



PennState

Ross and Carol Nese
College of Nursing

**Pre-Licensure
Nursing Program
B.S.N.**





PennState

Ross and Carol Nese College of Nursing

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For more information: www.nursing.psu.edu

Please call: 814-863-2229

General Bachelor of Science Handbook: www.nursing.psu.edu/student-handbooks

Student Success Center

Email: nursing@psu.edu

Visit us on facebook: www.facebook.com/psunursingstudentsuccess

Visit us on Instagram: www.instagram.com/psunursingstudentsuccess

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Resources

Admissions www.psu.edu/admission/undergraduate

Bursar www.bursar.psu.edu

Disability Services www.equity.psu.edu/offices/student-disability-resources

Housing and Dining (on-campus) www.liveon.psu.edu/university-park

Hershey Housing Office housing@pennstatehealth.psu.edu

Monday-Friday, 8:00AM-4:30PM

Penn State Learning www.pennstatelearning.psu.edu

Student Aid www.psu.edu/costs-aid

814-865-5471

814-865-6528

814-863-1807

814-865-7051 (housing)

814-863-1255 (dining)

717-531-8210

814-865-1841

814-865-6301

Why Penn State Ross and Carol Nese College of Nursing?

www.nursing.psu.edu

Research linking better-educated nurses to more successful patient care has prompted a national trend requiring nurses to earn a bachelor's degree in nursing for competitive job seeking and security. The Ross and Carol Nese College of Nursing is responding to this new demand by producing well-trained registered nurses with B.S.N. degrees. Penn State prepares more students each year for nursing careers than any other program in Pennsylvania.

What are the advantages of choosing Penn State Nese College of Nursing?

- ◆ A premium academic program with broad liberal arts courses, strong foundational science classes, and an innovative nursing curriculum
- ◆ Student-centered focus, with an approximate 1:8 nursing faculty to student ratio
- ◆ Nursing students are assigned a professional academic adviser for four years and are paired with a Faculty Mentor for their third and fourth years
- ◆ Penn State students begin working with patients during second year, one year sooner than many other universities offering similar programs
- ◆ Access to cutting-edge medical research in a variety of healthcare topics
- ◆ Exclusive health-related study abroad programs available only to nursing students
- ◆ Direct admit program with no second application for admission to major
- ◆ Nursing students from University Park spend either third or fourth year at world-renowned Hershey Medical Center, a Level I Trauma facility
- ◆ Penn State nursing students accumulate nearly 900 clinical hours by the time they graduate
- ◆ 93% first-time pass rate on NCLEX (National Council Licensure Examination) for Penn State Nursing students in 2025
- ◆ The Ross and Carol Nese College of Nursing is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE)
- ◆ Penn State Nursing students' clinicals take place in our technologically advanced simulation lab, nursing homes, hospitals, and various other settings



How can you prepare for nursing now?

While in high school, there are many things you can do to help learn if nursing is right for you.

- ◆ Maintain a high GPA
- ◆ Develop solid organizational, test-taking and study skills
- ◆ Take algebra, geometry, and other higher-level mathematics courses
- ◆ Complete social science courses, like psychology or sociology
- ◆ Obtain certification in first-aid and CPR
- ◆ Volunteer or shadow a medical professional at a hospital, nursing home, clinic or doctor's office
- ◆ Talk to family members or friends who are nurses, or interview nurses in your community
- ◆ Join HOSA—Future Health Professionals, or a similar organization, if offered at your school
- ◆ Select anatomy, physiology and chemistry classes

What opportunities are there in nursing careers?

Here is a list of just a *few* career paths available to graduates of Penn State Nese College of Nursing:

- ◆ **Critical Care** - work with the critically ill or injured in the intensive care unit
- ◆ **Neonatal** - provide complete care for newborns: weighing, feeding and monitoring health
- ◆ **Travel** - take on short-term assignments to temporarily fill a staff opening; can be anywhere in the U.S.
- ◆ **Oncology** - care for cancer patients
- ◆ **Emergency Room** - work in a fast-paced environment with critical, life-threatening cases
- ◆ **Doctor's Office** - work one-on-one with patients, taking vital signs, collecting information, doing blood work and giving injections
- ◆ **Cruise Ship** - provide day-to-day health care to passengers and crew members
- ◆ **Psychiatric** - assess mental health, monitor and administer psychotropic medications
- ◆ **Hospice** - care for people with terminal illnesses
- ◆ **Respiratory** - promote pulmonary health for individuals and families
- ◆ **Insurance** - evaluate patient claims and teach classes to insurance agents

SUGGESTED ACADEMIC PLAN for B.S.N. Degree in Nursing (NURS/GNURS)

for students at Altoona, Erie/Behrend, Fayette, Mont Alto, Schuylkill, Scranton, and University Park

Effective Fall 2023/ See IMPORTANT NOTES on back.

Semester 1	Credits	Semester 2	Credits
BIOL 161 & 162 (GN) Anatomy & Physiology I (Lecture & Lab)	4	BIOL 163 & 164 (GN) Anatomy & Physiology II (Lecture & Lab)	4
ENGL 15 (GWS) or ENGL 30 (GWS) Rhetoric & Composition/Honors Rhetoric & Composition	3	HD FS 129 (GS) Introduction to Human Development and Family Studies	3
PSYCH 100 (GS) Introductory Psychology	3	NUTR 251 (GHW) Introductory Principles of Nutrition	3
NURS 100 First-Year Seminar (if required by campus)	1	CAS 100A, CAS 100B, <u>or</u> CAS 100C (GWS) Effective Speech	3
Humanities (GH) (<u>NOT</u> Integrative Studies)	3	Quantification (GQ) (selected MATH based upon ALEKS score)	3
Arts (GA) (<u>NOT</u> Integrative Studies)	3		
Total Credits:	17	Total Credits:	16
Semester 3	Credits	Semester 4	Credits
CHEM 130 (GN) <u>or</u> CHEM 110 (GN) & CHEM 111 (GN) Introduction to General, Organic, and Biochemistry /Chemical Principles with lab	3-4	SOC 1 (GS) <u>or</u> SOC 5 (GS) Intro to Sociology/Social Problems	3
MICRB 106 (GN) Elementary Microbiology	3	STAT 200 (GQ) <u>or</u> STAT 250 (GQ) Elementary Statistics/ Introduction to Biostatistics	3-4
MICRB 107 (GN) Elementary Microbiology Laboratory	1	NURS 225 Pathophysiology (<u>PATHO</u>)	3
NURS 250 (US) Professional Role Development I: <u>Intro</u> to Professional Issues in Nursing Practice and Nursing <u>Informatics</u>	2	NURS 230 Introduction to the <u>Fundamentals</u> of Nursing	4
NURS 251 <u>Health Assessment</u>	3	Integrative Studies: Inter-domain course*	3
Elective	2-3		
Total Credits:	14-16	Total Credits:	16-17
Semester 5	Credits	Semester 6	Credits
NURS 301 Nursing Care of the Adult Client Requiring Medical-Surgical Intervention (<u>MED-SURG</u>)	4	NURS 200W Principles of Nursing <u>Research</u> and Evidence-Based Practice	3
NURS 305 Introduction to Pharmacological Concepts (<u>PHARM</u>)	3	NURS 302 Clinical Judgement in Nursing (<u>MED-SURG Immersion</u>)	1
NURS 310 Therapeutic Nursing Care of the Older Adult Client in a Variety of Settings (<u>GERO</u>)	3	NURS 306 Nursing Care of Children and Adolescents (<u>PEDS</u>)	3
NURS 350 Professional Role Development II: <u>Ethics</u>, Legal and Genetic Issues	2	NURS 320 Nursing Care of the Childbearing Family and Gynecological Client (<u>OB</u>)	3
Integrative Studies: Inter-domain course*	3	ENGL 202A, ENGL 202B, ENGL 202C, or ENGL 202D (GWS) Effective Writing	3
		Elective	3
Total Credits:	15	Total Credits:	16
Semester 7	Credits	Semester 8	Credits
NURS 405A Nursing Care of the Adult Client with <u>Complex Health Problems: Part A (MED-SURG)</u>	4	NURS 405B Nursing Care of the Adult Client with <u>Complex Health Problems: Part B (MED-SURG)</u>	4
NURS 450A Professional Role Development III: <u>Leadership</u> and Management	2	NURS 450B Professional Role Development III: Clinical <u>Capstone</u>	3
NURS 415 (US; IL) <u>Community</u> and Family Health Nursing	4	NURS 420 <u>Mental Health</u> Nursing (<u>PSYCH</u>)	4
Elective	3	NURS 480 Preparation for Nursing Licensure Exam (<u>NCLEX Prep</u>)	2
Total Credits:	13	Total Credits:	13

See IMPORTANT NOTES on back

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IMPORTANT NOTES

1. GWS, GHW, GQ, GN, GA, GH, and GS are attributes used to identify General Education requirements.
2. **Bold Type** indicates courses requiring a quality grade of C or better. All **NURS** courses define “C” as 75% or higher. See course syllabi for grade equivalents in other courses. See additional notes below.
 - a) See Nese College of Nursing Grading Scale and Academic Progression Policy in the B.S.N. Nursing Handbook at <https://www.nursing.psu.edu/student-handbooks/>
 - i. Clarification of Nursing Progression Policy: Each prerequisite requirement permits two attempts. For example, STAT 200 and STAT 250 are the same prerequisite requirement; CHEM 130 and CHEM 110/111 are the same prerequisite requirement, etc.
 - b) Most NURS courses, major requirements/prerequisites, GQ and GHW are all “C”-required courses. Elective courses, GA, GH, and the NURS 100 FYS course are not “C”-required.
3. *Students should consult with their Academic Adviser to select appropriate courses. Within the 30 credits of required General Education Domain courses, students must complete 6 credits of Integrative Studies (Interdomain, e.g., “dual- domain”) courses. Interdomain courses are designated with suffixes N (Interdomain) or Q (Honors Interdomain).
4. In addition, students must complete at least 3 credits each of single-domain General Education Arts (GA) and General Education Humanities (GH) outside of Integrative studies. Effective Summer 2018+.
5. BIOL 161 and BIOL 163 must be passed with a quality grade of C or better to progress to 2xx-level nursing courses. All 2xx clinical courses must be passed with a C or higher to progress to 3xx clinical courses, and all 3xx clinical courses must be passed with a C or higher to progress to 4xx clinical courses. Students who are unsuccessful in one or more courses will fall out of sequence and receive an individualized plan of study.
6. **Scheduling Patterns:** NURS courses are offered only in the semester indicated with the following exceptions: NURS 200W is generally offered spring only, but an Honors section is offered in fall semester which is sometimes opened to non- Schreyer students to fill. NURS 415 and 420 may be taken in fall OR spring of fourth year.
7. **Program Notes:** Third and fourth years include 6-12 hours of clinical experience per week. Students studying at UP will spend one (either third or fourth year, selected through a modified lottery) year or two years (years three and four) in residence at Hershey Medical Center (HMC). Otherwise, students at all campuses will attend clinicals within 50 miles of their campus location.
8. **Academic Advising Notes:** MATH 21 (or an ALEKS score of 30+) is a prerequisite for CHEM 130. MATH 22 (or an ALEKS score of 46+) is a prerequisite for CHEM 110. If a student places higher than MATH 22 (score of 61+) on the ALEKS Assessment, any GQ may be scheduled. Students who complete Calculus in high school receive an ALEKS of 101 and may schedule any GQ.
9. ***Italic Bold Type*** indicates courses requiring a quality grade of C or better and that satisfy both major and General Education requirements. Underlined courses are common abbreviations or names for courses.
10. “US, IL”, and “US; IL” are attributes used to designate courses that satisfy University United States/International Cultures requirements. These University requirements are integrated into the Nursing curriculum (NURS 250 and NURS 415) and do not require additional courses to be taken.
11. “W” is the attribute used to designate courses that satisfy the University Writing Across the Curriculum requirement.
12. Schreyer Honors College first-year students at University Park take ENGL 137H/CAS 137H in the fall semester and ENGL 138T/CAS 138T in the spring semester. These courses carry the GWS designation and replace both ENGL 15/ENGL 30H and CAS 100A/CAS 100B/CAS 100C. Each course is 3 credits.

Frequently Asked Questions for the General Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing

We have non-negotiable aspects of our program that we label as “vital points” because they are especially important to understand about the Penn State Nursing program. A summary of those vital points is listed below. As you read through this information packet, look for the red cross symbol for a more detailed explanation of each.

VITAL POINTS

The REALLY short version:

-  **Hershey is non-negotiable.** Every student goes to Hershey for one academic year. Exceptions to this requirement are made for curricular reasons. Exceptions are not made for personal reasons.
-  You must have a valid driver's license and vehicle by your fourth semester to travel to clinical and capstone sites.
-  Capstone will entail working evenings, nights, and/or weekends while still attending classes.
-  College is expensive, and it is important to choose a path to nursing you can afford from the beginning. Don't count on scholarships and grants as your sole funding, as they will not cover the cost of your attendance. Have a plan for how you will pay for college before you arrive on campus and incur debt.

What is the General Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing?

The Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.) General Option is a 4-year program that combines foundational science and liberal arts courses with nursing courses that include hands-on experience in clinical settings. Graduates are prepared to sit for the national exam (NCLEX-RN) for licensure as registered nurses.

Where is the Nursing Program offered?

The 4-year B.S.N. is offered at University Park (includes Hershey Medical Center campus), Altoona, Behrend (Erie), Schuylkill, and Scranton. If you have questions about our campus programs, please arrange a visit to your campus of interest or contact Jennifer Zeanchock, jrz117@psu.edu or 814-865-1643.

Can I change campuses?

Students may not change campus locations for the nursing degree. Students must complete the program at the campus where they begin. However, students admitted to University Park will spend one year at the Hershey Medical Center campus as part of the University Park program.

NEW!! Students can select two years at Hershey when you apply!

Beginning with the 2025 application year, students will be able to select a 2+2 option on the Nursing application. With this option, years one and two will be completed at University Park while years three and four will be spent entirely at the Hershey Medical Center and surrounding area. Lock in the Hershey Experience x2 from the beginning and set yourself up for an incredible nursing education journey!

Is the Nursing Program accredited?

Yes, the B.S.N. program is accredited by the CCNE:

Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE)

655 K Street, NW

Suite 750

Washington, DC 20001

202-463-6930

How competitive is the Nursing Program?

Admission is competitive. In a typical year, The Ross and Carol Nese College of Nursing receives upwards of 7,000 applications, with the intent to yield 170 students at University Park and an additional 300 students across the other campuses where the B.S.N. program is offered.

Are students admitted directly into the Nursing Program?

Yes, first-year applicants are admitted directly into the Nursing Program. Transfer students are eligible to apply to the four-year B.S.N. program at one of the four Commonwealth Campuses through a competitive entrance-to-major process. Transfer students should contact their campus of interest to discuss admission requirements.

CAMPUS	HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS OR ADULTS WITH LESS THAN 18 COLLEGE CREDITS	PENN STATE STUDENTS OR ADULTS WITH 18 OR MORE COLLEGE CREDITS
Altoona, Behrend (Erie), Schuylkill, Scranton	First-year direct admission into the major	Must have earned C or higher in Anatomy and Physiology (or A&P I and II) and at least 9 other non-remedial credits
University Park	First-year direct admission into the major	Not eligible for admission
		Entrance to major information

When does the Nursing Program begin?

The program begins every year in the fall. There is no spring admission. However, students may elect to begin University coursework in the summer. First-year nursing students at University Park have the option to participate in the following unique summer opportunity:

- LEAP (Learning Edge Academic Program) The LEAP Summer Start Experience is a 6-week summer bridge program open to first-year students admitted to the University Park campus. LEAP provides an opportunity for new students to start their Penn State career in a small-college atmosphere within the larger University. Students enroll in two courses reserved for first-year students, can elect to live in an academic interest-based learning community, and have an upper-class student mentor to guide them through the summer session. LEAP will complete the first-year seminar requirement for students in the College of Nursing. More information can be found at www.leap.psu.edu. The Nese College of Nursing does not recommend specific LEAP courses, but Nursing students may find the sections offering ENGL 15, CAS 100, HDFS 129 or STAT 200 particularly helpful in completing their degree requirements.

Will applying for the summer semester at University Park improve my chance of being admitted to the Nursing Program?

Students applying to the Nursing Program may be considered for admission to the summer session at the University Park campus; however, application to the summer session does not provide an advantage towards being accepted into the Nursing Program at University Park.

What are the admission requirements?

The following high school courses (or a college equivalent) are required:

- four years of English
- three years of science
- three years of math (algebra, geometry, or trigonometry)
- three years of social studies/art/humanities combined
- two years of a single world language other than English. Students lacking two years of the same world language must complete one course in a world language within the first two years at Penn State.

What are the average SAT or ACT scores and the average high school GPA for students offered admission into Penn State?

The ranges in the chart below represent the middle 50 percent of students offered admission to Penn State for Summer/Fall 2025 – they are not cutoffs or averages. Nursing students typically place in the upper end of these ranges. Additional information is available at www.psu.edu/resources/first-year-students/eligibility.

GPA	University Park	Commonwealth Campuses
High School GPA	3.63-3.94	3.16-3.80

Based on an unweighted 4.0 scale

Exam	University Park	Commonwealth Campuses
SAT Scores	1330-1480	1130-1350

Scores computed based on a 1600-point scale.

ACT Exam	University Park	Commonwealth Campuses
Composite ACT	30-34	25-31

Penn State does not require or accept scores from the optional Science portion of the Enhanced ACT exam.

First-Year applicants to Penn State can choose whether to submit SAT or ACT scores as part of their applications. More information can be found at www.psu.edu/resources/first-year-students/eligibility.

What is the deadline for application?

The deadline for application for the Nursing Program is December 1 and admission is competitive. Late applications are typically considered on a space-available basis only. We recommend that students strive to meet the Admissions Early Decision deadline of November 1.

Who makes admissions decisions?

Penn State admissions decisions are made through our centralized Undergraduate Admissions Office (UAO) for all Penn State campuses and programs. The Ross and Carol Nese College of Nursing does not evaluate applications. If you have questions about your application or the decision-making process, please contact the UAO by email, admissions@psu.edu, phone at 814-865-5471, or through your MyPennState account.

Is special housing available for first-year nursing students at University Park?

First-year students are required to live on campus and may be assigned to any residence hall. However, there are Living Learning Communities (LLC) that are available to students who would like to live and learn with classmates who share their interests. Students live with other members of their LLC in close-knit communities ("houses") located in the residence halls, where they have the opportunity to participate in field trips, group dinners, and other social and educational activities. LLC options are limited. Contact Penn State Housing Services www.liveon.psu.edu/university-park/living-learning-communities for more information if you are interested.

How much is tuition?

Tuition and fees and a tuition calculator are available at www.tuition.psu.edu. Consistent with other academic institutions, Penn State charges lower-division and upper-division tuition based on credits earned. Students with 59.1 earned credits will be charged upper-division tuition, which is based on the primary campus designation and the program of study. Information on these rates for the current academic year can be found at www.tuition.psu.edu/student-tuition-calculators by selecting applicable state residency and campus. Tuition and fee rates are subject to change.

Are there any additional costs or requirements?

1. Nursing students must purchase a personal laptop computer to participate in classroom-based assignments and Nursing examinations throughout the program.
2. In addition to standard tuition and fees, Nursing students may expect to spend approximately \$5,000 or more throughout the program for textbooks, uniforms, curriculum support materials (such as ATI software and simulation lab supplies), and clinical compliances, which include child abuse and criminal clearances, fingerprinting, liability insurance, drug screening, a completed physical, and other costs.
3. Clinical sites require anyone working on their premises to be appropriately vetted. In the Nese College of Nursing, we refer to these requirements as “compliances”. Each May following the nursing students’ first year of enrollment, students must complete the following requirements:
 - Pass an annual physical examination, which includes one-time antibody titers, vaccination history, and immunizations. Please be aware that insurance may or may not provide coverage for these medical requirements
 - **Students must be fully vaccinated to participate in clinicals.** COVID-19 vaccination is strongly recommended.*
 - Complete Pennsylvania and federal criminal background checks (fingerprinting is required and students must be free of felony convictions in the past ten years)**
 - Complete Pennsylvania child abuse background checks
 - Provide proof of medical coverage (student insurance policies are available)
 - Purchase professional liability (malpractice) insurance
 - Complete the American Heart Association Healthcare Provider CPR course
 - Complete a 10-point drug test

All program requirements must be met and submitted on time each year to progress in the program.

Estimated Cost Sheet for Undergraduate Nursing Students

ITEM	2 ND Year Student	3 rd Year Student	4 th Year Student
Uniform and Clinical Items (one time)	\$611.00	-	-
Estimated Compliance Expenses (not including personal health insurance)	\$364.95	\$189.95	\$314.95
Assessment Technologies Institute (ATI)	\$1175.00	\$940.00	\$940.00
ExamSoft (\$33.34 each semester, FA/SP)	\$66.68	\$66.68	\$66.68
TOTAL	\$2217.63	\$1196.63	\$1321.63

NOTE: Total does not include tuition and fees, room and board, textbooks, laptop, or a car.

**Nursing students must be fully vaccinated with boosters or risk missing clinical and consequently not earning the BSN. This is because all or almost all our clinical sites require student nurses to be fully vaccinated and we cannot override their decisions; they're protecting their populations, you, and themselves. Be aware that our contracted clinical sites may change their current requirements at any time. If unvaccinated, the site will require the student to either wear a mask or request the student receive the most recent vaccines to participate and interact with their patient population. Students may have the opportunity to request a religious exemption through the University's OEOA office, but that doesn't guarantee a clinical site will accept the approval from Penn State. Without clinical hours, you cannot complete a nursing degree or obtain an RN license.*

***Questions regarding how criminal history affects nursing licensure should be directed to the student's state board of nursing.*

What financial aid is available?

If you are enrolled as a degree-seeking student, you may be eligible for various federal and state grants or loans. Contact the Office of Student Aid at www.psu.edu/costs-aid for more information.

Completion of the FAFSA form automatically enters students into consideration for scholarships offered by the Nese College of Nursing. Information is available at www.nursing.psu.edu/undergraduate/financial-aid.

The Nese College of Nursing does offer scholarships to selected students who meet demonstrated need and other requirements specific to funding sources. These scholarships are typically offered to students beginning their second year in the nursing program and may or may not be renewable. A few scholarships are offered to students in their first year. In order to be eligible for Nese scholarships, students must only have a FAFSA on file at www.studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa. Other requirements, if needed, are emailed to students via student listserv emails or advertised in the College's newsletter. It is the student's responsibility to look into various hospitals, professional associations, military groups, community or other organizations which may also offer scholarships or low-interest loans.



Finances

College is expensive. Nursing is an expensive major. Students and families must take a hard and realistic look at the cost of tuition, housing, and supplies before committing to any institution. **Too many students arrive at Penn State without a plan for how they will pay for their education, and end up leaving in their first year with thousands of dollars of debt and no degree.** While many students receive scholarships and grant monies, these are not guaranteed, rarely cover the cost of attendance, and are not always renewable.

You have earned your place here, and we hope you join the Penn State Nursing family. However, no institution or program is worth putting yourself into overwhelming debt. There are multiple paths to nursing—CNA and LPN, diploma RN, and associate ASN programs with a plan to complete a BSN as time and finances permit are all viable, and many institutions are less expensive than Penn State. Penn State Commonwealth Campuses offer lower tuition and may be a more affordable option.

Use this tool www.cce.psu.edu to determine your first-year cost of attendance, and know how you will pay for your education before committing. We would rather talk you out of attending Penn State than have you saddled with crippling debt; your peace of mind and financial stability are more important than any program!

How will transfer credits and Advanced Placement (AP) credits fit into the nursing curriculum?

Transfer credits and AP credits may sometimes be applied to general education or elective credits. Admissions determines whether credits from other institutions will be accepted. The Nese College of Nursing determines how these credits are applied towards your degree. These credits will not impact your GPA at Penn State. They have the potential benefit of decreasing course load, which could provide students with the opportunity to explore a minor or other interests if desired. *However, please note that a tuition increase takes place when a student reaches 59.1 credits. Students bringing in credits may reach this tuition "bump" earlier.* Please communicate with the Academic Advising Office if you plan to bring in college-level credits. Additional information on credit for AP exams can be found at www.psu.edu/admission/undergraduate/credit/ap-credit

What and where are clinical courses?

Clinical courses typically involve a lecture and a hands-on component in a clinical setting. Clinical sites may be anywhere within a 50-mile radius of campus. Clinical experiences and schedules vary each semester, but are typically offered in six- to eight-hour blocks between 6:00 A.M. and 9:00 P.M. Monday through Friday (yes, our students have Friday clinical and classes). To avoid conflicts, students should not plan work or other commitments until their course and clinical schedules are complete. Nursing students participate in nearly 900 hours of diverse and educationally rewarding clinical experiences. University Park students spend one or more years (third and/or fourth year) at the Hershey Medical Center Campus. Students must be 18 years of age by September of their second year in the nursing program to participate in the required nursing clinical experiences. Nursing program completion takes a minimum of three years starting with second-year clinicals that are the foundation of all subsequent clinical courses. Therefore, underage students must step out of the nursing program until they turn 18 years old and will consequently be set back a full year. Our state-of-the-art simulation labs provide confidence-building practice to students beginning your third semester. Our labs include:

- Health Assessment/Skills Lab
- Home Health
- Critical Care
- Pediatrics
- Maternity/Newborn
- Advanced Practice Primary Care Lab

Examples of B.S.N. Clinical Sites

- Geisinger-Lewistown Hospital
- Mount Nittany Medical Center
- Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center
- Philhaven Behavioral Healthcare
- The Meadows Psychiatric Center
- University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) Altoona
- Doctors' offices
- Schools, non-profit and community agencies, or prisons
- Assisted living facilities

Will I need to have my own car?

Nursing students must have their own transportation starting in the spring semester of the second year.

Students are responsible for getting themselves to their clinical sites throughout the Nursing Program.



Clinical Experiences: Car and Driver's License

Travel to clinical settings and capstone sites is necessary and not provided by the college, as cost and logistics would be unmanageable. Clinical can be assigned anywhere within a 50-mile radius of University Park (or Hershey, during the Hershey year). **All students must possess a valid driver's license and have full access to a vehicle by their fourth semester when clinical begins in nursing homes. Nursing will not accommodate clinical setting requests as a result of students not having transportation.** Timing and distance to clinical sites may prohibit the use of public transportation. If you anticipate difficulty bringing a vehicle to campus for your use, you may want to consider a college location where public transportation can meet your clinical transportation needs.

Capstone

Nurses work all times of day and year, including evenings, overnights, weekends, and holidays. Capstone is another privileged opportunity not offered by all nursing programs. All fourth-year nursing students will be assigned to a capstone experience in spring where they will work nursing shifts under the supervision of a nursing preceptor. **If the preceptor works weekends, nights, or evenings, you will work weekends, nights, and evenings to complete your capstone hours.** As the College of Nursing is only able to offer capstone sites where we have willing preceptors, we cannot guarantee or change your assigned capstone site or preceptor to avoid working hours outside of the typical business week.

Will I go to Hershey Medical Center?

Hershey Medical Center (HMC) is a Level I Trauma Center for both adult and pediatric populations. Nursing students at University Park are required to spend one academic year living and studying at HMC. In the second year, students are assigned via modified lottery to third or fourth year at HMC. Penn State offers a limited number of student apartments on a first-come basis, or students can find housing in the Hershey area.

Hershey is non-negotiable.

Hershey is a wonderful experience and a privilege afforded to University Park students. Most of our students are excited about their Hershey year and the associated professional and career opportunities. Additionally, the Hershey clinical component of the University Park nursing program allows us to admit cohorts of 160-170. Without Hershey, we would accept half that number, meaning that half of the students here today would not have offers of admission.

Before committing to Penn State nursing, understand that **spending a full academic year at Hershey Medical Center is not negotiable. It is a required part of our program.** As the Hershey year approaches, students may feel some anxiety about leaving the University Park campus. This is normal and expected. Several majors require extensive off-campus experiences, including student teaching, internships, co-op, and study abroad. One huge difference between those experiences and the Hershey year is that nursing students are not going to Hershey alone. They go with half the cohort—over 70 other students! Further, we have an extensive support system of faculty and staff at Hershey, and students retain access to their academic and faculty advisers whether at University Park or Hershey.

Students are asked for their preference in the year they attend Hershey, but are not guaranteed their preference. We make every effort to accommodate as many students as possible, but ultimately the cohort must have half at University Park and half at Hershey in any given year. When a particular year is oversubscribed, we move to a lottery process to even out the cohorts. Third year at Hershey is typically the oversubscribed option.

Nursing allows for curricular exceptions to the Hershey requirement, which is limited to ROTC, Blue Band, Cheerleading, Lionettes Dance Team, and NCAA scholarship athletes who cannot meet their dual obligations otherwise. **Nursing does NOT allow for personal exceptions, including mental health, family, employment, or other circumstances.** Nurses must be flexible and adaptable, able to connect with a variety of people, and feel comfortable in various settings. Students whose mental health concerns are significant enough to preclude Hershey can consider a leave of absence to focus on their health and well-being, which is always the priority, and may return to the program once stable. Students who do not feel prepared to embrace the Hershey experience may want to consider another PSU campus, or another college major or institution.

Hershey Assignment & Lottery Process

Please note that the Hershey assignment process is subject to change without notice. Students are sent a survey in May or June after their first year in nursing. Students may submit their first choice of living at Hershey in third year, fourth year, or both years. Students who submit multiple surveys will be held to the most recent survey time stamp. If student selections do not naturally split the cohort in half, the Office of the Undergraduate Dean utilizes a random lottery to move identified students from the larger group to the smaller. **Hershey year assignments are never guaranteed, and students must be prepared and willing to attend Hershey whenever they are assigned.** Changes in assignment may only be accomplished by swapping with a student who has an alternate assignment and money, goods and services may never be exchanged as part of a Hershey assignment swap.

Are meal plans and housing offered while I'm at Hershey?

Students are responsible for providing their own meals during their time at Hershey. There is not a meal plan option. Grocery stores are within a five- to ten-minute drive. Penn State offers a limited number of student apartments on a first-come basis, or students can find housing in the Hershey area. On-campus student apartments are a short walk to the Hershey Medical Center and each house four nursing students with their own bedroom and a shared bathroom, kitchen, and living area. Students who reside in the Hershey area may also commute. There is no additional fee for parking for students at Hershey.

Am I able to complete the Pre-med program with the nursing degree?

With careful planning and collaboration with the program of interest, it may be possible to complete the Pre-medicine curriculum concurrent to the Nursing Program. The traditional medical model approaches patient health from a disease concept model, while nursing takes a more holistic approach that focuses on patient wellness, support systems and resources. Because the Nursing Program is highly structured, students should discuss any plans for the Pre-medicine curriculum with their Academic Adviser as soon as possible.

Am I able to complete a minor/certificate with the nursing degree?

With careful planning and collaboration with the program of interest, it may be possible to complete a minor or certificate concurrent to the Nursing Program. Because the Nursing Program is highly structured, students should discuss any plans for a minor or certificate with their Academic Adviser as soon as possible. Nursing students must be prepared to prioritize the nursing curriculum over minor or certificate coursework and for the possibility that this may mean *not* completing the entire minor or certificate if it interferes with nursing coursework or clinical rotations.

We are often asked for "typical" minors and certificates completed by Nursing students. Typical minors include [Human Development and Family Studies](#) (HDFS), [Child Maltreatment and Advocacy](#) (CMAS), [Psychology](#) (PSYCH) or [Psychological Sciences](#) (PSYSC). Gaining popularity are [Bioethics Medical Humanities](#) (BMH) and [Global Health](#) (GLBHL), and The Nese College of Nursing offers two Nursing Certificates, [Nursing Forensics](#) and [Nursing Informatics](#), through the World Campus. However, students may complete any minor or certificate available at University Park, provided they meet minor requirements. Work with your adviser to plan out minor or certificate coursework in the nursing curriculum.

Can I specialize?

Upon graduation, Penn State entry-level nurses are prepared to practice as generalists and can work in any number of settings. True specialization requires graduate education.

Are there any social/professional groups for Nursing students?

Penn State offers over 1,200 student groups and organizations. Nursing-specific organizations are listed below. **Students are strongly encouraged to participate in SNAPS in addition to any other organizations that resonate with their interests.** Students are also encouraged to moderate their extracurricular activities, including THON participation, to prioritize their academic performance.

Ross and Carol Nese College of Nursing Student Ambassadors (CONAm)

This student group represents the Ross and Carol Nese College of Nursing and provides a student perspective at information and recruitment events. Ambassadors embody Nursing students of varied interests, activities and backgrounds and volunteer to share their love of Penn State and all things nursing.

The Multicultural Student Nursing Association (MSNA)

MSNA was formed to provide an inclusive environment to multicultural students and allies in the Nursing major. MSNA coordinates social events and educational opportunities that create a safe space for students to strengthen community and develop professional skills for career success. [MSNA Article](#)

Diversity, Inclusion, and Advocacy for Minority Nursing Students (DIAMNS)

DIAMNS aims to create a specialized space for diverse minority nursing students to explore and express their intersectional identities in a supportive environment. DIAMNS specifically plans to emphasize advocacy for underrepresented students, by providing mentorship, resources, and a support system to navigate the unique challenges they may face in the healthcare field.

Sigma Theta Tau

Students with outstanding records of scholarship and leadership are invited to join Sigma Theta Tau, the international honor society for nursing. Penn State is home to the Beta Sigma chapter, one of over 150 chapters of Sigma Theta Tau at colleges and universities worldwide.

SNAPS

Each campus has a chapter of the Student Nurses Association of Penn State (SNAPS), the state-approved organization of the National Student Nurses Association (NSNA). Activities include professional development, community service, outreach, and social activities. See www.nсна.org or www.psusnaps.org for more information.

Can I study abroad?

Nursing students who wish to study abroad have the following options:

- Penn State Nese College of Nursing faculty offer short-term international experiences called “[Embedded Programs](#).” Experiences vary each year. Students are sent information on available opportunities for the upcoming academic year.
- Global Penn State offers experiences during the summer or other breaks. Information can be found at www.global.psu.edu.
- Other opportunities are available through student organizations, such as the PSU Global Brigades. Information on this organization can be found at www.sites.psu.edu/globalbrigades.
- One minor that Nursing students interested in studying abroad may want to consider is the Global Health Minor. This minor allows students to explore health issues and challenges affecting populations across the globe and incorporates a 6-week international “Global Health Fieldwork Experience” course. More information can be found at www.hhd.psu.edu/bbh/undergraduate/global-health-minor.

Due to the sequenced nature of the nursing curriculum, nursing students can complete traditional study abroad only during the summer or other breaks. Students who complete traditional study abroad programs during fall or spring semesters will find themselves a year behind in the curriculum.

How will Penn State prepare me for the NCLEX-RN exam?

The National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN) is the national licensing examination for all registered nurses. Passing this exam after graduation is the final step in becoming a nurse. Penn State prepares nursing students early for their licensing examination by introducing Assessment Technologies Institute (ATI) Nursing Education beginning second year. The ATI software incorporates practice exams, individualized coaching, and focused NCLEX-RN preparation. Additional information about ATI Nursing Education can be found at www.atitesting.com/Home.

The Pennsylvania Department of State and the National Council of State Boards of Nursing report national and state annual first-time NCLEX pass rates. The national average first-time NCLEX pass rate in 2025 is 88% ([NCSBN NCLEX Pass Rates](#)) while the Penn State rate is 93%.

What other supports does Nursing offer to students?

Just as you're invested in your education, we are invested in your academic, personal, and professional success. In addition to the technology, clubs & organizations, student services and resources that Penn State offers to all students, Nese College of Nursing students have access to:

Academic Advising: You will be assigned an academic adviser at New Student Orientation (NSO) and will remain with them through graduation. Advisers are similar to your high school counselors, but different in that you are expected to take responsibility for regularly checking in with your adviser. At minimum, plan to schedule an appointment with your adviser once per semester for an academic and scheduling check-up, but your adviser can also explain and facilitate Penn State policy and processes, help you connect to resources, advocate for and support you. Advisers offer weekly Office Hours, regular Walk-In/Zoom-In hours at key times of the year, and group advising. Our advisers' backgrounds are in counseling and education.

Faculty Advising- In your third year, you will also be assigned to a nursing faculty adviser. Your faculty adviser may be based at Hershey or at University Park and is available to discuss career planning and professional development. In your professional development coursework, you will create your resume for your job search, and participate in a brief mock interview.

Academic Success Coaches: Students may contact them on their own and may also be referred by faculty or advisers. The Success Coach can help with time management, study skills, and course content, in addition to referring you to other resources.

Career Fair- A Nursing Career Fair is sponsored each fall for Nursing students to connect with recruiters and companies from Pennsylvania and some surrounding states. Additionally, Penn State's Bank of America Career Services Office hosts career fairs each semester. All these events offer internship/externship and job opportunities.

Alumni Mentoring Program- Rising third-year students (juniors) may apply for the Alumni Mentoring Program to be matched with a Nese College of Nursing Alumnus through the students' graduation. Mentoring pairs are required to attend a kick-off event and meet at least once per month with at least one in-person meeting per year.

First-Year Seminar (Nursing FYS/NURS 100)- Nursing FYS introduces students to the University, the Nese College and the profession of nursing. Students are introduced to Penn State and nursing expectations, policies, and resources to prepare them for the rigor of the nursing curriculum and nursing practice. Course content promotes human health and initiatives that enhance quality of life. FYS offers a small class size and a safe environment for students to ask questions and meet other students in the nursing major.

Peer Tutoring- Students who are struggling in pre-requisite or nursing courses may benefit from one-on-one tutoring assistance. Peer Tutors are available through the Student Success Center by contacting your Academic Adviser. Peer Tutors are current nursing students who have excelled in their pre-requisite courses and nursing classes. The tutors are most helpful when used as an additional resource for students, coupled with attending class, utilizing office hours and any exam reviews and sessions offered by Teaching and Learning Assistants assigned to the course.

What does a typical day look like for a Nursing student?

Our students participate in Greek life, ROTC, Athletics, Schreyer Honors College, and numerous clubs, groups, and activities. Many hold part-time jobs or volunteer while in school. Setting realistic involvement goals and managing time wisely are key.

Ellen

Ellen is a first-year student involved in Nese CON Ambassadors and SNAPS.

8:30am wakeup, 8:30am-10:00am	Get ready, breakfast, relax, last minute studying
10:00am-11:30am/12:30pm	First class or two of the day
11:30am-1:00pm	Gym for a lift or cycling class
1:00pm-1:30pm	Lunch (sometimes studying) with friends at the HUB
1:30pm-2:30pm	Study/homework
2:30pm/4:00pm-3:30pm/6:00pm	Last class/lab
6:00pm	Dinner
7:00pm	Club meetings (if there are)
7:00pm-11:30pm/12:00am	Studying, homework, reviewing notes
12:30am-1:00am	Bedtime

Freda

Freda is a second-year ROTC student who also finds time for Nese CON Ambassadors, SNAPS, Christian Organizations, and THON.

4:30am wakeup, 5:30am-7:00am	ROTC physical training
6:30am wakeup	If no ROTC, personal workout, get ready/eat
9:00am-11:00am	Class
11:00am-1:25pm	Study, eat, meetings
1:30pm-3:30pm	Class
3:30pm-6:00pm	Study, meetings
6:00pm-8:00pm	Clubs/Organizations
9:30pm-12:00am	Bedtime depends on ROTC physical training in the morning

Harley

Harley is a third-year student who is involved in SNAPS, Club Gymnastics, and Nese CON Ambassadors. She is also a Research Assistant and has a job as a hostess. She's included a class day and a clinical day.

Class Day	
7:00am	Wake up and review before class and some breakfast!
8:00am-10:00am	First class of the day
10:30am-11:30am	Gym
12:00pm-1:00pm	Lunch and shower
1:00pm-3:00pm	Second class
4:00pm-8:00pm, 4:00pm-6:00pm	Work or study
6:00pm	Dinner
7:00pm-8:00pm	Club meetings if any
9:00pm-12:00pm	Homework and hang out with roommates!
12:30am	Get ready for the next day and sleep!

Clinical Day	
5:30am	Wake up for clinical! Get ready and have breakfast
6:30am-12:30pm	Clinical
1:00pm	Lunch
2:00pm- 4:00pm	Workout and shower
3:00pm-6:00pm	Homework and studying
6:00pm	Dinner
7:00pm	Meetings if any
8:00pm-11:00pm	Studying and hanging out with roommates
11:30pm	Get ready for the next day and sleep!

Michael

Michael is a fourth-year student who is involved in SNAPS and Nese CON Ambassadors. He's included a class day, clinical day, and capstone day.

Class Day	
8:30am-10:00am	Wake up, get ready, breakfast, relax, light studying/work, head to class
10:00am-12:00pm	First class
12:00pm-1:00pm	Lunch
1:00pm-3:00pm	Second class
3:00pm-6:00pm	Study, homework, gym
6:00pm-7:00pm	Dinner
7:00pm-8:00pm	Club meetings (if there are any)
8:00pm-9:30pm	Last studying, homework, etc. for the day
9:30pm-12:30am	Unwind, read, watch TV, hang with friends, shower
12:30am-1:30am	Bedtime
Clinical Day	
5:30am-6:30am	Wake up, get dressed/ready for day, breakfast/coffee, walk to clinical
6:30am-12:30pm	Clinical
12:30pm-2:00pm	Lunch, post-clinical conference
2:00pm-3:00pm	Unwind from clinical, relax
3:00pm-6:00pm	Study, homework, gym
6:00pm-7:00pm	Dinner
7:00pm-8:00pm	Club meetings (if there are any)
8:00pm-9:30pm	Last studying, homework, etc. for the day
9:30pm-11:30pm	Unwind, read, watch TV, hang with friends, shower
11:30pm-12:30am	Bedtime
Capstone Day	
5:45am-7:00am	Wake up, get ready for day, breakfast/coffee, head to capstone
7:00am-7:30pm	Capstone
7:30pm-8:30pm	Dinner
8:30pm-11:00pm	Unwind, read, watch TV, hang with friends, shower, get ready for bed
11:00pm-12:00am	Bedtime

Class sizes can vary from as few as 25 for English, Speech and Language classes, and Science labs to as many as 800 for large lectures such as Anatomy & Physiology. Nursing class sizes range from 8-10 in clinicals to 75-80 in lectures, with the entire cohort (150-160) coming together for second-year course lectures.

What graduate programs are available at Penn State?

Ph.D. and D.N.P. Programs:

- Penn State offers a B.S.N. to Ph.D. degree program for highly qualified students to pursue doctoral study directly from their B.S.N. program. This program incorporates a Master of Science in Nursing (M.S.N.) degree, which prepares nurse scientists and clinical scholars to continue for the Ph.D. in Nursing. We also offer an M.S.N. to Ph.D. degree program for students with an M.S. degree. Nursing Ph.D. students may pursue one of our dual-title Ph.D. program in Nursing & Bioethics or Nursing & Clinical Translational Sciences.
- Our D.N.P. degree program online through Penn State's World Campus with two entry options: directly from the B. S.N., or post-M.S.N. The D.N.P is a professional, practice-focused doctoral degree with options in Nursing Leadership or Nurse Practitioner with options in Psych/Mental Health Nursing, Family Nurse Practitioner, Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner, and Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner. Coming soon: D.N.P. Nurse Educator and D.N.P. Nurse Anesthesia.

M.S.N. Programs:

- Penn State offers an M.S.N. degree program online through Penn State World Campus with two Advanced Role options: Nurse Administrator and Nurse Educator.

A B.S.N. is required for admission to a graduate program of study in Nursing at Penn State. Graduate-level nursing certificates are also available. Additional information on the graduate programs can be found at www.nursing.psu.edu/graduate.

Helpful Websites:

Admission and University Statistics: www.psu.edu/resources/first-year-students/eligibility

ATI Nursing Education: www.atitesting.com/Home

Connect to Tech Student Guide: www.it.psu.edu/students/connect-to-tech

Credit from Advanced Placement (AP) Exams: www.psu.edu/admission/undergraduate/credit/ap-credit

Graduate Programs: www.nursing.psu.edu/graduate

Housing: University Park: www.liveon.psu.edu/housing

LEAP: www.summersession.psu.edu/leap/

Nese College of Nursing: www.nursing.psu.edu

Nese College of Nursing Financial Aid Opportunities: www.nursing.psu.edu/undergraduate/financial-aid

New Student Orientation: www.orientation.psu.edu/up

Office of Student Aid: www.psu.edu/costs-aid

Penn State Office of the Bursar: www.bursar.psu.edu

Penn State Undergraduate Admissions: www.psu.edu/admission/undergraduate

Residence Life: www.studentaffairs.psu.edu/reslife

SNAPS: www.nsna.org and www.psusnaps.org

Study Abroad: www.global.psu.edu/students, and www.sites.psu.edu/globalbrigades

Tuition: www.tuition.psu.edu

Tuition Calculator: www.tuition.psu.edu/student-tuition-calculators