programs focused on either research (PhD) or practice (Doctor of Nursing Practice or DNP).

- **Fast-Track Baccalaureate to Doctoral Programs:** This accelerated option provides an efficient educational pathway for motivated baccalaureate program graduates seeking an early-career doctorate. Strong clinical experiences are embedded throughout the entire 3-4 year program of study. These programs are available to both nurses already in practice and new graduates, with the option to focus on either research or practice. Given the rigorous nature of these programs, full-time study is strongly recommended.
- **Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP):** The DNP is designed for nurses seeking the highest level of preparation in nursing practice. In 2004, nursing schools affiliated with AACN voted to move the level of education necessary for advanced nursing practice from the master's degree to the doctorate. This move would essentially require doctoral preparation for the four APRN roles — Nurse Practitioners, Clinical Nurse Specialists, Nurse Anesthetists, Nurse-Midwives — as well as other nurses engaged in advanced specialty practice. Both post-baccalaureate and post-master's DNP programs are available, with more than 420 nursing schools currently offering this degree. DNP graduates are leaders in the health system and work collaboratively with nurse researchers to implement new nursing science and practice innovations.
- **Research-Focused Doctorate:** The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) represents the highest level of formal education for a career in research and the scholarship of discovery. Program graduates develop new nursing science, serve as leaders of the profession, and educate the next generation of nurses. In the academic setting, the PhD is required for success as a researcher in any discipline, not just nursing. In the scientific arena, the PhD is the beginning preparation

for the development of independence in scientific pursuit. Attainment of the PhD requires a strong scientific emphasis within the discipline; an understanding of the science of related disciplines and translation science; dissemination of innovations; and interprofessional collaboration. Currently, more than 145 nursing schools offer a research-focused doctorate.

- **Emerging Doctoral Programs:** To meet the growing demand for nurse specialists and the evolving needs of the healthcare system, nursing schools are working to expand their portfolio of doctoral program options. Doctoral programs are now available for those new to nursing (entry-level DNP), those seeking dual degrees (PhD-MBA, DNP-MBA), and for doctoral program graduates looking to focus on research or practice (PhD-DNP, DNP-PhD).

- **Post-Doctoral Programs:** Post-doctoral programs provide a bridge for new scientists to become independent, productive researchers who will generate and communicate knowledge fundamental to clinical nursing practice. New scientists embarking on post-doctoral study are expected to develop more depth in an area of science and enhance their expertise and skills for communicating within the scientific community and securing funding for future research. These programs are available at nearly 50 research-intensive schools nationwide.

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Preparation for Specific Nursing Roles

Nurses with graduate degrees serve in a variety of direct and indirect care roles in a wide range of practice arenas. Below is a sampling of career options for master's and doctoral program graduates based on data collected by AACN on the most common majors available at U.S. nursing schools. This is by no means an exhaustive list, and there are no limits on where your graduate nursing education can take you.

Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) provide primary, preventative, and specialty care in a variety of roles in acute and ambulatory care settings. According to the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), "APRNs are RNs who have received advanced education to develop knowledge and skills in areas not usual for RNs, such as diagnosing and managing common acute and chronic diseases, ordering diagnostic tests, prescribing medications, and performing minor procedures." Those considering a career as an APRN may choose from one of four recognized roles:

- **Nurse Practitioners (NPs)**, the largest segment of the APRN workforce, are essential providers of primary and acute care, and are particularly important to providing access to quality health care in underserved areas. NPs provide initial, ongoing, and comprehensive care, which includes taking comprehensive histories; providing physical examinations and other health assessments; and diagnosing, treating, and managing patients with acute and chronic conditions. This care encompasses health promotion, disease prevention, health education, and counseling, as well as disease management. NPs practice autonomously in areas as diverse as family practice, pediatrics, geriatrics, psychiatric/mental health, and women's health care.

- **Clinical Nurse Specialists** (CNSs) specialize in areas of nursing practice that are often defined by a population, setting, or disease type. The CNS is responsible and accountable for diagnosis and treatment of health/illness states, disease management, health promotion, and prevention of illness and risk behaviors among individuals, families, groups, and communities. With a focus on continuous, evidence-based improvement of patient outcomes and nursing care, CNSs clearly demonstrate that their practice reduces healthcare costs among other quality factors. These providers specialize in a number of areas, such as adult health, acute and critical care, and community health among others.
- **Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists** (CRNAs) provide the full spectrum of anesthesia care for individuals across the lifespan. CRNAs provide more than 30 million anesthetics in the U.S. annually and are the sole anesthesia providers in nearly all rural hospitals, affording patients access to trauma stabilization, pain care, and surgical services.
- **Certified Nurse-Midwives** (CNMs) provide a full range of primary healthcare services, including gynecologic care, childbirth, and care of the newborn. Ninety percent of visits to CNMs are for primary and preventive care, which may include addressing reproductive health issues and treating sexually transmitted diseases. This care is provided in diverse settings, including private homes, hospitals, birthing centers, and ambulatory care settings (e.g., private offices, community and public health clinics).

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To date, more than 75% of nursing schools offering APRN programs offer a post-baccalaureate DNP program, while most offer a post-master's degree DNP option as well.

To become an APRN, students must complete an accredited graduate program, pass a national certification examination, and obtain a license to practice in one of the four APRN roles. Programs focus heavily on advanced clinical knowledge and skills that prepare nurses to provide expert patient care in a number of specialty areas. While master's level programs are still available to prepare CNSs, and CNMs, the doctoral degree (DNP) is quickly becoming the standard for preparing APRNs for contemporary nursing practice. To date, more than 75% of nursing schools offering APRN programs offer a post-baccalaureate DNP program, and most also offer a post-master's degree DNP option as well.

Nurse Researchers are scientists who investigate ways to improve healthcare services and patient outcomes. Nurses in this field enhance patient care by translating research findings into practice innovations at the bedside. These specialists are responsible for identifying research questions, conducting studies, analyzing data, solving clinical problems, writing grants, and sharing their findings with the larger healthcare community. According to the National Institute of Nursing Research, a branch of the National Institutes of Health, the work conducted by nurse researchers is essential to building the scientific foundation for clinical nursing practice; preventing disease and disability; managing and eliminating symptoms caused by illness; and enhancing end-of-life and palliative care. Nurse researchers often begin their careers as research assistants, clinical data coordinators, and in other assistive capacities that usually require a master's degree. Doctoral preparation is expected for principal investigators and other senior research roles.



Nurse Educators combine clinical expertise with a passion for teaching. Responsible for preparing new nurses and advancing the development of practicing clinicians, nurse educators possess a solid clinical background, strong communication skills, and a high level of cultural competence. Educators must be flexible enough to adapt curriculum and teaching methods in response to innovations in nursing science and ongoing changes in the practice environment. Within this role, these professionals enjoy opportunities to conduct research, publish articles in scholarly journals, speak at nursing conferences, serve as consultants to education and healthcare institutions, write grant proposals, shape public policy, and engage in community service. Given the shortage of nurse faculty, the job outlook for those seeking careers in nursing education is bright with a growing demand for individuals needed to teach in schools of nursing, hospitals, public health agencies, and other settings.

Preparation for the nurse educator role varies by role and teaching site. Nurses with master's preparation are needed to serve as instructors in the practice setting, clinical preceptors, staff development officers, and faculty in associate degree

Clinical Nurse Leaders (CNLs) are prepared in master's degree programs to oversee the care coordination for patients, assess risks, develop quality improvement strategies, facilitate team communication, and implement evidence-based solutions at the unit level.

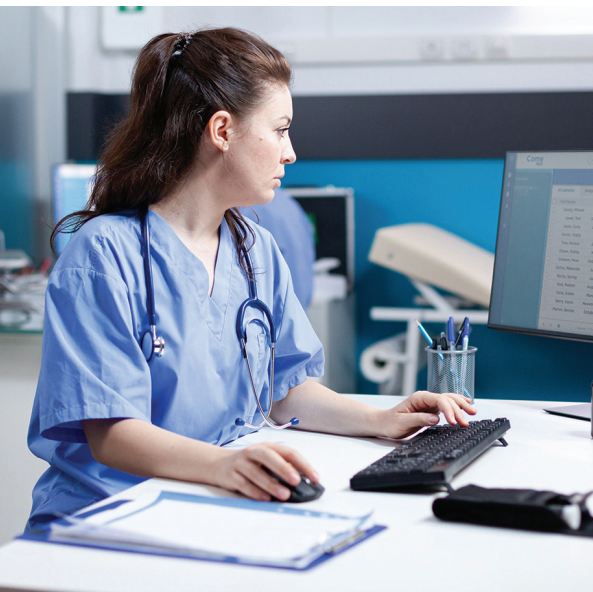
and allied nursing programs. Nurses seeking full-time faculty positions in four-year colleges and universities should pursue doctoral preparation. Future faculty pursuing a master's or doctoral degree are advised to specialize in a clinical area or research within the discipline, not the process of teaching. Individuals pursuing full-time faculty roles should have additional preparation in the art and science of teaching (i.e., pedagogy, curriculum development, student assessment) to better convey their clinical mastery to nursing students. This additional preparation may occur in formal course work as part of a clinically-focused doctoral or master's program, or completed separately from the graduate degree.

Clinical Nurse Leaders (CNLs) are prepared in master's degree programs to oversee the care coordination for patients, assess risks, develop quality improvement strategies, facilitate team communication, and implement evidence-based solutions at the unit level. Nurses looking to provide direct care services while exercising clinical judgment, systems improvement, patient advocacy, and communication skills often flourish in this role. CNLs by definition are leaders, but this leadership occurs at the point of care. This role is not focused on nursing administration or management. CNLs are typically found at the bedside or providing direct patient care in other settings where they collaborate with other members of the healthcare team to provide a safe environment for patients where needs are prioritized and individualized. Students graduating from CNL programs may complete their role preparation by pursuing certification through the Commission on Nurse Certification. CNL[®] certification is a mark of excellence that lets employers, patients, and colleagues know that the CNL possesses the requisite knowledge and skills to practice in this unique capacity.

Nurse Administrators serve in a variety of managerial and leadership capacities in all practice environments. These nursing professionals facilitate and deliver quality patient care while coordinating actions in the workplace and managing a team of nurses. A nurse administrator may run a small team of nurses, several nursing units, an entire department, or an entire health system. These nurses are well-versed in nursing practice as well as in administrative procedures. Nurses drawn to this specialty typically aspire to be leaders in health care and often seek executive and policy-making roles. Certification programs are available for graduates of nursing administration programs from the American Nurses Credentialing Center and the American Organization for Nursing Leadership.

Public Health Nurses focus on preserving the health and well-being of the public. These specialists are licensed professional nurses who participate in activities related to population health, health promotion, disease prevention and control, and community education. Though their responsibilities vary by role and location, master's- and doctorally-prepared public health nurses often manage clinics in various state and community settings (e.g., immunizations, well-child, health screenings), investigate communicable disease cases to determine sources and implement action necessary to curtail the spread of disease; analyze data to identify needs and service gaps for individuals, families, and communities; provide education regarding disease control and prevention as well as general preventive health care to individuals and groups; and implement programs that address environmental and population health risks. These nurses work collaboratively with community leaders, government officials, teachers, parents, and other providers in areas related to community and population health.

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Nurse Informaticists seek to improve information management and communications in nursing to maximize efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance the quality of patient care. The American Nurses Association defines nursing informatics as “a specialty that integrates nursing science, computer science, and information science to manage and communicate data, information, and knowledge in nursing practice. Nursing informatics facilitates the integration of data, information

and knowledge to support patients, nurses, and other providers in their decision-making in all roles and settings.” Informatics specialists must understand the nursing process, so they can design systems that will solve problems facing patient care. After completing a bachelor’s degree in nursing, many nurse informaticists obtain a master’s or doctoral degree in nursing depending upon their career aspirations.

Public Policy: Nurses in this arena work to shape public policy at the federal, state, and local levels. These professionals use their nursing knowledge to advise legislators on healthcare policy, develop legislation, and consult on nursing-related issues. Policy nurses provide expert analysis of the potential and current impact of government policies on healthcare concerns. These specialists work with government policy-making bodies, think tanks, nursing schools, national associations, special interest groups, and with other stakeholder organizations.

Nursing is a dynamic, evolving profession that presents limitless career opportunities for nurses with graduate degrees. Beyond the roles mentioned above, nurses are breaking fresh ground as specialists in forensics, case management, military nursing, school nursing, genetics/genomics, and other emerging practice areas. Today's nurse experts are working as entrepreneurs, authors, consultants, attorneys, legislators, communicators, and in numerous other roles. For an extensive list of nursing specialties, including an overview of academic requirements, see the Discover Nursing website at <https://nursing.jnj.com/specialty>.

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Insider Tips for Choosing the Right Graduate Program

Now that you've decided to advance your nursing education, it's important for you to do your research to make sure you choose the right program that fits your individual needs. Here are some important questions to ask and have answered before making your final decision:

Q What is required in terms of undergraduate grade point average, entrance testing (i.e., GRE), and prerequisites?

These basic questions will help you determine if your academic background is a good match with the institutions you are considering.

Q How long is the program, what is the credit load, and are full- and part-time study options available?

Understanding the program structure and completion-time requirements up front is important to setting your expectations. Keep in mind that shorter programs are often more rigorous and may not always fit your needs.

Q Are education programs offered online, face-to-face, and/or in a hybrid format?

Be sure to assess your own learning style preferences when selecting a course delivery option.

Q Are master's and DNP programs accredited by one of the nation's specialty nursing program accreditors – the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), the Accrediting Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN), or the Commission for Nursing Education Accreditation (CNEA)?

The strong majority of graduate nursing programs are CCNE-accredited. PhD programs in nursing, as in other fields, are not accredited. However, the PhD-granting institution should be accredited.

Q Does the faculty possess expertise that matches your academic, practice, and research interests?

A good match will help to guarantee strong clinical experiences in your primary interest areas.

Q Are clinical learning opportunities or preceptorships available in your chosen specialty area?

Having relevant clinical experiences is critical to your educational development.

Q If you are considering a master's degree, is the program structured to transition students seamlessly into a doctoral nursing program?

Though maybe not a current goal, ensuring easy articulation may facilitate and inspire future doctoral-level study.

Q If you are considering an APRN program, are faculty actively practicing?

Faculty with one foot in the practice environment may be better equipped to understand the expectations of contemporary nursing practice.

Q Are APRN program graduates eligible for certification from one of the national certifying bodies for APRNs?

This is a fundamentally important requirement for licensure to practice as an APRN.

Q Where are graduates finding jobs and what percentage have job offers at the completion of their studies?

Knowing these answers will help to determine employer satisfaction with program graduates as well as future job prospects.

Q Does the institution offer support in finding positions after completing your program of study?

Many schools have career centers that assist students with resume writing, practice interviews, job fairs, and alumni networking to help them secure new jobs after graduation.

Q Is financial aid available for graduate students and in what form (e.g., loans, scholarships, traineeships)?

Do not assume that a graduate nursing degree is beyond your means. Hundreds of scholarships, grants, and loan programs are available to nursing students pursuing advanced education.

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Prospective graduate students are strongly encouraged to contact nursing schools early in their decision-making process to determine specific program entry requirements, as they vary from school to school. Feel free to visit, call, or email faculty and admissions staff to discover more about particular specialties as well as career horizons in nursing.

Most grant and loan programs administered by the U.S. Department of Education, such as Perkins Loans, PLUS Loans, and Stafford Loans, are managed through the nursing school's financial aid office.

Financing Your Graduate Education

Now that you have selected the right program, how are you going to pay for nursing school? Fortunately, a variety of financial aid options are available to those new to nursing as well as RNs looking to advance their education to the master's or doctoral level.

The first place to go when seeking funding is the financial aid office at your chosen school of nursing. Most grant and loan programs administered by the U.S. Department of Education, such as Perkins Loans, PLUS Loans, and Stafford Loans, are managed through the nursing school's financial aid office. Eligibility for some programs, including Perkins Loans, is based on financial need. In order to receive any assistance through these programs, you must complete a **Free Application for Federal Student Aid or FAFSA** online at <https://studentaid.gov>.

Schools of nursing manage a variety of scholarship and loan programs for students pursuing graduate nursing degrees. Some programs do not require repayment while traditional loan programs have a payback requirement. Other programs also may require a post-graduation service commitment. Funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration, these programs include the **Nurse Faculty Loan Program, Advance Nurse Education Traineeships, Nurse Anesthetist Traineeships, and Nursing Student Loan Program**. Because not all schools of nursing offer these specific funding opportunities, you should check first with the financial aid departments at the institutions you are considering attending.

In addition to school-managed options, graduate students may apply directly for funding through a variety of federal programs. Here is a sampling of opportunities available through the Bureau of Health Professions:

- ***Nurse Loan Repayment and Scholarship Programs***

support current students and new graduates. These programs include:

Loan Repayment: Repays up to 85% of nursing student loans in return for at least three years of practice in a designated healthcare facility with a critical shortage of nurses or service as a faculty member at a school of nursing.

Scholarship: Offers individuals who are enrolled or accepted for enrollment as full-time nursing students the opportunity to apply for scholarship funds. Upon graduation, scholarship recipients are required to work in a healthcare facility with a critical shortage of nurses for at least 2 years.

- ***The Faculty Loan Repayment Program*** provides loan repayment for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds who serve as faculty at eligible health professions schools for a minimum of 2 years.
- ***The Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students Program*** provides scholarships to full-time students from disadvantaged backgrounds who demonstrate financial need.

Some states have developed programs that offer loan forgiveness for nursing faculty or have proposed legislation to provide funding assistance to nurses pursuing advanced roles. To find out if a program is available in your state or if one is being considered, contact your state board of nursing.

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In addition to government-sponsored financial aid programs, RNs are encouraged to take advantage of employer-sponsored programs that enable nursing personnel to continue their education and complete graduate degrees. Be sure to check with the human resources department to see what programs are available at your practice site. Finally, many private foundations and corporate sponsors offer funding opportunities specifically for nurses seeking graduate degrees. AACN has compiled a directory of some of these opportunities online at www.aacnnursing.org/students/scholarships-financial-aid.

Supporting Your Entry into Graduate Nursing Education

AACN is committed to providing resources and guidance to nursing students considering graduate study. The association's Web site — www.aacnnursing.org — contains a wealth of useful information that will help you assess your nursing education options, including:

- A comprehensive directory of affiliated schools of nursing with search capabilities to local specific graduate program options.
- An extensive financial aid section, including specific programs for graduate nursing students.
- Access to the Graduate Nursing Student Academy, which provides guidance, resources, programming, and leadership development opportunities for nursing students in master's and doctoral programs. Membership is free. To start taking advantage of these resources, explore www.aacnnursing.org/students/gnsa to sign up.
- A link to NursingCAS, nursing's centralized application service, which facilitates applications to multiple schools of nursing.

In addition to AACN, the following resources are also available to you to help guide your career and nursing program search:

- ***Johnson & Johnson's Discovery Nursing:***
www.discovernursing.com
Developed to generate strong interest in nursing careers, this information-rich site provides clear advice on getting into nursing school, paying for your education, and selecting the nursing specialty that fits your interests.
- ***ExploreHealthCareers.org:***
www.explorehealthcareers.org
This online clearinghouse gives students reliable information about nursing and the health professions, including links to career profiles, enrichment programs, financial aid resources, and current issues in health care.
- ***NursingCAS.org:***
www.nursingcas.org
AACN's Nursing Centralized Application Service (NursingCAS) allows students to easily apply and research over 2,500 nursing degree options at nearly 300 participating schools nationwide with one online application. Visit the NursingCAS application to explore a variety of graduate nursing degree programs, learn more about individual admission requirements, and find the best-fit program for you.



Bibliography

AACN Position Statements and White Papers

www.aacnnursing.org/news-data/position-statements-white-papers

- The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education
- AACN Position Statement on the Practice Doctorate in Nursing
- The Research-Focused Doctoral Program in Nursing: Pathways to Excellence
- The Preferred Vision of the Professoriate in Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Programs
- Competencies and Curricular Expectations for Clinical Nurse Leader Education and Practice

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Web Resources Referenced in this Guide

Nursing Program Accrediting Bodies

Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education:

www.aacnnursing.org/ccne-accreditation

Accrediting Commission for Education in Nursing:

www.acenursing.org

Commission for Nursing Education Accreditation:

<https://cnea.nln.org>

Resources for Specific Nursing Roles

Certified Nurse Midwives: **www.midwife.org**

Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists:

www.aana.com/become-a-crna

Clinical Nurse Leaders: **www.aacnnursing.org/cnl**

Clinical Nurse Specialists: **www.nacns.org**

Nurse Administrators: **www.aonl.org**

Nurse Educators: **www.nursesource.org/nurse_educator.html**

Nurse Informaticists: **www.allianceni.org**

Nurse Practitioners: **www.aanp.org/about/all-about-nps/whats-a-nurse-practitioner**

Nurse Researchers: www.ninr.nih.gov

Public Health Nurses: www.phnurse.org/what-is-a-phn-

Certification and Regulation

American Nurses Credentialing Center:

www.nursingworld.org/ancc

Certification Organizations for the APRN Roles:

www.aprnlace.org

Commission on Nurse Certification (CNL Certification):

www.aacnnursing.org/cnl

National Council of State Boards of Nursing:

www.ncsbn.org

General Information about Nursing Careers

Graduate Nursing Student Academy Career Board:

www.aacnnursing.org/students/gnsa

Occupational Outlook for Nurses:

- Registered Nurses:

www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/registered-nurses.htm

- Advanced Practice Registered Nurses:

www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/nurse-anesthetists-nurse-midwives-and-nurse-practitioners.htm

National Sample Survey of Registered Nurses:

<https://bhw.hrsa.gov/data-research/access-data-tools/national-sample-survey-registered-nurses>

Nurse Salary Surveys

The American Nurse: Trends and Salary Survey Results:

www.myamericannurse.com/trends-and-salary-results

Nurse.com: Nurse Salary and Work-Life Report:

www.nurse.com/nursing-salary-research-report





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655 K Street, NW, Suite 750
Washington, DC 20001
202-463-6930
www.aacnursing.org