

Nursing

School of Nursing

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Mission

The purpose of the School of Nursing is to achieve excellence in undergraduate and graduate education, research, public service, and to advance the missions of The University of Texas at Austin through:

1. Preparing students at the baccalaureate level to assume roles in professional nursing practice.
2. Preparing students at the graduate level to assume leadership in practice, education, and research.
3. Promoting excellence in nursing scholarship.
4. Advancing the health of the public through developing and disseminating new knowledge about health, health care, and health care delivery through scholarly inquiry.
5. Providing consultation, health care programs, and health care services in response to emerging and urgent public health needs.

History

The University of Texas School of Nursing, established in Galveston in 1890 as the John Sealy Hospital Training School for Nurses, is one of the oldest schools of nursing in the Southwest. In 1896 it was transferred to the University of Texas and became the School of Nursing, a division of the Medical Branch, with the diploma granted by the University. In addition to the diploma course, a curriculum leading to the degree of Bachelor of Science in Nursing was established in 1923 in cooperation with the College of Arts and Sciences of the Main University in Austin. In 1932 the School of Nursing was renamed the John Sealy College of Nursing. The degree program was transferred to the college in 1943.

With the financial support of the Texas Graduate Nursing Association, graduate courses in nursing were first offered in 1930 in the Department of Physical and Health Education at the Main University. In 1940, a complete curriculum was established leading to the degree of Bachelor of Science in Nursing Education. In 1945, the curriculum was transferred to the Medical Branch administration, bringing the John Sealy College of Nursing and the new Department of Nursing Education together to form the School of Nursing with its own dean. In 1949, a curriculum leading to the degree of Bachelor of Science in Nursing was established for graduates of diploma programs. The last class of students enrolled in the diploma program was admitted to the School of Nursing in 1957; since that time the school has offered a single program leading to the Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

Funding from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation provided for a program leading to the Master of Science in Nursing with a major in nursing administration, first offered in 1952. Participating in the program of the Southern Regional Education Board for graduate education in nursing, the School of Nursing offered additional specialization in 1955. At that time the name of the school was changed to the University of Texas Medical Branch School of Nursing.

In the fall of 1960, The University of Texas at Austin became an extension campus of the School of Nursing, which was still located in

Galveston, and nursing courses were offered on the Austin campus for the first time. The School of Nursing was reorganized in 1967 as The University of Texas Nursing School (System-wide) and administrative offices were moved to Austin. The school was renamed The University of Texas System School of Nursing in 1972. Junior- and senior-level nursing courses were offered in Austin, El Paso, Fort Worth, Galveston, Houston, and San Antonio.

On March 26, 1976, the Board of Regents of The University of Texas System voted to reorganize the schools of nursing in the system and to place each school under the administration of the president of the health science center or academic institution nearest it. On September 1, 1976, the School of Nursing at Austin became a part of The University of Texas at Austin.

The Doctor of Philosophy degree in nursing, focused on preparing nurse researchers, was initiated in 1974. Nursing faculty members conduct research on a wide variety of topics. Since 2002, the School of Nursing has been ranked among the top institutions in research funding received from the National Institutes of Health. In 2016, the Doctor of Nursing Practice program was initiated as an Option III program.

Financial Assistance Available Through the School

Application forms for scholarships are available from the [Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid](#) and from the [School of Nursing](#), 1710 Red River Street, Austin TX 78712. The School of Nursing Scholarship Committee selects the recipients for endowed nursing scholarships. A list of endowed scholarships can be found on the [School of Nursing website](#). Other scholarships are frequently available through the generosity of groups such as the The University of Texas at Austin School of Nursing Alumni Network, area civic organizations, and several nursing student organizations. Information is available in the [Office of Student Services](#) each semester.

Other Financial Aid Programs

ROTC Nursing Scholarships

To be eligible for an ROTC scholarship, an applicant must be a United States citizen and must be less than 25 years old on June 30 of the calendar year during which commissioning is scheduled.

Air Force ROTC Nursing Scholarships. These scholarships provide for payment of tuition and fees and for textbooks and a monthly allowance during the school year. For additional information, contact The University of Texas at Austin, Department of Air Force Science, 1 University Station C3600, Austin TX 78712.

Army ROTC Nursing Scholarships. These scholarships provide for payment of tuition and fees, a flat rate for textbooks, and a monthly allowance during the school year. Students must attend the Nursing Advanced Camp during the summer between the junior and senior years and work individually with a licensed BSN preceptor. Students may apply to the dean for independent study credit; applications are considered on a case-by-case basis. For additional information, contact The University of Texas at Austin, Department of Military Science, 1 University Station C3606, Austin TX 78712.

Navy ROTC Nursing Scholarships. These scholarships provide for payment of tuition and fees and for textbooks and a monthly allowance during the school year. For additional information, contact The University of Texas at Austin, Department of Naval Science, 1 University Station C3604, Austin TX 78712.

Vocational Rehabilitation

The Texas Workforce Commission Workforce Solutions Vocational Rehabilitation Services provides assistance with college education and employment resources to adults and students with disabilities who are eligible for the service. More information is available at <https://twc.texas.gov/jobseekers/vocational-rehabilitation-adults>

Student Services

Academic Advising

All nursing students must come to the School of Nursing before registration each semester for academic advising. Individualized academic advising is managed by the academic advisors in the Office of Student Services. In addition, group advising is offered to assist students with clinical schedules and particular requirements of the upcoming semester.

Student Organizations

Undergraduate students interested in nursing are eligible for membership in The University of Texas Nursing Students Association. Through the association, nursing students are represented on campus committees and in campus activities involving all students.

Qualified students in the School of Nursing are also eligible for membership in Epsilon Theta Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing.

Student Responsibility

1. It is the student's responsibility to be informed of general and special notices posted in the School of Nursing building and on the listserv.
2. The student must make arrangements for the completion of all work, including makeup examinations and requirements for removal of conditional and incomplete grades.
3. Because the curriculum is demanding, students are urged to limit work hours while in the program. A student's combined employment and semester-hour load (including clinical laboratory hours) should not exceed 40 hours a week in either a fall or spring semester or a summer term. During the final month of the last semester of the program, students are enrolled in a full-time preceptorship and are unable to have outside employment.
4. Students may be employed in area hospitals and clinics as nursing assistants, performing functions for which they have been trained by the employing institution and for which the institution has a clearly discernible policy, either in writing or by precedent, defining the scope of these functions. It is illegal for unlicensed students to practice as professional nurses.

Students should be aware that (1) the School of Nursing assumes no responsibility for their activities as employees of an agency; (2) they are personally responsible and liable for any activity they participate in while employed; (3) professional liability insurance purchased by students is valid only in their student role, not in their employment role; (4) individuals who practice illegally may jeopardize their future careers, since those who are convicted of violating the Nurse Practice Act may not be eligible to write state board examinations and subsequently to be licensed.

Students employed in an agency are personally and professionally responsible for engaging only in those activities that fall within their job descriptions as non-licensed workers (such as aides). They have a responsibility to refuse to participate in activities that they have

not been legally licensed to perform, such as giving medications and assuming total responsibility for a nursing unit.

5. Students should be familiar with the Student Standards of Conduct given in subchapter 11, Appendix C, "Student Discipline and Conduct," General Information, as well as the University Honor Code and the School of Nursing Honor Code. Students are expected to read and sign a pledge to abide by the Code of Honor.

School of Nursing Honor Code

The profession of nursing has a legacy of public respect and trust. We provide specialized care for the health needs of individuals and the community with integrity, honesty, compassion, and state-of-the-art knowledge and skills. Learning and practicing responsible and ethical professional behavior is a vital part of professional education.

As a student in The University of Texas at Austin's School of Nursing, I pledge myself to be honest in all of my student activities including, but not limited to, all of my scholastic work and interactions with patients, members of the community, faculty, and peers. Furthermore, I will not use any substance prior to or during my interaction with patients that could alter my judgment or ability to render safe care: this includes but is not limited to any use of alcohol, illegal drugs, and prescription or over-the-counter drugs that may impair my mental and/or physical abilities required to perform safe patient care. I will disclose to my instructor any violations of the above standards of conduct.

Standards of Nursing Performance and Progress

Progression Requirements for Nursing Majors Prior to Nursing Clinical or Lab Courses

Students must maintain a University grade point average of at least 2.80 in required nursing degree coursework prior to taking nursing courses with a clinical or lab component. In addition, students must attain a grade of at least C- in each natural science course. Courses in which the student receives a grade of less than C-, Q, or W must be repeated in residence to resume progression toward completing the degree. Students may not enroll more than twice in any one natural science course (including Q or W) and should take a full academic load of at least 12 semester hours of coursework when repeating a course. For the student to continue in the nursing major, no more than two natural science courses may be repeated. A student may not repeat for credit a course in which a grade of C- or better was awarded.

Students must meet all progression requirements prior to taking nursing courses with a clinical or lab component. Students who do not meet these requirements will not be permitted to continue in the nursing major. Students are advised every semester about the coursework needed to complete the degree in four academic years.

Students are placed on academic warning in the School of Nursing if they receive a grade of D+, D, D-, or F in any nursing or natural science course. Students are subject to dismissal from the nursing major if they receive more than one D+, D, D-, or F during a semester or receive a second D+, D, D-, or F while on academic warning.

Progression Requirements and Performance Standards for Upper Division Nursing Courses

Patient safety is a critical element in every clinical course. Clinical errors related to patient care, including those near-miss incidents intercepted

by the faculty, may interfere with a student's progression in the course and in the program. The standards of performance are described in course syllabi and clinical evaluation tools for clinical practicum courses.

A student must earn a grade of at least *C* in each nursing course for the course to be counted toward degree requirements. Concurrent or sequential enrollment is required as stated in each course description.

If the student is not on academic warning at the University, permission may be granted to repeat a required nursing course in which he or she failed to earn a grade of *C* or better. To receive credit, the student must repeat the course at The University of Texas at Austin School of Nursing. The semester in which a course is repeated is at the discretion of the dean and is dependent on the space available.

A student may repeat a nursing course only once. If the student does not earn a grade of at least *C* upon repeating the course, he or she cannot continue in the School of Nursing. If, while repeating the course, the student drops the course or withdraws from the University at a time when the student's performance in the course is considered to be inferior to that required for a grade of *C*, he or she may not re-enroll in the course or continue in the School of Nursing.

No more than two nursing courses may be repeated.

A student may not repeat for credit a course in which a grade of *C* or better was awarded.

As a prerequisite to medication administration in clinical nursing courses, students are required to pass a medications and calculations test with a grade of at least 90.

Compliance Requirements for Clinical Courses

Students must provide documentation confirming completion of compliance requirements prior to participating in clinical nursing courses. Log in to the School of Nursing [website](#) for more information.

Medical Clearance Requirements

Clinical experiences for nursing students are provided in hospitals and other health care agencies with which the School of Nursing is affiliated. A number of these facilities require that nursing students assigned to them have evidence of good health and immunity to certain diseases. Students must provide evidence of compliance with immunization requirements before they begin clinical nursing courses. Students must also submit a health certificate completed by a qualified health care provider prior to starting their first clinical rotation.

Criminal Background Checks

Students are required to submit to the Texas Board of Nursing criminal background checks before beginning the program. Information about the process is available on the School of Nursing Web site. Students with concerns about eligibility are urged to seek official determination from the [Texas Board of Nursing](#). Further, we urge students with concerns to seek the background check six months in advance of enrollment to allow sufficient time for investigation and Texas Board of Nursing approval.

Employment Background Check

Agencies in which nursing students are placed for clinical work require an employment background check. Directions to complete this requirement are on the School of Nursing [website](#) listed with other compliance requirements.

Drug Screen

Clinical agencies require that a drug screen be completed prior to participating in patient care. Students are to follow directions for the drug screen shown with the compliance requirements on the School of Nursing website.

CPR and First Aid Requirements

Current certification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and first aid are required for participation in clinical nursing courses. The CPR course must be the Basic Life Support for Healthcare Providers and include Automatic External Defibrillator from the American Heart Association. Online courses for CPR are not acceptable. The basic first aid certification must be acquired from the American Heart Association (Heartsaver First Aid) or from a local emergency medical services agency (National Safety Council First Aid). Students must provide evidence of current certification before they begin clinical courses. Students who are registered nurses, licensed vocational nurses, or emergency medical technicians are not required to provide evidence of first aid certification.

Professional Liability Insurance

Professional liability insurance is required of all students enrolled in the professional sequence in the School of Nursing. Students will be billed through the "What I Owe" system for liability insurance each semester they are participating in clinical courses. All student policies expire on the date of graduation.

Training Modules

All students must complete the following modules on the [School of Nursing Intranet Site](#) before participating in clinical nursing coursework: online orientation, facilities training, and training on the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Health and Hospitalization Insurance

Students are required to purchase health insurance. The cost of personal health care, including care required as the result of clinical practicum experiences, is not covered by either the University, the School of Nursing, or clinical agencies. Information about low-cost group health insurance is available through [University Health Services](#). The professional liability insurance students buy as a part of compliance for participating in clinical courses does not cover health care expenses.

Uniforms and Other Expenses

Students must purchase uniforms, shoes, name badges, and other supplies before taking the first clinical nursing course. Specific requirements and information about suggested equipment are distributed as a part of orientation and will be available in course syllabi.

Transportation

Upper-division clinical courses require students to go to various clinical facilities and community sites at varied hours. Students must have their own transportation.

Applicability of Certain Courses

ROTC Courses

The dean has the authority to substitute an equivalent air force science, military science, or naval science course or courses for a course or courses prescribed by the School of Nursing; core curriculum courses cannot be substituted. The dean can also make adjustments to compensate for any differences in semester hour value. The total number of semester hours required for the degree remains unchanged.

Correspondence and Extension Courses

Credit earned by correspondence or extension from the University or elsewhere will be counted toward a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree if approved by either the assistant dean for student services or the assistant dean for undergraduate programs. A student planning to meet pre-professional course requirements with correspondence or extension courses should consult the Office of Student Services to ensure enrollment in appropriate courses. Credit for professional sequence courses may not be earned by correspondence or extension.

Credit by Examination

The faculty believes that each educational experience should build on previous achievements to encourage fulfillment of each student's potential. Therefore, all students and registered nurses are urged to seek advice on arranging a logical sequence of work. The faculty subscribes to the principle that a candidate's competence should be validated and that credit should be awarded on the basis of satisfactory achievement on examinations as well as in the classroom. Twenty-four of the last 30 semester hours of credit presented for the degree must be earned in residence, rather than by examination, correspondence, or transfer.

An examination for credit may not be taken in a course in which the student is enrolled, which the student has completed, or which the student has dropped with either a passing or a failing grade.

University policies regarding credit by examination are given in the *General Information Catalog*.

Degree Audit

Each semester during group advising, students conduct their own degree audits, which provide information about the courses they must take and the requirements they must fulfill to receive their degree. The degree audit is normally done according to the catalog in effect when the student was admitted to the School of Nursing, but the student may choose to have it done according to any catalog under which he or she is eligible to graduate. Rules on graduation under a particular catalog are given in [Graduation Under a Particular Catalog](#). It is the student's responsibility to fulfill all catalog requirements. The Office of Student Services is available to provide guidance to students as needed.

Honors

Criteria for graduation with University Honors are given in [General Information](#). Criteria for graduation with program honors are given in program pages.

Nursing Honors Program

The Nursing Honors Program is designed to enhance the educational experience of high-achieving undergraduate nursing majors by focusing on the development of scholarship. Students must apply to this competitive honors program when applying to the School of Nursing as freshman. Honors coursework begins in the sophomore year. Admission to the program requires approval of the Honors Program Committee.

Students in the program must complete [Nursing 321H](#), [117H](#), [264H](#), and [377H](#). These courses provide students with enhanced mentorship experiences. Students must complete an honors project with a focus on research, ethics, or leadership. Students are also required to take [Nursing 337](#), *Topics in Independent Study* with their mentor with the focus on their honors project. The statement "Special Honors in Nursing" appears on the transcript of each student who completes the honors program.

Sigma Theta Tau International

Epsilon Theta Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing, was chartered at the University on May 16, 1980. Membership in Sigma Theta Tau is an honor conferred by active chapters on students who demonstrate academic excellence and on nursing leaders who advance the scientific base of the profession. The society recognizes superior achievement in many areas, facilitates the development of leadership qualities, fosters high professional standards, encourages creative work, and strengthens commitment to the ideals of nursing.

Each year qualified students in the undergraduate and graduate programs may apply for consideration for membership. Invitations to membership are extended to students who are in the top 35 percent of their graduating class. Undergraduates must have a grade point average of at least 3.00; graduate students must have a grade point average of at least 3.50. Qualified community nursing leaders may also be invited to membership. Applications for membership in Epsilon Theta Chapter are available from the [Office of Student Services in the School of Nursing](#).

At the induction ceremony each spring, Epsilon Theta Chapter announces its awards, grants, and scholarship recipients. A scholarship is awarded to an upper-division nursing student who has demonstrated leadership potential and outstanding scholastic achievement. The chapter also awards start-up grants annually to Epsilon Theta Chapter members and/or students to fund research projects.

Sigma Theta Tau International, with active chapters on more than four hundred campuses in the United States and in several other countries, offers opportunities for involvement at the chapter, regional, national, and international levels.

Facilities

The 110,008-square-foot, five-story Nursing School building houses administrative, faculty, staff, and research offices, as well as large and small classrooms and seminar and conference rooms. Also located in the building are the Cain Center for Nursing Research, the St. David's Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Research in Underserved Populations, and the School of Nursing Learning Enhancement and Academic Progression Center which includes a staff who provide technical assistance for clinical simulation and skills, instructional design, and production.

Learning experiences in the health field are numerous and varied. The School of Nursing has ongoing clinical placement agreements with more than two hundred agencies. These include the Austin State Hospital, Dell Children's Medical Center of Central Texas, Dell Seton Medical Center at The University of Texas, and St. David's Medical Center. Other community settings used for student field experiences include nursing homes, neighborhood health centers, day-care centers, state and local health departments, physicians' offices, and clinics, including our Family Wellness Center, and our Children's Wellness Center (located in Del Valle).