What is **NURSING?**

A career in nursing is challenging, rewarding, and offers varied and exciting work environments. Now more than ever, nurses prepared at the baccalaureate and master's level are in great demand by health care employers. WCU's undergraduate nursing program prepares students to become licensed as registered nurses who offer high-quality care to patients from children to older adults in settings from hospitals to schools. Some students go on to pursue advanced nursing degrees and may take courses toward earning their graduate degree while still an undergraduate.

WCU's affordable nursing programs feature small class sizes that enable students to receive one-on-one attention from expert faculty who guide them through coursework and clinical experiences.

What are the undergraduate **DEGREE OPTIONS?**

Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN): The Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) Pre-Licensure program prepares you to begin the practice of professional nursing. Upon graduating, you will be eligible to apply to sit for the National Council of State Boards of Nursing licensure examination for registered nurses (NCLEX-RN). The BSN program conducts theory classes on the Cullowhee campus at WCU's state-of-the-art Health and Human Sciences building. Clinical nursing experiences are held at health care agencies throughout western North Carolina for your third and fourth years, after you apply and are admitted into the program. For other undergraduate degree options offered, please visit nursing.wcu.edu

What is the **ADMISSION PROCESS?**

Admission into any Nursing program at WCU is *highly* competitive. Students must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0, a minimum ACT score of 17, pass the TEAS exam, and have completed at least 60 hours of course credit. Most students apply for the School of Nursing at the end of their second year. For a complete list of admission requirements and processes, please visit the **School of Nursing website.**

What **JOBS ARE AVAILABLE?**

Many of our graduates move on to various nursing careers including Army Nurse, Health Services Manager, Occupational Health Nurse, ICU Nurse, Paramedic, Camp Nurse, Learning Disability Nurse, Pediatric Nurse, Dermatology Nurse, Emergency Room Nurse, Mental Health Nurse, Geriatric Nurse, Midwife, etc.

Who employs **NURSING** graduates?

Our graduates work in a variety of environments including hospitals, medical centers, state and local health departments, nursing homes, home care agencies, psychiatric units, rehabilitation centers, hospice, prison systems, military branches, private practices, primary care facilities, and schools.

MAJOR MAP

How to use this map: Review the four categories and suggestions of activities and when you should consider engaging in them. Remember, these are just suggestions! Work with a career counselor or your academic advisor to make your map relevant to you and your interests.

	1st YEAR	**2nd YEAR**
EXCEL IN ACADEMICS	In addition to general elective courses and liberal studies requirements, many first-year students will focus on required Biology, Chemistry, Health, and Math courses. Because of the competitive nature of the nursing program admission process, it will be critical to perform well in these courses. **To meet minimum admission requirements, you must pass all prerequisite coursework with a C or better.** Check out the **8-semester plan and make an appointment with your advisor.**	Courses your second year will include additional coursework in the sciences such as Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and required prerequisite Nursing courses. **Be sure to also get your university liberal arts classes completed by your second year.** Check out the **8-Semester Plan and consult with your advisor.** Students typically apply to the School of Nursing at the end of their second year. **A minimum 3.0 GPA is required to apply for admission to the nursing program. Click here for full admissions requirements.**
GET HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE	Check out **WCU's DegreePlus program** and choose which events in any of the four categories you want to attend. Categories include: Professionalism, Teamwork, Leadership, or Cultural Responsiveness. See what on-campus employment opportunities are available by logging in to JobCat via your MyWCU.	If you are thinking about attending a graduate school, start engaging in hands-on experiences required by graduate school admissions. Engage deeper with **DegreePlus;** choose an additional competency to complete Volunteer with relevant nonprofits such as **Blue Ridge Health** and **Appalachian Mountain Community Health Centers**, and dive deeper into activities with more responsibility.
BE PART OF THE COMMUNITY	Connect with the **Center for Service Learning** and ask about the **Lily Award,** a program aimed to encourage students to be connected with their community.	Develop deeper relationships with the organizations for which you volunteer. Ask for special projects or responsibilities that you can highlight on a resume. If you want to **study abroad,** you should consider it before the end of your second year or consider summer study abroad experiences, as Nursing students will not have time once in the major. Consider things like **Work the World** and **Connect 1-2-3.**
PREPARE FOR LIFE AFTER COLLEGE	Further explore your career options or career interests using the **Center for Career and Professional Development's** online resources, **Focus 2,** and **Onet Online.** Connect with a career counselor early on to explore opportunities and experiences you can do while in college to further develop your professional resume.	Attend the **Catamount Career and Networking Day** to identify summer, part-time, or internship opportunities for additional hands-on experiences. Start a spreadsheet of graduate schools you wish to apply to in a few years; label your spreadsheet with each school's admission requirements and required application materials so that you are aware of what the expectations are.

3rd YEAR

Once admitted to the program, students will begin a very prescriptive and intensive curriculum, which will include clinical practicum courses in both acute and community settings. Students must pass all coursework with a C or better to progress in the program. Be sure to check the **8-Semester Plan with your advisor** for more information.

Consider networking with professionals in your field at national or regional professional conferences such as the **North Carolina Association of Nursing Students (NCANS)**

Get involved with Association of Nursing Students or Nurse-Christian Fellowship, the Nursing student organizations available on campus.

Build a professional rapport with your clinical supervisors.

Connect with alumni in your field through **LinkedIn**

Visit the CCPD to hone your professional resume and cover letter. Utilize the **Writing and Learning Commons** for GRE, and other professional exam preparation sessions. Take the GRE. Use **Big Interview** to learn more about professional interviews.

Schedule a visit to tour graduate schools of your choice, if applicable.

4th YEAR

Courses in the fourth year include additional nursing courses and clinical practicum experiences to help develop generalist nursing skills and leadership skills to support development into the profession of nursing. Be sure to review the **8-semester plan,** make an appointment with your advisor, complete your degree audit, and **apply for graduation!**

Students will also be preparing for the NCLEX licensure exam during their final year.

Investigate requirements for full-time jobs. Assess what skills or experiences you're lacking and invest time in seeking additional opportunities such as certification programs, classes, or professional development workshops during your last year to fill that gap. Connect with your faculty advisor or career counselor.

Join professional organizations such as the **American Nursing Association.** For a full list of nursing associations, visit **Nurse.org**

Network with employers and non-profits at the **Catamount Career and Networking Days.**

Apply to graduate school, if applicable.

Look for and apply for jobs between 4 and 6 months before graduation. Interested in seeing the world and applying your Nursing skills? Consider a post-bacc internship with organizations like **Work the World.**

Polish your resume, cover letter, and interview skills by visiting the **CCPD.**

DID YOU KNOW?

Internships are still the number-one educational experience employers look for in a recent college graduate resume. (Chronicle of Higher Education's study on 50,000 employers)

MORE INFORMATION

CLINICAL Information

Students will participate in a number of required practicum experiences including Adult Nursing Practicum, Synthesis of Nursing Concepts Practicum, Maternal-Child Nursing Practicum, and Community/Mental Health Practicum. For more information contact the School of Nursing Office.

SKILLS LEARNED in the classroom

The core competencies will center on developing skills, knowledge, and attitudes such as:

- Independent Worker
- Information Handling & Organization
- Curiosity and Creativity
- Statistical Awareness
- Oral & Written Communication
- Numerical Computation
- Analytical & Quantitative Abilities
- Innovative Talents
- Problem Solving
- Technical Skills
- Teamwork

KNOWLEDGE Base

This program will prepare students to:

- Utilize effective communication (verbal, written and nonverbal) to support the development of therapeutic relationships with colleagues and clients in diverse healthcare settings.
- Use the nursing process to support clinical reasoning to provide holistic, patient and family centered care to diverse populations in a variety of settings.
- Engage in effective interactions with colleagues, other members of the health care team as well as patients and families toward a unified goal of high quality patient outcomes.
- Demonstrate nursing practice that is rooted in ethical behaviors, caring actions, and professional comportment.
- Utilize technology and information systems to critically evaluate and analyze data to support evidence-based patient and family-centered care.

Professional RESOURCES

- For a full list of professional associations and organizations within the nursing field, visit **Nurse.org**

QUESTIONS?

For questions, please call the School of Nursing at 828-227-467or visit nursing.wcu.edu.

To schedule an appointment with a career counselor, contact the Center for Career and Professional Development, 828-227-7133 or careerservices@wcu.edu.

Western Carolina UNIVERSITY