

NURSING (NURS) - BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN NURSING

Nursing Program Overview

The Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) Program is designed to prepare a diverse student population for professional nursing careers across healthcare settings. This program prepares graduates to achieve state licensure requirements and for excellence in practice as a professional nurse. This educational program prepares students to meet the health care needs of individuals, families, groups and communities with a special emphasis on rural and population health.

Nursing Program Mission

The Western Colorado University (WCU) Nursing Program prepares future nurse generalists for professional roles with a special focus on meeting the unique healthcare needs of rural communities. The program ensures a strong foundation in nursing theory and practice with an emphasis on critical thinking, wellness, advocacy, patient-centered care, leadership, and evidence-based practice.

Program Goals: Students will:

- Learn the art and science of nursing to provide excellent, safe, evidence-based, and compassionate care
- Develop professional nursing competency, knowledge, and skills necessary in the rapidly changing healthcare environment while learning the importance of transdisciplinary and multimodal care
- Prepare for professional practice, graduate study, and leadership roles in healthcare

Degree Overview

This Bachelor of Science in Nursing Degree is designed for the qualified student intending to obtain a career as a professional nurse, pursue graduate education or assume leadership roles in healthcare. The BSN program includes two unique tracks: traditional track and accelerated track. The traditional track training begins with comprehensive pre-nursing classes.

Traditional Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) Track

The Traditional Track is a 4-year intensive program designed to prepare students for practice as a generalist nurse at the baccalaureate level. During the first two years, students complete the Western Watershed general education curriculum alongside designated Pre-Health coursework. Students may formally apply for admission to the Nursing Program in their second year (see Formal Admission Requirements). Upon completion of the Pre-Health Nucleus, students may be formally admitted to the Nursing Program. Once admitted, students begin completing courses in the Nursing Nucleus.

The Traditional Track provides a carefully sequenced curriculum that integrates classroom instruction, hands-on skills labs, high-fidelity simulation, and supervised clinical experiences. Students gain exposure across a wide spectrum of nursing practice, including medical -surgical, maternal -newborn, pediatrics, mental health, community and population health, and leadership/management.

This program fulfills Colorado State Board of Nursing requirements by providing more than 750 hours of clinical experience, with less than 25% achieved through simulation. Consistent with Western Colorado University's mission, the Traditional BSN Track emphasizes student-

centered learning, professional development, and preparation for practice in rural and underserved communities.

Graduates of the Traditional Track are prepared to:

- Deliver safe, evidence-based, patient-centered, and compassionate care.
- Collaborate effectively within interprofessional healthcare teams.
- Address the needs of rural and underserved communities through generalist practice.

Upon successful completion, graduates are eligible to sit for the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN) licensure exam.

Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSN) Track

The Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSN) track is an intensive 12-month pathway designed for students who already hold a bachelor's degree in a non-nursing discipline and seek to transition into professional nursing practice. This track builds on students' prior academic preparation, providing a condensed, rigorous course of study that prepares graduates for RN licensure and entry into the nursing workforce.

The rationale for offering this track is rooted in strong community demand. Prospective students, including career changers and post-baccalaureate learners, have expressed interest in an accelerated option that allows them to fully dedicate themselves to their studies and graduate within 12 months. In addition, healthcare community partners have specifically requested this program to support urgent workforce development needs in the face of the current nursing shortage. These employers are committed to creating pathways that enable their staff to pursue nursing education in an efficient, time-sensitive manner while continuing to meet the needs of their communities.

This program fulfills Colorado State Board of Nursing requirements by providing more than 750 hours of clinical experience, with less than 25% achieved through simulation. Consistent with Western Colorado University's mission, the ABSN emphasizes rural and population health while preparing graduates to:

- Deliver safe, evidence-based, patient-centered, and compassionate care
- Lead and collaborate effectively within interprofessional teams
- Address rural health disparities and respond to population-specific needs

Upon completion of the ABSN track, graduates will be eligible to sit for the NCLEX-RN licensure exam.

Capstone Requirement

The following course in the Bachelor of Science Nursing major fulfills the capstone course requirement: NURS 490 - Senior Capstone Clinical

Western Watershed General Education Requirements

Students must complete all Western Watershed General Education requirements to graduate. Given the number of credits a student must take as they advance through the traditional track nursing program, it is recommended for all General Education requirements to be completed prior to entrance into the program. The number of completed General Education courses will be taken into consideration when reviewing

applicants for admission to the Nursing program. Admission to the University does not guarantee acceptance into the nursing program.

Admission Requirements

Formal Admission to the Nursing Program: Traditional Track

Students must be formally admitted into the Nursing program. The Nursing Comprehensive Major: Nursing Emphasis - Traditional Track is gated and admission to the program is a multi-step process.

Students with an interest in nursing should declare nursing as their major upon application to the University in their first year. One must be formally admitted to the University with a separate admission process to the nursing program typically in the spring semester of the sophomore year. Students apply for formal admission into the BSN program as they complete Pre-Health Nucleus requirements. Students are required to complete general education requirements by time of graduation. Admission to the University does not guarantee acceptance into the nursing program.

Admissions requirements for the Nursing Traditional Track are listed below.

To be formally admitted to the traditional BSN Program, a student must:

- Submit a complete application for admission and become selected for admission.
- Achieve a minimum overall cumulative GPA of 2.0; preference for GPA of 3.0 or higher.
- Present related professional or volunteer experience, if completed (preferred).
- Complete the prerequisite Pre-Nursing nucleus courses with at least a C (see listed).
- Complete an admission interview and selection procedures.

Special Considerations for Formal Admission:

- Upon earning 48 credits, including 34 Pre-Nursing credits, the student is eligible to complete application for conditional admission to the Nursing Program.
- Upon completing the 44-credit Pre-Nursing Nucleus and maintaining a 3.0 cumulative GPA, the student may be formally admitted to the Nursing Program.

WCU students who apply and do not gain acceptance shall receive feedback on application and schedule an advising appointment aimed at planning for either re-application or declaring a non-BSN major.

Formal Admission Requirements to the Nursing Program: Accelerated Track

One must first be formally admitted to the University, followed by a separate admission process to the nursing program. Acceptance to the BSN accelerated track requires:

- Submission of formal application including the Nursing Accelerated Track Prerequisite Form.
- Completion of a previous bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university (not a BSN).
- Achieve a minimum overall cumulative GPA of 2.0; preference for GPA of 3.0 or higher.

- Healthcare or related professional experience.
- Maintain a minimum of at least a C in prerequisite coursework including: Human Anatomy/A&P I, Human Anatomy/A&P II, Microbiology, Chemistry and Statistics.
- Successful completion of an admission interview and selection procedures.

Upon formal admission to the Nursing Program, all nursing students must complete an American Heart Association or American Red Cross BLS Health Care Provider training prior to beginning any Nursing Core coursework.

Programs

- Nursing Comprehensive Major: Nursing Emphasis - Accelerated Track (<https://catalog.western.edu/undergraduate/programs/nursing/nursing-comprehensive-accelerated/>)
- Nursing Comprehensive Major: Nursing Emphasis - Traditional Track (<https://catalog.western.edu/undergraduate/programs/nursing/nursing-comprehensive-traditional/>)