

Pre-Nursing

What are the pathways to nursing?

WWU does NOT offer a traditional nursing major, but as a Western student you can pursue any bachelor's degree while taking the necessary prerequisite courses for entry into a pre-licensure nursing program. Choose a major that best fits your goals and interests, while considering financial constraints.

The two most common paths to nursing school WWU students take are 1) pursuing a major at Western and graduating with a bachelor's degree before transferring to a pre-licensure nursing program, or 2) completing only prerequisite courses here before transferring to a pre-licensure nursing program. Students may choose to seek their Registered Nurse (RN) credentials through completing an Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN), a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN), or a direct-entry Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) or Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP). Note that by 2020 it is recommended that 80% of all nurses hold a BSN degree.

Requirements for programs vary, so it is important to review the admissions information closely for schools you are interested in. The WA State Nursing Commission website has a list of approved programs available here: <https://tinyurl.com/NursingPrograms>. (As you are doing your research, note that "direct-entry" is a program designed for those without a nursing background or degree).

Core Courses

Prerequisites vary depending on whether you are applying to nursing school after completing a bachelor's degree. Regardless of your major, prerequisite courses expected by **most** schools include

COMMUNICATIONS

- 5 credits English Composition (UW requires an additional writing intensive course)
- 5 credits Communications

QUANTITATIVE/SYMBOLIC REASONING

- 5 credits of statistics (MATH 240)

HUMANITIES & FINE ARTS *(likely waived if you complete a bachelor's degree)*

- 10 credits of humanities (Sociology, Anthropology, etc).
- 15 credits of visual, literary and performing arts (history, music, literature, etc).

SOCIAL SCIENCES

- 5 credits of Introduction to Psychology (PSY 101)
- 5 credits of Lifespan Psychology (PSY 230)

NATURAL SCIENCES

- 5 credits of General Biology (BIOL 101 or BIOL 204/205)
- 5 credits of Microbiology (BIOL 245)
- 5 credits of Chemistry (CHEM 161)
- 5 credits of Organic Chemistry (CHEM 251)
- 10 credits of Anatomy & Physiology (BIOL 348/349)
- 5 credits of Nutrition (HLED 350)

This document is for preliminary advising purposes only – consult with health professions advisors on a regular basis.

Keep informed

- WWU students may join the **Advisor's Pre-nursing Listserv**. To join, go to www.wvu.edu/careers, click on *Health Professions Advising* (on the lefthand side of the page), and click *Join Listserv*.
- A list of nursing programs can be found here: www.aacn.nche.edu/students/nursing-program-search

2020-2021

Contact Information

Pre-Nursing Advisor:

Anna Tognazzini, M.Ed.
360-650-3268
prehealth@wwu.edu

To meet with an advisor:
Call 360-650-4240
Old Main 280

Health Professions Advising Website:

[www.wvu.edu/careers
/prehealth.shtml](http://www.wvu.edu/careers/prehealth.shtml)

Notes

ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP): Check with targeted schools whether they recognize AP as college-earned credit. Not all do. *It is better to view any earned credits as qualifying to enroll in upper-division courses rather than as “testing out” of prerequisites.*

DECLARING A MAJOR: Departments vary in how to declare majors. Behavioral Neuroscience, Biology, Chemistry, Kinesiology, and others allow students to declare as a “pre-major” while addressing their specified prerequisites. Some majors require a specific GPA in certain courses. Declare early, even as a “pre-major”, to help shorten your time to degree. *While working on any pre-major content, explore many disciplines to keep your options open.*

ACCESS TO CLASSES: High demand exists for upper-division courses, especially in the sciences. Many departments grant enrollment priority to students declared in specific majors over those seeking enrollment for professional school purposes. Registration access procedures for impacted courses can change, and departments generally provide updates via their websites and email notifications, or by checking with the department’s program coordinator.

REPEATING/DROPPING COURSES: When you repeat a course, only your most recent grade is used when Western calculates your GPA. However, the class still shows up on your transcript. Although some students think that repeating a course will help them get into professional schools, this is almost always untrue. Professional schools will take into account ALL college-level coursework when performing their own calculation of your GPA, and this will include any courses you have repeated at Western. Still, in some circumstances it may be appropriate to repeat a course so talk to an advisor to be sure. Also, dropping a course can have an impact on eligibility for financial aid, scholarships, and athletic participation so consider your options carefully and speak with an advisor before making a decision.

SHADOWING: Students should gain shadowing experience with a nurse, and will likely need an RN to write a letter of recommendation. Discuss your shadowing options with Pre-healthcare advisors.

VOLUNTEERING/HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE: The more experience you have working with people in a healthcare setting the stronger your application will be (some programs require it). Becoming certified as a Nursing Assistant (CNA) is one way to show your commitment to nursing and allows you to work with patients before applying to nursing school.

Additional Resources

WWU Allied Health Advising: www.wwu.edu/alliedhealth

WWU Health Professions Pinterest: www.pinterest.com/wwuprehealth/

Association of Colleges of Nursing: www.aacn.nche.edu

Washington State Nursing Commission approved programs: <https://tinyurl.com/NursingPrograms>

Explore Health Careers: www.explorehealthcareers.org

Health Professions Advising Events

Typical programming events offered include (but are not limited to):

Fall:

Health Professional & Grad School Info Fair (October)

Winter Registration Drop-in Advising

Winter:

Faculty Research Panel (February)

Spring Registration Drop-in Advising

Spring:

The Healthcare Professional School Application: A session overviewing the process (April)

Fall Registration Drop-in Advising

Health Professions Advising / Career Services Center
Old Main 280 360.650.4240 Careers@wwu.edu

PROGRESS LIST FOR PRE-NURSING STUDENTS*

(Research nursing schools before taking many prerequisites – remember that *every program has different requirements!*)

- Join Pre-Nursing Listserv: go to www.wvu.edu/careers, click on *Health Professions Advising* (on the lefthand side of the page), and click *Join Listserv*.

Academic Foundation:

- Math 114 (5 credits) *Precalculus I*
- Chemistry 161 (5) *General Chemistry with laboratory*
- Chemistry 251 (5) *Elementary Organic Chemistry with laboratory*
- Biology 101 (5) *Introduction to Biology*
or
Biology 204, 205 (4,5) *General Biology with laboratories*
- Biology 245 (5) *Microbiology for Health Sciences*
or
Biology 345, 346 (3,2) *Fundamentals of Microbiology with laboratory*
- Biology 348, 349 (5,5) *Human Anatomy and Physiology* (see note →)
- English 101 (5) *Writing and Critical Inquiry*
- English 202 (5) *Writing About Literature* (or another English composition course)
- Mathematics 240 (4) *Introduction to Statistics*
- Psychology 101 (5) *Introduction to Psychology*
- Psychology 230 (5) *Lifespan Developmental Psychology*
- Health Education 350 (3) *Nutrition*
- Communication Studies 101 (4) *Fundamentals of Speech* or 224 (4) *Small Group Processes* (RECOMMENDED)

NOTE:

Only PEHR and Bio/Anthro majors are allowed to register for Biology 348 at WWU. Students in other programs requiring Biology 348 for professional school may be granted an override if they request one from the instructor **at least three weeks prior to Phase I of registration.**

WWU Degree Fulfillment:

- Complete academic major
- Fulfill General University Requirements (or DTA)
- Writing Proficiency course(s) to total 3 or more points
- Two quarters before graduation, meet with major advisor for evaluation and apply for graduation

Exposure/Experience:

- “Shadow” a nurse to learn more, gain experience, and for possible letter of recommendation
- Clinical Experience (one or more may apply)
 - Volunteer/community service (UW requires a *minimum* of 100 hours of paid or volunteer health experience)
 - Get certified as a NAC (Nursing Assistant Certified) and work to gain additional clinical hours
- Teamwork/Leadership Development (does not need to be healthcare related!)
 - Athletics/Clubs
 - Other _____

Countdown to Application:

- Two quarters before application, meet with Health Professions Advisor to discuss procedures and timeline
- Draft personal statement; edit, edit, edit
- Request letters of recommendation from professor (science), professionals (RN, physician), clinical supervisor
- Complete NursingCAS application if schools require it
- Interview preparation: www.wvu.edu/careers/mockinterview_home.shtml
- Stay abreast of issues in healthcare and nursing, as well as current events.

* NOTE: The courses listed here reflect the general admissions requirements for local nursing programs. Other nursing schools may have different admissions requirements. It is up to the student, with the help of advisors, to ensure that appropriate courses are taken.