What Can I Do With A Degree in Nursing?

Staff Nursing
Specialties by
Work Setting or Type of Treatment, such as: Perioperative (operating rooms), Emergency/Trauma, Critical Care, Ambulatory Care, Home Health Care, Hospice and Palliative Care, Occupational Health, Radiology, Psychiatric-Mental Health
Specific Health Conditions, such as: Oncology, Diabetes Management, Addictions Treatment, HIV/AIDS Care
Organ or Body Systems, such as: Cardiovascular, Gastroenterology, Gynecology, Dermatology, Orthopedic, Urology, Respiratory
Well-defined Populations, such as: Neonatology, Pediatrics, Adults, Geriatrics
Advanced Practice Nursing, such as: Clinical Nurse Specialist, Nurse Anesthesiology, Nurse Midwifery
Nurse Practitioner, including: Family, Adult, Women's Health, Pediatric, Neonatal, Geriatric, Mental Health

Employers
Hospitals
Clinics and medical centers
Physicians' offices and medical groups
Outpatient surgery centers
Ambulatory care centers
Home health agencies
Nursing care facilities
Rehabilitation centers
Hospices
Dialysis centers
Diabetes care clinics
Birth centers
Psychiatric hospitals and mental health agencies
Health maintenance organizations
Educational institutions
Summer camps
Large corporations
Correctional facilities

Strategies & Information
- Work or volunteer in healthcare and medical settings during summers and breaks.
- Shadow nurses in different settings to learn which ones hold the most appeal.
- Gain experience through externship or internship programs.
- Take electives in areas such as wellness, holistic health, medical ethics, and death and dying.
- Get involved in student organizations and seek leadership roles.
- Learn to be organized and to manage stress well.
- Develop patience, the ability to work with both patients and families for long periods, and good listening skills. Learn to work effectively with people from different cultures, races, and socioeconomic backgrounds.
- Prepare to work nights, weekends, and holidays in a hospital setting.
- Cultivate managerial skills for head nurse or other supervisory positions.
- Many specialties exist and some nurses combine specialties, e.g. pediatric oncology.
- Obtain a master’s or doctoral degree for advanced practice nursing. Some specialties may also require certification.
- Join relevant professional associations and plan to attend continuing education programs.

Health Education and Promotion

Employers
- State and local health departments
- Home healthcare agencies
- Public schools
- Daycare centers
- Mental health facilities
- Senior centers
- Nurse-run clinics
- Religious organizations
- Social service agencies
- Wellness centers
- Community education programs

Strategies & Information
- Develop knowledge and skills in management, decision-making, motivating, teaching, counseling, speaking, and writing.
- Gain experience with handling emergencies, working independently, and demonstrating flexibility.
- Expand knowledge of health issues related to age, cultures, religions, ethics, and government policies.
- Learn to relate well with people from a variety of backgrounds.
- Some positions may require a master’s degree in nursing, public health, or a related field.
- Take continuing education courses in topics such as smoking cessation, nutrition and fitness, and stress management.

Community and Public Health

Areas
- Home Health
- Rural Nursing

Independent Practice

Areas
- Temporary Staffing
- Travel Nursing
- Personal Services Contracting
Private Duty

Employers
Healthcare staffing agencies
Travel companies
Businesses and organizations with temporary needs
Private households

Strategies & Information
▪ Gain years of experience in a hospital or other healthcare setting.
▪ Learn to work autonomously and make decisions independently.
▪ Be prepared to move frequently to various locations either locally or abroad.
▪ Become flexible and adaptable.

Government Service
Areas
Staff Nursing
Administration
Policy Development
Research

Employers
Government health agencies: Public Health Service, Indian Health Service, Veterans Affairs, Peace Corps, VISTA, Armed services, Prisons

Strategies & Information
▪ Define an area of interest since government work offers a variety of practices.
▪ Earn a master's or doctoral degree for positions involving research, policy development, or administration.
▪ Become familiar with other cultures, languages, health systems, and beliefs.
▪ Be prepared for combat nursing in armed services.

Telehealth
Areas
Provide care and advice through electronic communications media (phone, Internet).

Employers
Call centers
Private offices
Clinics
Health maintenance organizations
Hospitals

Strategies & Information
▪ Work in other practices for five to ten years to gain the necessary experience.
▪ Develop good communication skills and the ability to make important decisions quickly.
▪ Earn the Telehealth Nurse Certification.

Nursing Research
Areas

Employers
Large hospitals and medical centers
Colleges and universities
Centers for nursing research
National Institute for Nursing
Pharmaceutical companies

Strategies & Information
▪ Gain experience with research through supervised independent study or class projects.
- Develop curiosity, analytical thinking, attention to detail, persistence, good writing skills, and an understanding of statistics.
- Maintain a high grade point average and secure strong faculty recommendations.
- Obtain a doctoral degree in nursing.

**Education**

**Areas**
- Teaching
- Educational Administration

**Employers**
- Teaching hospitals
- Colleges and universities
- Schools of nursing

**Strategies & Information**
- Develop patience, sensitivity to the needs of young adults as well as patients, and the ability to accept responsibility for the actions of others.
- Take courses in the principles and practices of teaching.
- Earn an advanced degree to teach at the college or university level.
- Gain experience in public speaking.

**International Health**

**Areas**
- Clinical Nursing
- Emergency Relief
- Policy Development

**Employers**
- Embassies
- Military bases
- National or international government agencies

**Non-governmental organizations**
- Humanitarian organizations
- Private voluntary organizations
- Church-related mission services
- World Health Organization

**Strategies & Information**
- Consider advanced education as a clinical nurse specialist or nurse practitioner to be more marketable.
- Learn a foreign language and an appreciation for other cultures. Study or volunteer abroad.
- Participate in medical mission trips.
- Inquire about the need for additional preparation in religious studies or similar courses.
- Research nursing requirements in other countries.

**Other Areas**

**Areas**
- Insurance: Underwriting and Claims
- Sales
- Product Management
- Quality Assurance
- Writing
- Law
- Forensic Nursing
- Healthcare Administration
- Information Management
- Patient Advocacy
- Case Management

**Employers**
- Insurance companies
- Hospitals
- Health maintenance organizations
Business and industry: Pharmaceutical companies, Medical equipment and supplies manufacturers, Medical marketing firms
Law firms
Medical and health publications
Healthcare websites
Healthcare advertising agencies
Public relations firms
Professional associations

Strategies & Information
- Combine interest in nursing and healthcare with another field by earning appropriate graduate degrees or gaining relevant experience.
- Minor in business or communications as an undergraduate.
- Develop strong computer skills and an understanding of business practices.
- Gain experience as a staff nurse before taking expertise in another direction.
- Demonstrate initiative and effective leadership.
- Get involved with relevant professional associations.

General Information and Strategies
- Nursing is the largest healthcare field. Three out of five nurses work in hospitals. Many nurses work part-time.
- Nursing combines science and technology with the desire to help people. One must enjoy helping people of all types and backgrounds.
- Nursing requires both physical stamina and emotional stability. Nurses must be able to follow orders and direct others.
- Other qualities important to the field include orientation to detail, sympathy and concern, responsibility, and the ability to handle stress and emergency situations.
- There are multiple educational paths to acquire the Bachelor of Science Nursing (BSN) degree and the Registered Nurse (RN) designation. Research alternatives such as accelerated BSN programs or Master’s Entry programs.
- All states regulate nursing by requiring licensure. Investigate individual state requirements if planning to relocate.
- Earn a master’s degree to prepare for advanced practice nursing including: clinical nurse specialist, nurse practitioner, nurse midwife, nurse anesthetist, and administration. Earn a doctoral degree for research or teaching at a university.
- Many opportunities outside of traditional nursing exist for RN's who want to work in non-clinical roles. Research the skills, experiences, and degrees necessary to attain these positions.

Major Exploration
Kansas State
www.k-state.edu/acic/majorin/pre-nursing.htm

McGill University

University of Delaware
http://www.udel.edu/CSC/nur.html

Rutgers University
http://careerservices.rutgers.edu/mh/nursing.shtml

Career Exploration
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Education/nurse_ed/career.htm

Occupational Outlook Information
Registered Nurses
http://stats.bls.gov/oco/ocos083.htm
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses
http://stats.bls.gov/oco/ocos102.htm

Discover Nursing
www.discovernursing.com

Nursing Career Profiles from Nurse Week
www.nurse.com/students/careersinnursing.html

Sloan Foundation Careers in Science, Technology and Medicine
www.careercornerstone.org/nurse/nurse.htm

Explore Health Careers

Medical and Public Health Jobs with the Federal Government
www.makingthedifference.org/federalcareers/medicalpublichealth.shtml

Nursing Schools
Nursing Degree Directory
http://www.bestnursingdegree.com/

Job Postings
Nursing Careers
www.nurse.com/jobs/

Professional Associations
Sigma Theta Tau International
www.nursingsociety.org

American Nurses Association
www.nursingworld.org

American Association of Nurse Anesthetists
www.aana.com

The Career Center
Br. Urban Gregory Hall
925.631.4600
www.stmarys-ca.edu/careercenter

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