

University of Washington School of Nursing – Seattle Campus

Exploratory Direct Admissions Study November 2022

In its 2022 supplemental operating budget effective March 31, 2022, the Washington State Legislature required the University of Washington School of Nursing (SoN) to explore pathways to provide direct admissions to Seattle campus nursing programs. This exploratory study includes background and definitions, recommendations for direct admissions, a timeline (Appendix A), estimated costs (Appendix B), an exploratory scan of other schools' admission pathways (Appendix C), and a [SoN Fact Sheet](#) (Appendix D).

Our overall mission is to advance nursing science and practice through generating knowledge and educating future leaders to address health for all. Our vision is to lead in improving health and health care via innovative nursing science, education and practice. In undergraduate education, our focus is to graduate BSN-prepared Registered Nurses (RNs) who reflect our Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Strategic Action Plan outcomes into the regional workforce.

We offer degree programs at all three UW campuses, with the Seattle campus offering:

- **Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)** - a two-year (six quarter) program typically for full-time students pursuing their first bachelor's. Rare exceptions include postbaccalaureate students and state employees participating in the tuition exemption program.
- **Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSN)** - a one-year (four quarter) full-time program for students with any prior bachelor's or equivalent and the nursing prerequisites.
- Three graduate programs: **Master of Science (MS-CIPCT)**, **Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)**, and **Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing Science (PhD)**

Direct admission, for this study, is defined as simultaneous admission to both a four-year college or university and one of its capacity-constrained major fields of undergraduate study that requires successful completion of college-level prerequisite coursework. By contrast, traditional admission to an undergraduate major is defined, for this study, as a separate step typically taken after enrollment in the college or university and after the successful completion of a capacity-constrained major's prerequisites. Note that "direct admission" can be used in other states and provinces to mean other types of educational pathways. For example, in British Columbia and Idaho it's used for programs that have to do with high school graduates gaining access to post-secondary education regardless of the future major area of study. Our exploratory scan of other schools' admission pathways (Appendix C) focused on nursing programs nationwide and on UW majors. Also note that traditional admission to a major, while distinct from admission to the college or university, could in some cases happen simultaneously with college/university admission, e.g., transfer and running start students ready to apply for both at once.

This exploratory study focuses on admission only to the BSN program because:

- ABSN students start their program immediately on UW enrollment. They already earned one or more degrees and successfully completed nursing prerequisites. They apply to UW as postbaccalaureate students only for the four-quarter ABSN program.
- Neither direct nor traditional admission to undergraduate majors is applicable to graduate programs.
- Adding a direct admission process as another path toward a UW BSN is a potential remedy to the issue of undergraduates faced with challenging and disruptive educational decisions when they must choose between staying at UW for their third and fourth years vs. earning a BSN. Many excellent students don't get into the BSN program after completing their first two years of college at UW. Over the past 5 years, more than 2,800 students applied but were not accepted into our BSN program, in addition to those who were accepted and those who did not accept offers.

Admission to the BSN program is exceptionally competitive for multiple reasons including:

- BSN capacity is limited to a maximum of 80 new students each year due to severe systemic workforce constraints in clinical placements and instructor availability.
- The UW and Salish region's overall desirability as a great place to live, study, and work in health care.
- Our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion in all aspects of teaching, research, service and practice.
- We are honored to be ranked by U.S. News & World Report as #1 among public institutions with Doctor of Nursing Practice programs (tied for #2 overall), #1 among public schools with master's degree programs (#5 overall, and specific to UW Bothell and UW Tacoma), tied for #2 as the country's best program, and ranked #1 among public universities for our BSN program. This attracts more and more extraordinarily prepared applicants than our current maximum capacity of 80 new BSN students per year can accommodate.

The traditional path to [BSN admission](#) includes successful completion of two years (90 credit hours, 60 semester hours) of undergraduate coursework including prerequisites, and a clear understanding of the RN role as demonstrated by an ability to reflect thoughtfully on 100+ hours of hands-on healthcare experience and to show why one is a good candidate for the program.

Adding a path to early BSN admission primarily for students coming directly from high school with little or no college coursework would be a significant departure from the holistic approach in place, which requires applicants to demonstrate success in college-level science courses and an affinity for nursing. It would raise the possibility of high attrition among direct admit students who, at that age and/or stage of educational development, would be more likely than students with two or more years of college coursework to change their minds about their educational and career goals. Potential impacts to our pursuit of nursing knowledge and practice that is sufficiently broad in perspective and content to meet the healthcare requirements of a diverse, multicultural population remain unclear. Allocating spots to direct admits might reduce the number of spots for students with less typical educational backgrounds, including transfer and running start students. In addition, this proposal would not increase the total number of nursing enrollment slots available, and would certainly add complexity and cost during an extreme staffing shortage when other projects, particularly expanding the number of A/BSN graduates into the workforce by growing clinical placement opportunities, are urgent top priorities over the next 10 years.

Despite these initial concerns, we developed an exploratory timeline (Appendix A) and budget (Appendix B) for implementing pathways to direct admissions that would allow us to mitigate some of those concerns while innovating to meet some of the most pressing public needs throughout the region. In tandem, the timeline and budget variables could potentially be adjusted to speed up implementation, lower costs, or achieve other goals.

Our recommendations, if we were to initiate steps toward direct admissions, would include:

- Develop holistic wrap-around support services for prospective and enrolled direct admit students, including community-oriented approaches to engaging with future nurses from backgrounds and/or communities whose existing pathways to nursing may not be as robust. The diversity of the nursing workforce is not reflective of the patient population, so expanding programs that are successful in recruiting and retaining diverse nursing students is critical to maximizing successful patient outcomes.
- Invest equally in our capacity to expand spots in our BSN program. This would allow us to admit a larger number of the excellently prepared students who apply to the program, rather than just adding a pathway to the same limited number of spots (80 per year). Further addressing bottlenecks in clinical placement opportunities and instructor retention would allow more future nurse leaders to graduate with a UW BSN in response to the workforce crisis.
- Synchronize the timeline and budget with projects underway, in tune with the effects of the public health crisis on our faculty, staff, students, professional communities, and workforce.

Finally, we would like to express our deep appreciation for your continued support of nursing and of the University of Washington School of Nursing at all three campuses.

APPENDIX A

EXPLORATORY TIMELINE TO DIRECT ADMISSION

Implementation Phases

The total time to implement a direct admission process for the University of Washington Seattle Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program would realistically range from 4 – 6 years in the following six phases.

Phase 1 - Plan (6-9 months)

- Review undergraduate nursing and healthcare admission practices nationwide
- Review direct admission practices statewide and throughout UW
- Identify, engage, and coordinate with the School of Nursing, UW, and external stakeholders
- Align with the School's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan
 - Consider integrating direct admission with our NurseCamp program geared toward increasing access and opportunities in nursing to a more diverse population of high school students.
- Evaluate options, variables and perspectives to decide on the optimal proposal(s)

Phase 2 - Propose & Refine (9-20 months)

The School of Nursing and the University, through mechanisms for shared governance and review, have several venues that would need to review and approve a change in admissions policy for the BSN program, including the following:

- A new undergraduate program [Notice of Proposal](#) in the School of Nursing involves both BSN Coordinating Committee (BSNCC) Approval and Faculty Approval. This takes *at least* 2-3 months, more if during any summer months (2-6 months), and can take longer than these minimum estimates.
- Here is an overview of the overall Notice of Proposal process:
 - "In 2019, the Faculty Council on Tri-Campus Policy (FCTCP) approved this [review stage](#), which must take place *prior* to campus academic program committee review of an undergraduate program proposal. A unit planning to offer a new undergraduate program or make [certain substantive changes](#) to an existing undergraduate program must complete the Notice of Proposal review process. For a detailed view of this process, please refer to this [flowchart](#). To learn more about the undergraduate program proposal process, please refer to these [FAQs](#)."
- SoN would then submit the Notice of Proposal to UW via its Quali approval process tracker, kicking-off UW Curriculum's full, tri-campus [review](#), which can take *at least* 3 months (3-6 months).
- Once UW approves, SoN creates a [new undergraduate program with a one program/multiple credentials relationship](#), which must go through the full SoN approval process prior to submitting to UW's Quali system. This takes *at least* 4 more months, more if in the summer (4-7 months).

Phase 3 - Prepare & Communicate (12-18 months, some possible overlap with phase 4)

- Coordinate with UW admissions, undergraduate advising, and financial aid
- Customize database, and integrate new process with current SoN and UW systems
- Update recruiting and marketing materials

- Plan to engage with diverse community leaders and members
- Hire, onboard, and train staff for recruitment and admissions support
- Hire, onboard, and train staff for first year and second year student support
- Design six 100-level and 200-level courses (three each), propose, refine, gain approvals, integrate new courses with existing systems

Phase 4 - Implement to start (22 months, some possible overlap with phase 3)

- Support and engage with community leaders, school counselors, prospective applicants and their families – January to November (11 months)
- New dual UW and SoN application period – September 1 to November 15th (2 months)
- Applications review – November 15 to February 15 (3 months)
- First-year student notification period – March 1-15 (1 month)
- Accept, orient, support incoming first-year students – March to September (7 months)
- UW matriculation – the first direct admit students start in September as first-year students
- Finalize 3 new 100-level courses and hire faculty (one 100-level course per quarter)
- Collect and analyze data for program evaluation and adjust accordingly

Phase 5 - Implement to sustain (24 months)

- Continue to support and engage with community leaders, school counselors, prospective applicants and their families (ongoing)
- Support first year and second year direct admit students (24 months)
 - Year One: 15 first-year students, one course per quarter (3 new courses)
 - Year Two: 15 first-year and 15 second-year students (30 students, 3 more new courses)
- Continue 3 new 100-level courses, retain faculty, evaluate course goals and outcomes
- Finalize 3 new 200-level courses and hire faculty (one 200-level course per quarter)
- Enroll direct admit students in BSN program two years after UW enrollment in Autumn – 15 direct admit students who remain interested in nursing and in good academic standing would enter the BSN program each year (within the current maximum capacity of 80 total BSN spots per year)
- Graduate direct admit students, together with traditional admit students who all started the two-year BSN program together (two years later in June)
- Collect and analyze data for program evaluation and adjust accordingly

Phase 6 - Sustain (ongoing)

- Support prospective applicants and school counselors
- Support first- and second year direct admit students
 - Year Three and on: 15 first-year, 15 second-year students, 6 courses each year
- Coordinate with UW admissions, undergraduate advising, and financial aid
- Maintain IT systems to manage the additional complexity
- Offer three 100-level and three 200-level courses (one each per quarter, 6 total per year) and evaluate course goals and outcomes
- Collect and analyze data for program evaluation and adjust accordingly (at least every 3-5 years)

APPENDIX C

EXPLORATORY SCAN OF OTHER UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS' ADMISSION PATHWAYS

For this exploratory study, we reached out to national nursing education leaders at the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) about other public institutions' experiences with direct to major undergraduate admission and can provide information about their pending reply on request.

We also collected information on other nursing schools' and on UW major admission pathways. This study was informed by a scan of 30 nursing programs nationwide with a variety of direct admission pathways, which did not indicate a clear benefit or alignment with our BSN program.

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON UNDERGRADUATE MAJORS

Freshman applicants have three primary pathways to a major: pre-major, [direct to major](#) and [direct to college](#). If a student indicates a program that has a direct to major or direct to college pathway as their first-choice major, they are automatically *considered* for that program. Second-choice majors are not considered for direct to major programs. There are three undergraduate major admission categories:

- **Open Admission:** Students in good academic standing are admitted at any time.
- **Selective/Minimum Requirements Admission:** Requires students to complete satisfactorily a set of prerequisite courses with a minimum GPA. All students who meet the minimum requirements are admitted.
- **Capacity-Constrained Admission:** Students must complete all the minimum requirements to apply. Admission is not guaranteed because space is limited. These majors often have application forms and application deadlines; some require standardized tests, recommendations, and/or interviews.

Capacity-constrained UW majors with direct-to-college or direct-to-major admission for incoming first year and/or transfer students include Architecture, Biochemistry, Business Administration, Chemistry, Computer Science, Computer Engineering, Engineering (several/all), Music (several), Construction Management, Informatics, and Neuroscience.

As the exploratory timeline (Appendix A) indicates, one first step to initiate planning for a future direct admission process would be to engage with leaders involved with implementing these pathways in nursing nationwide and in UW undergraduate majors in order to fully understand lessons learned, costs/benefits, outcomes, and best practices.

2022-2023 FACTS

THROUGH INNOVATIVE RESEARCH, TOP ACADEMIC PROGRAMS, AND OUTREACH TO UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES, UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON NURSING SCHOOLS ARE POISED TO TACKLE THE GAPS AND CHALLENGES IN TODAY'S HEALTH CARE SYSTEMS. TOGETHER, OUR STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND STAFF WORK TO TURN IDEAS INTO IMPACT AND IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES LOCALLY AND GLOBALLY.

RANKINGS

#1 AMONG PUBLIC SCHOOLS OFFERING A BSN (Seattle, Bothell, Tacoma)

#1 AMONG PUBLIC SCHOOLS OFFERING A DNP (Seattle)

#5 OVERALL MASTER'S DEGREES (Bothell, Tacoma)

#1 AMONG PUBLIC SCHOOLS OFFERING A MASTER'S (Bothell, Tacoma)

DEGREE PROGRAMS

SCHOOL OF NURSING (Seattle)

- Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)
- Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSBN)
- Master of Science (MS-CIPCT)
- Master of Nursing (MN) (offered in passing to PhD students)
- Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)
- Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing Science (PhD)
- Graduate Certificates

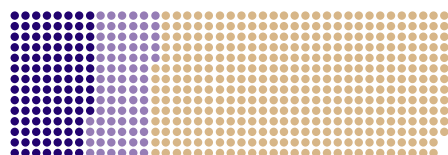
SCHOOL OF NURSING AND HEALTHCARE LEADERSHIP (Tacoma)

- Bachelor of Arts in Healthcare Leadership (BA)
- RN to Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN to BSN)
- Master of Nursing (MN)

SCHOOL OF NURSING & HEALTH STUDIES (Bothell)

- Bachelor of Arts in Health Studies (BA)
- RN to Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN to BSN)
- Master of Nursing (MN)

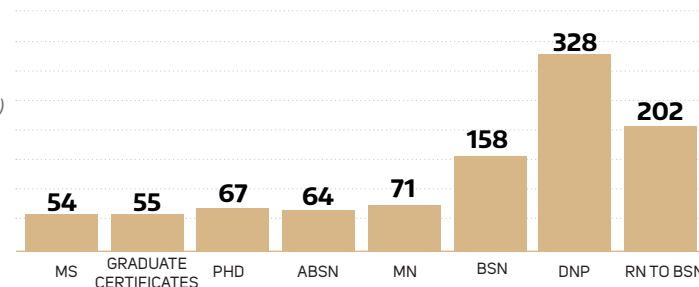
572 TOTAL DEGREES AWARDED 2021-2022



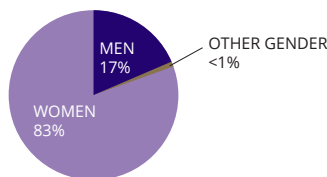
108 DOCTORATE (DNP/PHD) 79 MASTER (MN/MS) 385 BACHELOR (BSN)

STUDENTS

NUMBER OF ENROLLED STUDENTS (Seattle, Bothell, and Tacoma) BY PROGRAM

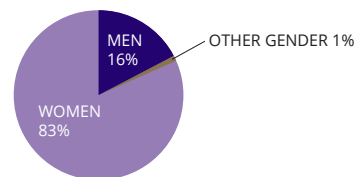


UNDERGRADUATE (Seattle, Bothell, and Tacoma) 424



AVERAGE AGE: 30
56% SELF-IDENTIFIED PEOPLE OF COLOR*
27% SELF-IDENTIFIED UNDERREPRESENTED MINORITY
1% INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

GRADUATE (Seattle, Bothell, and Tacoma) 575



AVERAGE AGE: 35
40% SELF-IDENTIFIED PEOPLE OF COLOR*
18% SELF-IDENTIFIED UNDERREPRESENTED MINORITY
6% INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

* Asian, Asian-American, Black, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, African American, Native American or Alaskan Native, Latinx; does not include self-identified Caucasian people or people for which race/ethnicity is unknown

FACULTY AND STAFF

NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED

FACULTY (Seattle, Bothell, and Tacoma)

- 63 tenure and tenure track professorial rank faculty
- 21 teaching professorial rank faculty
- 5 research professorial rank faculty
- 42 teaching associates and lecturers
- 40 clinical faculty
- 237 adjunct and affiliate faculty
- 40 faculty members elected fellows of the American Academy of Nursing

STAFF (Seattle)

- 199 (full- and part-time)
- 119 student employees

SEATTLE CAMPUS IMPACT

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED TO STUDENTS

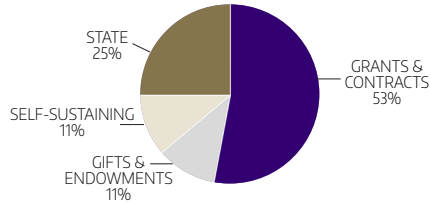
FUNDS FROM PRIVATE SUPPORT AND THE SCHOOL OF NURSING

\$2.215 MILLION

- 13 recruitment awards to new/continuing PhD students

FUNDING SOURCES

2010-2020



RESEARCH

TOTAL GRANT DOLLARS AWARDED FY 2021

\$15.02 MILLION

- 73 Research grant awards
- 5 NIH-sponsored Career Development Awards
- 2 NIH T32 Training Grants

NURSING PHD DREAM PROJECT

There is a critical link between nursing education, the nursing workforce, and the health of the people of Washington state. PhD nursing graduates are a vital part of solving this shortage. Although our state needs more nurses, we are experiencing a dire nursing faculty shortage: qualified students are being turned away from programs due to lack of space. Not all students have access to practice experiences due to high competition for posts and funding for nursing education fails to keep pace.

PhD students also bring diversity and cultural competency into the field and conduct research that matters to individual and population health. As researchers and educators in institutions of higher learning, PhD-educated nurses lead the field in health care discoveries and train future generations of nurses. They constitute the backbone of health care in our local and global communities.

With the creation of the Nursing PhD Dream Project, the UW School of Nursing intends to raise funds to give each of our PhD candidates the gift of a lifetime: a full financial aid package that will completely fund their training.



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

ENGAGING SERVICE LOCALLY AND NATIONWIDE

- The School of Nursing launched a new state-funded program that partners with local long-term care facilities to address the ongoing staffing crisis. Select students will participate in the six-month externship program and work in skilled nursing homes with agencies such as EmpRes Healthcare and Pennant Healthcare.
- The Premera Rural Nursing Health Initiative is addressing the urgent need to improve access to primary care in rural areas of Washington state. 65 primary care ARNP students from six Washington DNP programs have been awarded stipends to help defray living expenses to attend clinical rotations in targeted high needs rural communities.
- Clinical partner relationships with institutions across the state and nation expose students to more than 1,200 physicians and nurse practitioners who instruct, guide, and mentor future healthcare leaders.
- The School of Nursing works with skilled nurses from six local medical centers who work as faculty at the school.
- Nurse Camp, staffed by faculty and staff volunteers, increases access and opportunities in nursing to minority and low-income high school sophomores and juniors.
- The Dementia and Palliative Education Network (DPEN) aims to transform dementia care by empowering nurses and healthcare providers with the knowledge, authority, and training to provide comprehensive, equitable person-centered care.

CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE

ADVANCING NURSING RESEARCH, INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION AND PATIENT CARE

- Center for Antiracism in Nursing
Cultivates antiracist teaching practices, academic curriculum and professional development, promotes community-driven and partnered research, supports students from underrepresented and historically excluded groups, and applies antiracist principles to clinical practice, organizational operations and health-related policy
- Barnard Center for Infant Mental Health & Development
Supports the development of interdisciplinary infant and early childhood practitioners and conducts research related to infant and early childhood mental health
- Center for Health Sciences Interprofessional Education, Research and Practice
Dedicated to transforming practice by furthering collaboration between the healthcare professions
- Center for Global Health Nursing
Promotes nursing research and training to build capacity for sustainable improvements in health and health care around the world
- Center for Innovations in Sleep Self-Management
Develops, tests and implements self-management interventions to help adults and children with chronic illnesses sleep better and improve their health
- de Tornay Center for Healthy Aging
Dedicated to supporting nursing students interested in healthy aging research