

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY



School of Nursing

# 2015-2016 PRE-NURSING HANDBOOK FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

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

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## 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), 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 earn a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) degree from Vanderbilt's School of Nursing. 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). All undergraduate students interested in this option will be designated as Pre-Nursing Students (Peabody) or Joint Baccalaureate-MSN (A&S) interested in the Pre-Nursing Option. Students who complete the five- or six-year program of studies 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 Acute Care Nurse Practitioner - Hospitalist](#)
- [Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner - Intensivist](#)
- [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/MDiv & 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. Additional examples are given in the Peabody section of this handbook.

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 – 2015-2016"* for more information. You may also find it helpful to visit the Vanderbilt School of Nursing website at [www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu](http://www.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, discover the pre-nursing options at Vanderbilt, and increase the understanding of the role of the advance practice nurse. This will be accomplished through:

- Participation in conferences, 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 Dr. Jana Lauderdale, Pre-Nursing advisor;
- Networking opportunities in the nursing community, and;
- Liaison activities between undergraduate and graduate nursing students.

### **2015-2016 Officers:**

President: Kathleen Alvarez (fall 2015) [kathleen.m.alvarez@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:kathleen.m.alvarez@vanderbilt.edu)  
Kathryn Seeger (spring 2016) [kathryn.seeger@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:kathryn.seeger@vanderbilt.edu)  
VP Peabody: Emily Thermos [emily.t.thermos@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:emily.t.thermos@vanderbilt.edu)

Finance: Lillian Funkhouser [lillian.g.funkhouser@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:lillian.g.funkhouser@vanderbilt.edu)

Community Service: Maria Ramos [maria.l.ramos@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:maria.l.ramos@vanderbilt.edu)

PR: Rachael Wills [rachael.e.wills@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:rachael.e.wills@vanderbilt.edu)

Secretary: Sydney McMillen [jessica.s.mcmillen@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:jessica.s.mcmillen@vanderbilt.edu)

If you have questions about the Pre-Nursing Society contact:

Kathleen Alvarez in fall 2015 ([kathleen.m.alvarez@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:kathleen.m.alvarez@vanderbilt.edu)) or beginning spring 2016 please contact Kathryn Seeger ([kathryn.seeger@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:kathryn.seeger@vanderbilt.edu)).

## Paths to Becoming a Registered Nurse

Currently there are several paths you can take to become a Registered Nurse, including Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN), a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing (BSN), and Vanderbilt's offering which is to graduate with a Bachelor's degree in another field, continuing on to complete the Masters of Science in Nursing degree. For those who pursue the MSN you will be allowed 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 who choose pre-nursing at Peabody can choose from at least two majors and two entry options:

1. Major Areas
  - a) **Child Development:** (The Department of Psychology and Human Development) This major is strongly recommended for those students interested in pediatric primary care, family, or psychiatric mental health.
  - b) **Health and Human Services:** (The Department of Human and Organizational Development HOD) This major is strongly recommended for students who are interested in nursing and unsure of their specialty area.
  - c) **Child Studies:** Major currently under review. Contact Dr. Vicki Harris at [vicki.s.harris@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:vicki.s.harris@vanderbilt.edu).
2. Two Degree Options:
  - a) **5-Year Program:** Complete a major in Child Development or HOD/HHS and earn both a BS and a MSN.

With this option, students complete their Peabody major during the first three years of study, earning **91** hours before fall of their senior year. Students apply for admission to the School of Nursing before November 1<sup>st</sup> of their junior year.

Upon admission, students take generalist nursing courses their senior year, formally transferring to the School of Nursing for spring semester of their senior year. Upon successful completion of the fall and spring semesters of course work (31 hours) students are awarded the BS in Human Development. The BS is conferred by Peabody College at the end of spring semester senior year.

Students continue in the School of Nursing for four additional semesters (summer, fall, spring, and summer) to earn the Master of Science in Nursing.

- b) **6-Year Program-Regular BS Degree:** Complete degree requirements at Peabody, nursing prerequisite courses, and then enter the School of Nursing in the fall after receiving the bachelor's degree from Vanderbilt.

### **Pre-Nursing Studies in the College of Arts and Science**

Students who choose to pursue pre-nursing in the College of Arts and Science may choose from the following options:

#### **Joint Baccalaureate MSN Option (5-Year Program):**

1. Students must complete the requirements for the Bachelor's degree (AXLE or general requirements, at least one major, nursing prerequisites, 105 hours) by the beginning of the Fall Semester senior year. Students apply by **November 1<sup>st</sup> of the junior year.**
2. The first semester in the School of Nursing (16 hours) will transfer to the College of Arts and Science and be applied to the remaining hours required for the Bachelor of Arts degree. The student is awarded the BA degree the December following the successful completion of fall semester in nursing school.

3. Students finish five additional semesters of study in the School of Nursing to earn the Masters of Science in Nursing.

**Regular BA Degree (6-Year Program)** A student must complete degree requirements at the College of Arts and Sciences, nursing prerequisites, and enter the School of Nursing after graduation from Vanderbilt.

### **Advantages and Challenges of Vanderbilt's Five-Year 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 healthcare 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, Child Development or Child Studies (proposed).

If you are interested in family, pediatric primary care, or psychiatric nursing, 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 [www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu](http://www.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 Pre-Specialty (Peabody) and Pre-Baccalaureate (A&S) Program:**

Students should apply for admission by ***November 1<sup>st</sup> of their junior year.***

#### **Regular BS or BA Graduates**

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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 [www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu](http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu).
2. Join the Vanderbilt Pre-Nursing Society. Contact the PNS president for information: [kendra.osborn@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:kendra.osborn@vanderbilt.edu).
3. Contact school of nursing admission counselor to explore options of interest to you (615) 322-3800.
4. Set up a meeting with the pre-nursing advisor, Dr. Jana Lauderdale ([jana.lauderdale@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:jana.lauderdale@vanderbilt.edu)), to discuss your interest areas.
5. Attend at least one of the Vanderbilt School of Nursing Open Houses held twice per year; the dates are **October 3, 2015** and **March 2016**. 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 in either A&S (Dean Roger Moore) or Peabody (Professors Vera Chatman, William Turner or Vicki Harris), 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 medicine and immerse oneself in the patient environment. Volunteering at one of the two Vanderbilt Hospitals is a minimal time commitment, but 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](mailto:volunteer.services@vanderbilt.edu) or by phone at 615.322.2379, for more information and an application. You will also receive volunteer 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](mailto:jana.lauderdale@vanderbilt.edu)) for information.

In fall 2014 we initiated the PNS Shadowing Program. Contact the PNS president, Kathleen Alvarez for more information.

## 2. NATS

NATS, Inc. offers a 5 week, 120 hour training program for Nurse Technicians located here in Nashville. The purpose of the NATS program is to provide comprehensive classroom and clinical training which will enhance and improve levels of technical performance to prepare students to perform as an effective member of the health care team. An inherent purpose of the program is to prepare students to take the State Competency Evaluation required by the Tennessee Department of Health and Environment for placement on the State Nursing Assistant Registry.

For additional information, please visit [www.natscnt.com](http://www.natscnt.com). ***\*Note: this program is optional. VUSN does not endorse any one particular Nursing Assistant program.***

### 3. 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). \*PNS does not make arrangements for the CPR course for its members.

## 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: NURS 1500 (3-4 variable credit) offered spring semester only
- \*\*Human Anatomy & Physiology (NURS 3101 & 3102) (4 credits each) Fall/Spring; must take NURS 3101 before NURS 3102; must have a semester of chemistry or biology as a prerequisite; can use NURS 1500 Microbiology for this prerequisite
- \*\*Nutrition: NURS 1601 (2 credits) offered fall & spring
- Developmental Psychology: HOD 1250 or PSY-PL 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).

***\*\*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 [www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu](http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu). The online application for fall 2015 will open after September 15, 2015. Your official application must contain the following:

- Statement of Purpose
- Responses to 6 application questions
- Official Transcripts
- Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores
- Three Letters of Recommendation
- Resume (Optional)

### Statement of Purpose and Responses to Application Questions:

Submit as part of 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 is your opportunity to explain what you are planning to do with your career after you finish your Master's Degree. This statement helps the faculty determine your fit within the specialties offered at VUSN as well as to plan for your specific needs in terms of clinical experiences and professional networking. There is no set length for this statement however, it is generally at least a full page in length. Be sure that this statement directly reflects the health care delivery and role of the advanced practice nurse of your specialty and that you have specified what you plan to do with your career, short and long

term, you may want to consider writing about why you are choosing this specialty, and what is important to you in your career.

**Responses to Application:** Submit as part of online application. The six questions ask for your response to a number of issues pertaining to nursing, nursing specialties, and the tasks of an adult learner. 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, applicants to the Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner specialty are required to have a phone interview with a faculty member. Other specialties may request a phone interview.

**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 interview survey, 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.
- Do not be afraid to talk about your **achievements, or special talents** that would contribute to your ability to be an effective practitioner, and **experiences** you have had working in health care (with underserved populations, the elderly, children, the homeless etc.). ***This is a competitive program with limited enrollment so be sure to differentiate yourself from other applicants.***

**Official Transcripts:** \*Must be mailed to the *Center for Data Management, Vanderbilt University, PMB 407833, 2301 Vanderbilt Place, Nashville, TN 37240.*

**Please note:** Applicants must submit **official** transcripts from all post High School studies. 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 2015 class was 3.5.**

Official Vanderbilt transcripts can be obtained online at [www.vanderbilt.edu/aai](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/aai).

The procedure is as follows:

- Go to [www.Vanderbilt.edu/aai](http://www.Vanderbilt.edu/aai)
- Log in with your VUnetID 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

## GRE Test Information

Applicants take the GRE General Test, a computer-based exam, which consists of verbal, quantitative and writing sections and is required as part of the nursing school acceptance criteria.

**Graduate Record Examination (GRE):** Information (testing centers, fees, preparation, and registration) on the exam is available on the GRE website [www.gre.org](http://www.gre.org).

Send scores to the school:

**Vanderbilt school code is 1871; the Nursing School code is 0610.**

\*Please visit the GRE website at [www.gre.org](http://www.gre.org) for further information on testing centers, fees, preparation, and registration, as changes apply.

\*It is recommended you take a GRE preparation course such as the Kaplan or Princeton Review.

### Local Sites

The GRE general test is available year round in many locations. It is administered in the Nashville area at:

Tennessee State University  
TSU Avon Williams Campus  
330 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. North, Room 220  
Nashville, TN 37203

Nashville – Donelson Pike  
1410 Donelson Pike, Suite A-11  
Nashville, TN 37217

Clarksville – Forbes Avenue  
220 Forbes Ave., Suite B  
Clarksville, TN 37040

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

All applicants must provide three letters of professional reference.

These letters should be submitted by faculty members, professional colleagues, or job supervisors who can evaluate your potential for success in a graduate program. Recommendations from friends, other students or co-workers are not appropriate.

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](mailto:roger.e.moore@vanderbilt.edu)

### **Child Development and Child Studies Majors**

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

### **HOD Majors**

Professor Vera Chatman  
(615) 343-1924  
[vera.a.chatman@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:vera.a.chatman@vanderbilt.edu)

Professor William Turner  
(615) 343-8715  
[william.l.turner@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:william.l.turner@vanderbilt.edu)

### **Vanderbilt School of Nursing**

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

### **VUSN Admissions Office**

(615) 322-3800  
[vusn-admissions@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:vusn-admissions@vanderbilt.edu)

*Revised 07/15 JL*