

Nursing



career exploration center
your future in focus

Career Options for Nursing Majors

This booklet contains specific information about majoring in nursing at The University of Texas at Austin, as well as career opportunities related to this major. The careers listed typically require a bachelor's degree, and special certification or training requirements are noted. Please use this booklet as an idea generator, rather than as a comprehensive list of all career options for nursing majors. The career descriptions were obtained from CEC library resources and career websites (see listing of sources on last page).

For nursing majors, there are many career options that require a master's or doctoral degree but do not require any particular undergraduate degree. Examples of these include law, international affairs, museum administration, library and information studies, hospital administration, and many more. For careers requiring graduate education, please visit our library or speak to a career counselor.

The CEC offers many other services and resources to help you with your career planning. These include:

- Career Counseling
- Career Testing
- Career Information Library
- Internship Information
- Graduate School Planning Assistance

Visit our website at www.utexas.edu/student/cec
or call 471-1217 for more information

MAJORING IN NURSING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Departmental Website: www.utexas.edu/nursing

Campus Location: NUR 2.104A

Phone Number: 232-4780

DESCRIPTION OF MAJOR

The Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program prepares graduates to work in a wide variety of clinical settings and provides the necessary foundation for masters and doctoral degrees in nursing.

EXAMPLES OF COURSES

N 323 Genetics in Health Care

The integration of genetic information into nursing practice, including ethical, legal, psychological, and social issues.

N 265 Nursing Care of Childbearing Families

Concepts, theories, and processes essential to understanding the health concerns and problems of women and their families during the childbearing years.

N 375P Public Health Nursing Practicum

Provides opportunities for students to apply public health nursing concepts, theories, and processes to the care of aggregates and the total community. Assigned clinical experiences are designed to develop student skills in the practice of public health nursing. Emphasis is on interdisciplinary health care with at-risk aggregates in the community, and high-risk families and aggregates in the community.

N 264 Nursing Research

Basic components of the research process; interpreting descriptive and inferential statistics in research. Critical examination of research studies in nursing.

OVERVIEW OF THE NURSING PROFESSION

Nurses help people feel better and regain, improve or maintain their health through the science and art of nursing and specific nursing strategies. They address mental and emotional needs as well as physical needs. They observe, evaluate and record symptoms, responses and progress of patients who are receiving medications, treatments, or therapies, or who are facing or recovering from surgeries. They are responsible for developing and managing nursing care plans and teaching patients and their families about proper care, including precautions and intended results of therapies and medications. They work with patients individually or in groups.

Nurses are needed in a wide variety of work settings to do a variety of tasks. Regardless of where they work or what they do, they draw upon similar skills however. They must be active listeners who are adept at determining the best care alternatives among various approaches. They also must be effective communicators, who can teach and explain sensitive and complex matters clearly and with compassion both orally and in writing. They are also required to be organized and observant—good time managers, who are also skilled at monitoring changes, behaviors, and performance. They have a strong orientation to service and are constantly looking for ways to help their patients, even doing unpleasant tasks, such as cleaning up bodily fluids, in the spirit of providing whatever is needed to care for sick and injured patients.

The majority of health care workers are nurses and the majority of nurses work in hospitals. However, as hospital care becomes more costly, nurses are finding increasing employment opportunities in home health care, nursing care facilities, and outpatient care. Other work settings include physician's offices, employment services, government agencies, social assistance agencies, and educational services.

DIRECT JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Armed Forces Nurse

Serve in the nursing corps of one of the branches of the armed forces and provide direct patient care, and teach or consult with other government personnel while assigned to stations world-wide

Emergency Room Nurse

Use triage to evaluate the seriousness of patients' conditions involving traumas such as broken bones, cuts and abrasions, gunshot wounds, serious burns, heart attacks, serious respiratory illnesses, asthmatic attacks, strokes and high fevers

Forensic Nurse

Work with law enforcement to provide care to victims and help investigate sexual assault, elder and domestic abuse, and unexplained or accidental death

Geriatric or Long-term Care Nurse

Provide care in a nursing home or other specialized facility for elderly and/or chronically ill patients who have conditions such as arthritis, diabetes, heart problems or Alzheimer's disease, or who are recovering from stroke or head injuries. Handle supervisory and administrative tasks as well as evaluate patients' conditions, develop plans for treatment, and supervise other nursing personnel

Head Nurse

Plan work schedules and assign nursing duties to nurses and aides in the hospital or clinical unit. Train and observe nurses. Ensure that accurate records are kept and that equipment and supplies are ordered as needed

Home Health Care Nurse

As prescribed by a physician, provide a wide spectrum of care for invalid or housebound patients who may be recovering from illness, injury, childbirth, or chronically debilitating conditions. Instruct patients on self-help medical procedures, such as how to properly administer insulin or apply dressings for patients recovering from an infection or surgery

Industrial or Occupational Health Nurse

Provide nursing care to patients in work settings who have minor injuries, illness, or health complaints. Handle medical emergencies, prepare accident reports, and arrange for follow-up care. Assist with health examinations and inoculations and work on accident prevention programs

Intensive Care Unit Nurse

Provide intensive, one-on-one nursing care to help patients suffering from strokes, diabetes, blood loss from serious car, work or home accidents, failure of vital organs, or other critical health issues

Medical-Surgical Nurse

Supervise or attend to the needs of patients facing or recovering from a wide range of issues, such as eye or back surgery, or swallowing or stomach disorders

Obstetrics and Gynecology Nurse

Assist with the delivery of babies and the care of newborns. Provide care for premature infants who need intensive intervention with breathing, circulation or digestive problems until these systems are fully functional. Assist female patients with surgery and other medical conditions

Office Nurse

Assist physicians in private practices, clinics, urgent care centers, and health maintenance organizations. Prepare patients, help with examinations, handle medications and injections, dress wounds or surgical incisions, assist with minor surgery, and maintain records. May handle routine lab and office work, including receptionist

Operating Room Nurse

Work with supervising physicians, anesthesiologists, and others in various types of surgeries and assist with equipment surgeons need to perform laser or microsurgery

Outpatient or Ambulatory Care Nurse

Treat minor health issues, such as bandage removal, and provide follow-up to surgery

Peace Corps Nurse

Nurse other Peace Corps volunteers, plan and implement programs and educate about health care in the countries assigned

Public Health Nurse

Work for a government agency, such as a city health department, or a private agency serving adults, children and their families. Provide service in the areas of disease prevention, nutrition, health education and sanitation. Work with teachers, community leaders, parents, physicians, and other health care workers in providing health care

School Nurse

Advise teachers of symptoms of illness. Alert parents about possible or actual health problems, including below-normal results on hearing or vision exams or evidence of scoliosis. Record and monitor immunizations and engage in the prevention of communicable diseases

SPECIALTY AREAS IN NURSING

Advanced Practice Nurses use advanced training beyond the R.N. (registered nurse), Advanced practice nurses carry out certain tasks formerly restricted to physicians, such as prescribing medications, giving health examinations, and handling case histories. They work together with physicians or independently depending on how their scope of practice is defined in a particular state's medical practice acts.

Certified Nurse-Midwife

Provide well-woman gynecological exams and handle low-risk prenatal, labor and delivery, and post-delivery care. Assist with family planning.

Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist

Handle all phases of a patient's anesthesia care, monitoring the patient throughout surgery

Clinical Nurse Specialist

Do health assessments, make diagnoses, and give treatment. Work as a consultant or in research, education, and administration. Specialize in areas, such as mental health, gerontology, cardiac or cancer care, and community or neonatal health

Nurse Practitioner

Conduct physical exams, take case histories, diagnose and treat minor injuries or illnesses, order and interpret lab and x-ray results, prescribe medications, and counsel and educate patients on wellness and on-going care of chronic health conditions. Specialize in areas, such as family planning, pediatrics, gerontology, or hospital inpatient care. Work for a hospital or clinic, a health maintenance organization, private industry, or as an independent practitioner if state laws allow

MORE JOB OPPORTUNITIES

A background in nursing also can lead to a variety of roles in other fields, which draw upon different skill sets. Here are some examples.

Case Manager

Organize and coordinate resources and services in response to individual health care needs in a variety of managed care settings. Assess and monitor clients in targeted populations, such as the frail elderly and the chronically ill, in relation to the health care delivery services they receive. Work toward goals of patient self-managed care and cost-effective use of health resources to ensure cost savings and continuity of care

Childbirth Educator

Provide informational and educational classes for expectant parents. Offer physical and emotional support as well as information

Consultant

Give advice or provide specialized services on a contractual basis in areas such as research development, clinical expertise (e.g., breastfeeding, brain injury), curriculum development, staffing of health care institutions, and other aspects of the health care industry

Ethicist

Work with an ethics team to investigate questions raised by allegations of ethics violations or resolve ethical dilemmas in hospitals, nursing homes, hospices and outpatient settings

Genetics Counselor

Work as a member of a health care team that provides support and information to families of individuals with birth defects or genetic disorders and to families at risk for a variety of inherited conditions. Investigate and interpret information about a condition, research and analyze inheritance patterns and risks of recurrence, assist families in considering available options, and serve as an advocate for patients

Health Coach

Provide around-the-clock telephone support to patients undergoing a health crisis or needing tips on self-care until they feel better and are more confident about following dosing and equipment protocols and navigating through the health care system

Health Policy Analyst/Lobbyist

Perform detailed policy analysis on issues related to health care legislation or health policy by collecting data, conducting background research, synthesizing findings and reporting on the broad aspects of the subject of interest to the client, as well as the impact of the data on policy change

International Consultant

Work for a government agency, such as the United Nations or the World Health Organization, or for a non-governmental organization (NGO) or as an independent consultant to provide health care in the face of dire poverty, epidemics, environmental degradation, internal conflicts, civil wars, and natural disasters across the globe

Legal Consultant

Use specialized health care knowledge and expertise to consult with attorneys, insurance companies, and hospitals on medical-related cases such as medical malpractice, product liability, personal injury, worker's compensation, fraud and abuse, and risk management. Arrange expert reviews, evaluate care and assist in the resolution of cases by drafting litigation documents, conducting medical and legal research, and analyzing medical records in depth

Media Consultant

Consult with the media regarding how to portray accurate and realistic depictions of health care, patient care, and the professional practice of nursing

Medical Records Auditor

Examine, verify, adjust and correct medical records and bills to ensure accuracy and reliability. Audit medical billing practices to ensure compliance with governmental and third-party rules, regulations and requirements

Ombudsperson

Investigate reported complaints, report findings and help bring about satisfactory resolutions to problems related to the quality of life and quality of care for vulnerable persons in long-term care environments

Pharmaceutical Representative

Promote and sell products from pharmaceutical companies

Recruiter

Develop and activate recruitment plans and strategies to address nurse staffing needs

SOURCES

101 Careers in Nursing by Jeanne Novotny, Doris Lippman, Nicole Sanders, and Joyce Fitzpatrick. Springer Publishing, 2003.

Careers in Nursing by Terence Sacks. McGraw-Hill, 2003.

O*Net Dictionary of Occupational Titles by J. Michael Farr and Laurence Shatkin. Jist Publishing, 2004.

Opportunities in Nursing Careers by Keville Frederickson. McGraw-Hill, 2003.



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