

CHOICES in EDUCATION



HEALTH CARE

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CAREER PATHWAYS

How to determine if nursing is right for you



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Individuals considering nursing need to determine if the field might be the right fit for them.

Nursing is a popular career choice. With strong job security and the potential for growth, it is no wonder nursing draws such interest. In 2021, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated there would be about 203,200 openings for registered nurses each year for the next decade. And employment of registered nurses is expected to grow by 6% between 2021 and 2031.

A strong job outlook and competitive pay (nurses

earn median salaries of \$77,600 as of May 2021) appeals to any aspiring professional, but a career in nursing is about more than opportunity and compensation. Individuals considering nursing need to determine if the field might be the right fit for them. It's not always glamorous being a nurse. In fact, it can be quite challenging and often stressful. However, the rewards tend to outshine the trials and tribulations. The following are some compo-

nents of nursing that can help individuals determine if the field is right for them.

Training time constraints

There are different levels of nursing, each of which requires a different amount of training and certification, according to Nurse Money Talk. A certified nursing assistant must complete a program at a specific CNA vocational school, and such

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There are different levels of nursing, each of which requires a different amount of training and certification.

Nursing

FROM PAGE 4

programs run between four and 10 months, on average. Licensed vocational nurses can expect to study for 12 to 18 months, and must pass the NCLEX-PN licensing exam. Registered nurses will need two to four years of schooling and are expected to earn an associate's degree or bachelor's degree. Aspiring RNs also will need a passing grade on the NCLEX-RN licensing exam. Most nurses will have to complete clinicals to showcase skills in real life situations. Flexibility Nurses need to be adaptable and flexible. Shifts may not be consistent and the demands of the job may differ from day to day, even though there may be some overlap. If challeng-

ing new experiences come easy to you or if you have the flexibility to work different shifts rather than a set schedule, then nursing could be a good option.

Problem-solver and critical thinker

Although nurses are part of a larger health care team and may need to leave certain decisions to physicians, there are plenty of critical decisions and think-on-your-feet actions that may need to be taken to ensure patient health. It is essential for nurses to keep their emotions in check so they can think clearly in stressful situations.

Good communicator

Nurses must be able to speak and interact with doctors and others in a clinical setting, but also communicate effectively with

patients who may not fully understand all of the medical jargon nor what is happening to them. Nursing requires social skills and an ability to pivot between many different roles — all the while adjusting communication tactics depending on the audience.

Organized and diligent

There isn't too much room for mistakes in health care, which means nurses will need to maintain their attention to detail; otherwise, they could subject patients to injury or even death.

In addition to these traits, good nurses should have compassion for patients. A desire to help others during difficult times compels many people to become a nurse.

Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection



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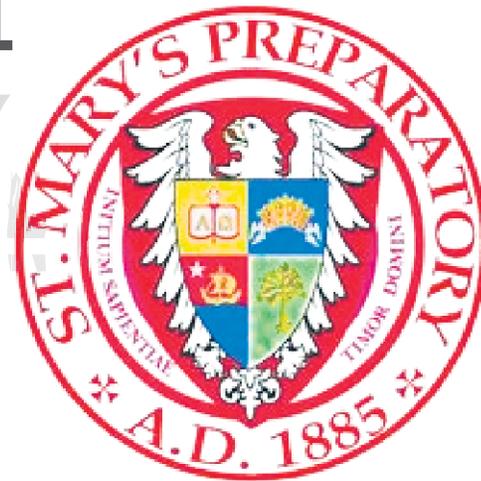
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TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Strategies to help transfer students adjust to a new school

It's not uncommon for all students to experience some first-day jitters, but that nervous excitement might be especially pronounced for transfer students. The transition to a new school is made simpler for many students because they make it alongside classmates they've known for years. Transfer students have no such security blanket, but can embrace the following strategies as they prepare to begin the school year in a whole new environment.

Attend student orientation sessions

Orientation sessions can benefit any student, but may be especially useful for transfer students. Orientation sessions typically include a campus tour, a rundown of both academic and social activities and a chance to meet the school staff, including teachers and coaches. Transfer students who attend these sessions also may meet fellow class-

mates, who typically serve as guides on campus tours or in other capacities which requires them to interact with session attendees. This can be a great opportunity to connect with individuals who could serve as a familiar face come the first day of school.

Schedule a visit with a guidance counselor

Guidance counselors can be invaluable resources for transfer students. Parents can come along and discuss the student's interests in a direct conversation with a counselor, who can fill the family in on all that's available on campus. That can include academics and extracurricular activities.

Dive in socially

Though it's not always easy to transfer to a new school that already has its own social networks, the best way to meet new people is to make

a concerted effort to engage socially. Student-athletes may have an advantage because the team atmosphere provides a ready-made social network. However, extracurricular clubs also provide that benefit and do so without the added pressure of competing for a spot on a team.

Don't go it alone

Students should recognize that the transition is not something they need to do on their own. If students transferred because their family moved, then others in the family, including parents, are likely to experience their own ups and downs as well. Speak with parents and siblings if the transition does not get off to a smooth start. Such openness can open the door to new strategies and help to alleviate some of the stress that can accompany a transition to a new school.

Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Guidance counselors can be invaluable resources for transfer students. Parents can come along and discuss the student's interests in a direct conversation with a counselor, who can fill the family in on all that's available on campus.

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CAREER PATHWAYS

The many benefits of vocational training

Earning a four-year degree is one path toward a rewarding career. However, that path is the only one available to aspiring professionals. Enrolling in a vocational program can provide students with the skills necessary to engage in high-demand and well-paying jobs.

Vocational school, often referred to as “trade school,” can be an advantageous route for many people who are looking for an alternative to college.

In 2020, the National Center for Education Statistics said a four-year private college cost around \$50,300 for a student living on campus, while a four-year public college was roughly \$24,300 annually.

A 2018 poll from The Learning House, a skills training and coursework company, found 35% of students said tuition and other fees were their primary concerns when choosing college programs. Trade schools can cost three times less than other schooling, making them more palatable to young people concerned about the high costs of college.

Career and Technical Education programs number around 1,200 in the United States alone. Many students begin vocational career tracks in high school, according to American Education Services.

Here are some benefits to pursuing an education in the trades.

- **Lower cost:** According to NCES, trade schools cost significantly less than four-year institutions. Data from the U.S. Department of Education says programs may run between \$3,600 to \$16,000 per year. Most vocational programs last two years, meaning that students graduate with far less debt than they might ac-



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Career and Technical Education programs number around 1,200 in the United States alone.

crue when pursuing a four-year college program.

- **Individualized attention:** Many trade programs offer instruction in very intimate settings, with experienced practitioners serving as mentors and trainers. While each program is different, vocational training schools tend to have lower faculty-to-student ratios than traditional colleges.

- **Fewer admission requirements:** Trade schools may not have the same stringent application and

admissions processes as colleges. Course prerequisites and grade point average requirements also may not dictate trade school admissions policies.

- **Direct, hands-on training:** Unlike a traditional college that marries general education courses with those specific to a major, trade school programs focus only on skills and training relevant to each student's chosen career path.

- **Less time to complete schooling:** More direct les-

sons means that students can complete their certifications or degrees in shorter times and enter the workforce much more quickly than their counterparts at traditional colleges and universities.

Vocational training in trade schools is a viable option for students who want to spend less money and gain valuable skills they can utilize to earn a good living.

Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection

Unlike a traditional college that marries general education courses with those specific to a major, trade school programs focus only on skills and training relevant to each student's chosen career path.



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CAREER PATHWAYS

Why access, education and support are vital to close the gender gap in tech careers

While women make up approximately half of the U.S. workforce, they are underrepresented in the technology sector, making up 28% of the industry. These numbers are even lower for women of color seeking opportunities in the field, with 3% of computing-related jobs being filled by African American women, 6% by Asian women and 2% by Hispanic women.

Conversations often focus on empowering diverse voices to ensure they are represented in society. While these conversations raise awareness, they may not result in action and shifting the narrative surrounding diverse hiring practices. Diversity becomes a guide for program development to ensure diverse and female students feel supported in their pursuit of tech-related jobs, helping to address the gender gap in the industry.

To address the gender and diversity disparities, women must have access to resources and learning opportunities that give them the skill sets and confidence to pursue tech careers. Higher education institutions can play a significant role in bridging the gap. Creating greater awareness of job opportunities in the tech industry, potential career paths and sharing how to attain the necessary skills provides emerging talent with a clear trajectory for a future career in tech.

Higher education institutions can design inclusive programming.

In higher education, diversity is often thought of as the physical makeup of the student body. But di-

versity also extends beyond demographic data to how students learn — taking into consideration the tools they need to succeed. These tools can come in the form of academic success teams or programming rooted in uplifting diverse students to help them achieve their academic and professional goals.

Higher education institutions are tasked with providing the most current and industry-relevant education to students to augment a work-ready pool of talent. To be successful in this mission for all students, institutions can use adaptive programs to close the opportunity gap for female and diverse students. An example of a curriculum informed by student need is DeVry University's Women + Tech Scholars Program, which was established to increase female representation in the tech field by providing women with tools, support and resources such as: access to mentors, early access to industry-related internships and job opportunities and industry association memberships.

Providing more women with a seat at the table helps to advance the tech industry.

Despite increased efforts to diversify a traditionally homogenous workforce, nearly 70% of tech companies report a lack of diverse representation in their workforce. In 2020, Google reported that 5.5% of new hires during that year were Black. Creating a more diverse tech workforce can lead to greater opportunities for collaboration because new perspectives are brought to the forefront



PHOTO COURTESY OF BRANDPOINT

Providing more women with a seat at the table helps to advance the tech industry.

that were previously unrepresented — driving innovation, creativity and productivity.

“Considering the current workforce and the growing need for tech talent, the share of diverse and female tech employees remains at alarmingly low levels,” said Randi Zuckerberg, founder and CEO of Zuckerberg Media. “Programs like DeVry University's Women + Tech Scholars Program help create greater awareness of tech careers and give women of all backgrounds the tools they need to persist in this academic path and obtain the skills they need to pursue tech-enabled

careers.”

Diversity of thought enhances problem-solving exercises because teams are mitigating the potential of finding themselves in an echo chamber of a singular thought derived from similar opinions. Studies suggest that companies that prioritize gender or racial and ethnic diversity are more likely to see financial returns that are above national industry averages.

Higher education institutions have an opportunity to create supportive networks and communities.

Seeing someone from a similar background succeeding in a career path

builds awareness. Higher education institutions that create opportunities for women to network and build connections with leaders they can identify with increase the chance of success in these highly sought-after, influential industries.

“Access to education alone is not enough. Students, particularly those from underrepresented communities, need support, opportunities and resources throughout their education journey,” added Veronica Calderón, DeVry University's chief inclusion, belonging and equity officer.

Carving out unique, defined spaces in which di-

verse and female communities can feel a sense of belonging helps increase overall academic performance, persistence and academic success, which can translate into professional success post-graduation.

As diversity in tech remains a topic of critical importance, comprehensive and agile programming that focuses on female learners allows women, particularly women from diverse backgrounds, to break down barriers that have persisted in the tech industry for decades.

Story courtesy of Brandpoint

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