



VANDERBILT 2018-2019 PRE-NURSING HANDBOOK FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

BS/MSN PEABODY COLLEGE OF EDUCATION & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
BA/MSN COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Vanderbilt's Advanced Practice Nursing Specialties for Vanderbilt Undergraduates	3
Dual Degrees	3
Vanderbilt Pre-Nursing Society	4
2018-2019 Officers:	5
Paths to Becoming a Registered Nurse	5
Pre-Nursing Options at Vanderbilt.....	5
Pre-Nursing Studies at Peabody College	6
a) Child Development:	6
b) Human and Organizational Development/Health and Human Services Track:	6
Pre-Nursing Studies in the College of Arts and Science.....	7
Advantages and Challenges of Vanderbilt's Program	8
Frequently Asked Questions about Pre-Nursing.....	8
What should be my major?	8
Which specialty area should I apply to?.....	8
When should I apply?	9
Five-Year or the senior year in absentia program from Peabody and A&S.....	9
How Do I Learn More about the Pre-Nursing	9
Options at Vanderbilt?	9
Advice for Student by Students	10
Required Prerequisite Courses.....	11
Statement of Purpose and Responses to Application Questions.....	12
Statement of Purpose.....	13
Responses to Application	13
Suggestions	13
Official Transcripts	14
Faculty Contacts.....	15

Introduction

The following handbook was created for those undergraduate students interested in obtaining a Master's of Science degree in Nursing offered by Vanderbilt University. Although Vanderbilt University School of Nursing does not offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree, undergraduate students may complete a Bachelor of Science (BS) at Peabody College or the Bachelor of Arts (BA) from the College of Arts and Science and apply for admission to the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) degree program at Vanderbilt's School of Nursing.

Students enrolled at Vanderbilt in the **fall 2017** semester may be eligible to complete the senior-in-absentia program offered in the College of Arts and Science and Peabody College. This accelerated 12-semester program of study can be taken within a five-calendar year period of time or students can complete the bachelor's degree in the usual four years (8 semesters) and then enter the MSN program for an additional two calendar years (6 semesters). Students enrolling after fall 2017 **are not eligible** for the senior year in absentia program but are strongly encouraged to apply for MSN admission by November 1st of their senior year at Vanderbilt.

Regardless of whether students enter through the senior-in-absentia path or after completion of an undergraduate degree, all students will have had the experience of dividing their academic career between liberal arts major and the health sciences center of a major university. This unique combination of study provides the student with an excellent nursing education, strongly complemented by study in the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences. The profession of nursing builds on a liberal education, and a university provides the best possible environment for this kind of education.

The first professional degree in nursing at Vanderbilt is the Master of Science in Nursing. The increase in knowledge and scope of nursing responsibilities, as well as changes in roles, functions and practice settings, require a post-baccalaureate nursing education that builds on a rich liberal education base and a baccalaureate in nursing or its equivalent. Vanderbilt's MSN program is based on a variety of

cognitive styles, life experiences, and educational backgrounds, and its flexibility allows all students to achieve the same goals through different options.

Vanderbilt offers the MSN degree in a wide variety of specialties. Students entering the MSN program through the pre-nursing pathway are eligible to apply to one of the following specialties:

Vanderbilt's Advanced Practice Nursing Specialties for Vanderbilt Undergraduates

- [Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner +](#)
- [Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner*](#)
- [Family Nurse Practitioner *](#)
- [Nurse-Midwifery](#)
- [Nurse-Midwifery/Family Nurse Practitioner Dual Focus](#)
- [Pediatric Primary Care Nurse Practitioner*](#)
- [Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner \(Lifespan\) +](#)
- [Women's Health Nurse Practitioner*](#)
- [Women's Health Nurse Practitioner/Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner Dual Focus*](#)

Dual Degrees

[MSN/M.Div. & MSN/MTS- Dual Degree](#) (on campus only)

+ *Offered in modified learning (block) format for RNs who live at a distance. Students entering as non-RNs must complete entire program in Nashville*

* *Offered in modified learning (block) format for students who live at a distance. Non-RNs must spend first 3 semesters (one calendar year) in Nashville for pre-specialty year.*

There are a variety of undergraduate majors that are natural complements to nursing specialty areas. Examples include: **psychology** & psychiatric-mental health, **women's studies** and either nurse-midwifery or women's health, medicine, health and society, and **child development** & pediatric primary care nurse practitioner, to name a few.

Students in the Pre-Nursing Program will be challenged by the exciting and rigorous course of study. The program requires strong commitment and continual dedication to learning. There is much to consider as you explore the option of pre-nursing at Vanderbilt and the following handbook is designed to assist you in this process.

This handbook is updated annually to reflect the changing guidelines and policies for Peabody and the College of Arts and Science. Please refer to the black *"The Bulletin of Vanderbilt University – Undergraduate Catalog 2018-19"* for more information. You may also find it helpful to visit the Vanderbilt School of Nursing website at <https://nursing.vanderbilt.edu/>. It is also suggested that anyone interested in nursing at Vanderbilt should become a part of the Pre-Nursing Society and contact the Admissions Office of the School of Nursing.

Vanderbilt Pre-Nursing Society

The Pre-Nursing Society is a Vanderbilt Student Organization that is open to any student that has an interest in nursing and who has or is taking the prerequisite nursing classes. The organization holds monthly meetings usually at the Vanderbilt University School of Nursing.

The major goals of this organization are to explore the field of nursing and increase the understanding of the role of the advance practice nurse. This will be accomplished through:

- Participation in presentations, panel discussions, community service and other pertinent events;
- Exposure to clinical settings via 1-1 interviews with a nurse practitioner or via shadowing. Students are responsible for arranging their shadowing experience in consultation with their Pre-Nursing advisor. Contact the pre-nursing academic advisor jana.lauderdale@vanderbilt.edu or call 615-343-2228
- Networking opportunities in the nursing community, and;
- Liaison activities between undergraduate and graduate nursing students.

2018-2019 Officers:

Co-Presidents:

Haley Jones: haley.a.jones@vanderbilt.edu

Megan Flagg: megan.b.flagg@vanderbilt.edu

Secretary:

Corinna Lin: corinna.lin@vanderbilt.edu

Treasurer:

Doreen Li: yiheng.li@vanderbilt.edu

Community Service Chair:

Jamaria Southward: jamaria.j.southward@vanderbilt.edu

PR Chair:

Kristen Roemer: kristen.e.roemer@vanderbilt.edu

Shadowing Coordinators:

Negest Alemu: negest.alemu@vanderbilt.edu

Tia Kellman: tia.a.kellman@vanderbilt.edu

Paths to Becoming a Registered Nurse

Vanderbilt School of Nursing offers several paths you can take to become a Registered Nurse. You can apply with either an Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) or a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing (BSN). Vanderbilt also offers a non-traditional path, which is to graduate with a Bachelor's degree in another field then, continuing on to complete the Masters of Science in Nursing degree. For those who pursue the MSN you will be qualified to practice as an advance practice nurse in your chosen specialty area, once successful program completion, licensing and credentialing are realized.

Pre-Nursing Options at Vanderbilt

Students interested in nursing at Vanderbilt may apply for admission to either Peabody College or the College of Arts and Science and indicate that pre-nursing is their intended program of study.

Pre-Nursing Studies at Peabody College

Students eligible for senior year in absentia at Peabody College complete a major in human and organizational development or child development and earn both a BS and an MSN through a senior-in-absentia program. Students enrolling after Fall 2017 **are not eligible** for the senior year in absentia program but are strongly encouraged to apply for MSN admission by November 1st of their senior year at Vanderbilt. Students must satisfy admission requirements for the MSN program.

Upon admission to the School of Nursing, the student is required to complete six semesters (two calendar years) of full-time study to earn the MSN. Under this option, students complete their first three years of study (91 credits) at Peabody, apply for admission to the School of Nursing by November 1st of their junior year, and, upon admission, take generalist nursing courses their senior year. Upon successful completion of the fall and spring semester nursing course work, students are awarded the BS in human and organizational development or child development. They then continue for a minimum of four additional semesters (summer, fall, spring, and summer) to earn the Master of Science in nursing.

The BS degree is conferred by Peabody College at the end of the spring semester. The MSN is conferred by the School of Nursing at the end of the fifth year.

Students who choose pre-nursing at Peabody can choose from at least three majors:

1. Major Areas

- a) **Child Development:** (The Department of Psychology and Human Development). This major is recommended for those students interested in pediatric primary care, family, or psychiatric mental health.
- b) **Human and Organizational Development/Health and Human Services Track:** (The Department of Human and Organizational Development HOD.) This major is strongly recommended for students who are interested in nursing from a community (including counseling and working in health/human service organizations), organizational,

administrative, or public health perspective or students who are unsure of their specialty area.

- c) **Child Studies:** For information contact Dr. Vicki Harris at vicki.s.harris@vanderbilt.edu.

Pre-Nursing Studies in the College of Arts and Science

Students enrolling *after fall 2017* **are not eligible** for the senior year in absentia program but are strongly encouraged to apply for MSN admission by November 1st of their senior year at Vanderbilt.

Students enrolled at Vanderbilt *in fall 2017* **are eligible** to obtain both the baccalaureate degree and the MSN degree by combining three and one-half years (105 credit hours) of study in the College of Arts and Science with six semesters of study in the School of Nursing.

Students eligible for the senior year in absentia program will receive the baccalaureate from the College at the end of the eighth semester under the senior-in-absentia program and the MSN from the School of Nursing after completing an additional five consecutive semesters of study. This program of study requires that students complete the general curriculum requirements for the baccalaureate degree and satisfy the prerequisite courses for admission to the School of Nursing.

The first three semesters in nursing are accelerated generalist nursing courses and serve as a “bridge” into the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program by preparing students for the NCLEX exam to become a Registered Nurse (RN). These courses also provide the foundation equivalent to the bachelor’s degree in nursing for course work in the selected nursing specialty. Upon completion of three semesters of pre-specialty courses, students enter a minimum of an additional three-semester sequence of courses in their declared specialty in order to earn the MSN degree.

Students must apply to the School of Nursing for admission to the senior-in-absentia program by November 1st of their junior year. Students are subject to all nursing school admission requirements, and no student is assured of admission to the School of Nursing.

Up to 16 hours of School of Nursing courses approved by the College may be counted toward completion of the undergraduate degree. Upon acceptance to the School of Nursing, students will be assigned an adviser and should schedule an advising appointment.

Advantages and Challenges of Vanderbilt's Program

The nursing program of study is a rigorous, accelerated sequence of courses. Students are eligible to take the National Council Licensing Exam for Registered Nurses at the end of the first three semesters of nursing coursework and must secure licensure as an RN before beginning the clinical component of the specialty year (last three semesters).

The nursing courses include clinical work every semester. During the first three semesters the majority of the clinical work is conducted in a hospital setting conforming to the daily shift schedule of the health care providers (usually 6:30 AM- 7:00 PM or a combination of day and evening shifts). Some of the clinical experiences may occur on weekends as well. The curriculum is fast paced and includes a variety of types of clinical experiences that are prescribed by the licensing and accreditation boards. Students find the schedule differs from the typical undergraduate course time frames, and while challenging, will give the student a "real world," faculty directed, health care experience.

Frequently Asked Questions about Pre-Nursing

What should be my major?

Students interested in the pre-nursing program at **Peabody College** major in Human and Organizational Development or Child Development.

If you are interested in family (FNP), pediatric primary care (PNP), or psychiatric nursing (PMHNP), it is recommended that you major or minor in Child Development. **Students in Arts and Science may choose any major.**

Which specialty area should I apply to?

When applying to the School of Nursing (for any entry option), you must apply to a specialty area.

If you are not sure of what you would like to specialize in, it is important to get as much experience as possible exploring the various options to make your specialty choice. It is recommended that you interview an advanced practice nurse in the area of your interest as well as spend time volunteering in hospital and clinic settings to learn more about health care delivery and your interest areas. For information on the specialties, visit the Vanderbilt School of Nursing webpage at <https://nursing.vanderbilt.edu> and attend one of the Open Houses that are held in the fall and spring each year. It is recommended that you begin attending the Open House in the spring semester of your freshman year to be able to have multiple opportunities to interact with faculty about the possibilities for a major at VUSN.

When should I apply?

Five-Year or the senior year in absentia program from Peabody and A&S:

**This option only available to students enrolled at Vanderbilt University in fall 2017.*

Once a student completes the 91 hrs. required by Peabody or the 105 hrs. required by A&S, students are eligible to apply for admission by **November 1st of their junior year.**

Regular BS or BA Graduates:

**This option is for students enrolled at Vanderbilt University after fall 2017.*

Students interested in completing the regular four-year BS or BA degree programs followed by two years (6 semesters) of graduate work should apply by **November 1st of their senior year.**

How Do I Learn More about the Pre-Nursing Options at Vanderbilt?

There are several ways to learn more about the pre-nursing options at Vanderbilt:

1. Visit the Vanderbilt School of Nursing webpage <https://nursing.vanderbilt.edu>
2. Join the Vanderbilt Pre-Nursing Society. Contact the PNS Co-presidents for information: haley.a.jones@vanderbilt.edu or megan.b.flagg@vanderbilt.edu
3. Attend an MSN program information session offered most Tuesdays and Fridays at 10:00 am. RSVP online at https://apply.vanderbilt.edu/portal/nursing_info_session

4. Set up a meeting with the Prenursing Advisor, Dr. Jana Lauderdale (jana.lauderdale@vanderbilt.edu), to discuss your interest areas.

Attend at least one of the Vanderbilt School of Nursing Open Houses held twice per year; the dates are **October 6, 2018 and March 2, 2019**.

Contact the Admissions Office for more information on Open House.

6. Make an appointment to talk with Specialty Directors with your questions following the Open House. E-mail Dr. Lauderdale and/or the program faculty. The better you know the faculty, the more you will know about the chosen specialty and your fit within it.
7. Contact the undergraduate pre-nursing advisor Dean Roger Moore (A&S); Dr. Vicki Harris, Child Studies (Peabody); or Vicki Scalf (HOD). Contact information is located on page 16.

Advice for Student by Students

This handbook has been designed to offer you a brief overview of Vanderbilt's School of Nursing and the admission process.

The following are recommendations from our past and current students for consideration as you explore your interest in the health care field:

1. Volunteer, Interview or Shadow

Volunteering at the VUMC or Monroe Carroll Junior Children's Hospital is a wonderful way to explore different fields of nursing/medicine and immerse oneself in the patient environment. Volunteering at one of the two Vanderbilt Hospitals is a minimal time commitment, but a unique and rewarding experience. There are opportunities for college students to volunteer in both the school year and summer months. Contact Volunteer services for both hospitals at volunteer.services@vanderbilt.edu or by phone at (615)-322-2379, for more information and an application. *You will also receive volunteer and community service opportunities through the Vanderbilt PNS organization.*

Additionally, interviewing or shadowing an advanced practice nurse is a valuable experience. If you know a nurse practitioner in your community, request an interview to discuss their advanced practice role. Nurse Practitioners in the Nashville area are available for 1-1 interviews with prospective students. Contact the PNS nursing advisor (jana.lauderdale@vanderbilt.edu) for information.

*A Shadowing Program for PNS members is available. Contact the PNS shadowing coordinators for more information: Tia Kellman (tia.a.kellman@vanderbilt.edu) or Negest Alemu: (negest.alemu@vanderbilt.edu)

2. CPR Certification

CPR training is required prior to starting the first semester of Nursing School. Contact the American Heart Association (615) 256-1818 for information. Remember to ask for the **“health care provider course”** when you sign up, as this is a requirement for VUSN (includes infant, child and adult CPR).

Required Prerequisite Courses

No matter which entry option you choose, the following courses are required as prerequisites for matriculating into the nursing program, but not required at the time you apply:

- 3 hours of Statistics
- **Microbiology: MHS 1500 (3-4 variable credit) offered spring semester only.
- **Human Anatomy & Physiology (MHS 3101 & 3102) (4 credits each) Fall/Spring; must take MHS 3101 before MHS 3102; also, you must have a semester of biology as a prerequisite or you can use MHS 1500 Microbiology for this prerequisite if you have a strong biology foundation from high school. Meet with the nursing advisor to discuss your options jana.lauderdale@vanderbilt.edu.
- **Nutrition: MHS 1600 Introduction to Nutrition and Health for a Changing World (3 credits) offered fall & spring

- Developmental Psychology: HOD 1250 or PSY-PC 1250
- Other prerequisite requirement:

American Heart Association CPR Approved Certification (this is required before matriculating into the nursing program, not required to apply) **Remember to ask for the **“health care provider”** course when you sign up, as this is a requirement for VUSN (includes infant, child and adult CPR). Usually offered at the SON, check with the PNS president.

*****Note: All nursing courses meet science requirement for Peabody students.***

Application Process

To assist in the application process and to ensure a quality application, it is necessary to become familiar with the admission requirements early. Whether you are in the process of applying or simply interested in what it entails, this section will not only explain the requirements, but will also provide recommendations and suggestions on how to create a well-rounded application. The online application is available on the School of Nursing web page at <https://nursing.vanderbilt.edu>. The online application for fall 2019 will open after mid-September 2018. Your official application must contain the following:

- Statement of Purpose
- Responses to application questions
- Official Transcripts
- Three Letters of Recommendation
- Resume (Optional)

Statement of Purpose and Responses to Application Questions:

Submit as part of the online application. Your Statement of Purpose and responses to application questions should address your first choice of specialty. **It is not possible to enter the program without choosing your specialty area.**

You should only **apply to one specialty** on your application. Please make sure that you thoughtfully choose your specialty prior to beginning the admission process. **After admission, it is very difficult to change specialties.**

Statement of Purpose: Submit as part of online application.

The Statement of Purpose (750 words maximum) should reflect your understanding of the role of the advanced practice nurse and your interest in a particular patient population. Before writing your statement of purpose, please carefully review information about the specialty on our web site so that you clearly indicate to the faculty that your career goals are a fit with the specialty.

Students are offered admission to their selected specialty; it is not possible to enter the program undecided about your specialty area. While the online application system will allow you to submit more than one application, the School of Nursing can only consider one application per student per term.

Responses to Application: Questions are submitted as part of the online application. Each question is to be answered in 100-250 words. Both the writing style (grammar, punctuation, spelling, word use, etc.) and the content of your responses will be reviewed as part of the overall application. In addition to the written responses and, after a preliminary review of the application, applicants to the Nurse-Midwifery and Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner specialty may be invited to schedule a phone interview with a faculty member. Other specialties may request a phone interview if necessary.

Suggestions: The application questions require you to examine yourself and your role as a future professional. It is highly recommended that you ask yourself these questions early and begin to cultivate answers. There is no set length for each response, or right or wrong answers. The key is to write concise, well-reasoned answers that demonstrate your individuality and your ability to maturely handle the demands of a rigorous graduate program.

Please consider the following points:

- In both the statement of purpose and application question responses, be sure to demonstrate your understanding of the **role of the advanced practice nurse in the specialty you have chosen**. The VUSN faculty wants to be sure that you have a **clear understanding** of the career that you have chosen to undertake.

- The School of Nursing is committed to the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion. Read the VUSN diversity and inclusion position statement <https://nursing.vanderbilt.edu/about/diversity/index.php> and consider how you will contribute to a diverse and inclusive environment at VUSN.
- Do not be afraid to talk about your **achievements, or special talents** that would contribute to your ability to be an effective practitioner including, **experiences** you have had working with underserved or at-risk populations. ***This is a competitive program with limited enrollment so be sure to differentiate yourself from other applicants.***

Official Transcripts: * Applicants should request electronic transcripts. Please **do not** have paper copies mailed. **Please note:** Applicants must submit **official** transcripts from all post High School studies. To avoid errors, start your online application at <https://apply.vanderbilt.edu/apply/> before submitting transcripts.

Students admitted to this program must have earned an undergraduate grade point average of at least a "B," or a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. **The average GPA for the entering fall 2018 class was 3.5+**

Official Vanderbilt transcripts can be obtained online at www.vanderbilt.edu/aai.

The procedure is as follows:

- Go to www.Vanderbilt.edu/aai
- Log in with your VUnet ID and Password
- Look at the Tabs on the Top of the Page and click: Order Transcript
- Fill out the instructions on the web page, and have the transcript sent to the Center for Data Management (address above)
- Click Submit

1. **Letters of Recommendation: Submitted Online**

All applicants must provide three letters of academic or professional reference. Your letters should be submitted by faculty members, professional colleagues, or job supervisors who can evaluate your potential for success in a graduate program. Since you are a current VU student, it is strongly recommended that at least two letters come from VU faculty familiar with your academic ability.

Additional letters from professionals will be accepted, but not required. Make sure the people completing your references, have direct knowledge of your abilities

and keep in mind, more is not better, quality of the reference is more important as to their knowledge of your academic or work performance.

Titles are not as important as the people who know you well. You will need to provide a valid e-mail address of your recommenders. The online application system will prompt you how to send the letters electronically.

2. Resume: (optional)

Submitting a resume provides another opportunity for applicants to demonstrate volunteer and/or academic honors and activities.

Faculty Contacts

A&S Students

Dean Roger Moore
(615) 322-2844
roger.e.moore@vanderbilt.edu

Child Development and Child Studies Majors

Professor Vicki Harris
(615) 343-1896
vicki.s.harris@vanderbilt.edu

HOD Majors

Ms. Vicki Scalf, Program Coordinator
(615) 322-8495
vicki.scalf@vanderbilt.edu

Vanderbilt School of Nursing

Pre-Nursing Advisor
Dr. Jana Lauderdale
(615) 343-2228
jana.lauderdale@vanderbilt.edu

VUSN Admissions Office

(615) 322-3800
vusn-admissions@vanderbilt.edu

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