VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY
PRENURSING HANDBOOK
For
Undergraduate Students

An Exploration into the Joint PreSpecialty Options

BS/MSN College of Education, Peabody College
BA/MSN College of Arts and Sciences

2006-07
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Introduction

The following handbook was created for undergraduate students interested in learning more about the Pre-nursing options offered by Vanderbilt University. Although Vanderbilt no longer offers a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN), undergraduate students may complete a Bachelor of Science (BS) at Peabody College or the Bachelors of Art (BA) from the College of Arts and earn a Master of Nursing (MSN) degree from Vanderbilt’s School of Nursing in as little as five calendar years. 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-Specialty Option.

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 Sciences. Please refer to the black “The Bulletin of Vanderbilt University - Undergraduate Catalog – 2006/2007” page 12-14 for more information. You may also find it helpful to visit the Vanderbilt School of Nursing Website at www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/nursing. It is also suggested that anyone interested in nursing at Vanderbilt should become a part of the Pre-nursing Society. More information on the Pre-nursing Society is included in the next section.

If you have any comments or suggestions to improve this handbook, please contact Professor Vera Chatman at vera.a.chatman@vanderbilt.edu.
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 objectives and purpose of this organization are to:

a. explore the field of nursing through education and research
b. increase exposure to clinical settings
c. network in the nursing community
d. be a liaison between undergraduate and graduate nursing students
e. understand the nursing profession by research, conferences, and other pertinent events
f. increase awareness and visibility of the prenursing options at Vanderbilt
g. gain understanding of nursing options
h. aid in the development of the whole person and his/her role and responsibility as a health care provider

The 2006 – 07 Officers

President      Allison Rose   Peabody
Vice President, A & S    Ann Rice   A&S
Vice President, Peabody   Morgan Chatman  Peabody
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Treasurer       Anna Edwards   A&S
Community Service Chair    Morgan Chatman  Peabody
Community Service Chair    Ann Rice   A&S
Public Relations/Fundraising A & S   N/A    A&S
Public Relations/Fundraising Peabody   Meredith Owens   Peabody

If you have questions about the Pre-nursing Society contact alison.d.rose@vanderbilt.edu. To be added to the mailing list, contact Emily Eckert at emily.a.eckert@vanderbilt.edu
Paths to Becoming a Registered Nurse

Currently there are several paths you can take to become a Registered Nurse. The traditional path is to complete a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing (BSN) and become a Registered Nurse by taking the licensing exam after graduation. Vanderbilt no longer offers this option. A second path is to graduate with a Bachelor’s degree and apply for a Master’s of Science in Nursing. The last path is limited to only a few colleges and universities and involves a Pre-Specialty Nursing program.

The Vanderbilt School of Nursing is one of the few Universities in the United States currently offering this non-traditional nursing program. The other recognized Pre-Specialty programs are offered at Boston College, Columbia University, and Yale University. All of these programs have similar prerequisite requirements. For more information on these programs, consult the following websites:

**Boston College** School of Nursing—*Accelerated Master’s Entry into Nursing Program*  
[www.bc.edu/schools/son/graduate/masters/](http://www.bc.edu/schools/son/graduate/masters/)

**Columbia University** School of Nursing—*Entry to Practice for Non-Nurse College Graduate (ETP)*  

**Vanderbilt University** School of Nursing—*Pre-Specialty*  
[www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/nursing/msn/options.html](http://www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/nursing/msn/options.html)

**Yale University** School of Nursing—*Graduate Entry PreSpecialty in Nursing*  
[nursing.yale.edu/Academics/Masters](http://nursing.yale.edu/Academics/Masters)

This handbook will focus only on the PreSpecialty options at Vanderbilt.
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 Sciences 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 two majors and three degree options:

1. **Two Major Areas**
   a. **Child Development** (The Department of Psychology and Human Development)
      This major is strongly recommended for those students interested in pediatrics 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.

2. **Three Degree Options**
   a. **5-Year Program**: Complete a major in Child Development or HOD/HHS and earn both a BS and a MSN.

      1. With this option, students complete their Peabody major during the first three years of study, earning 91 hours before Fall of their Senior year.

      2. Students apply for admission to the School of Nursing before December 1st 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 (29 hours) students are awarded the B.S. in Human Development. The B.S. is conferred by Peabody College at the end of Spring semester Senior year.

      3. 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. **Regular B.S. Degree:** Complete degree requirements at Peabody and enter the School of Nursing in the fall after graduation from Vanderbilt.

c. **Complete 78 hours:** It is possible to enter the School of Nursing without a plan to complete the B.S., however it is not recommended.

Students choosing any of these options must satisfy admission requirements for the MSN program. Upon Admission to the School of Nursing, the student is required to complete at least six semesters (two calendar years) of full-time study to earn the MSN.

**Pre-nursing Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences**

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

a. **Joint Baccalaureate MSN Option:**
   
   1. Students must complete the requirements for the Bachelor’s degree (ACEL or general requirements, at least one major, and 105 hours) by the beginning of the Fall semester Junior year.
   
   2. The first semester in the School of Nursing (15 hours) will transfer to the College of Arts and Sciences 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 completion of Fall semester in Nursing school.
   
   3. Students finish six semesters of study in the School of Nursing to earn the Masters of Science in Nursing

b. **Regular B.S. Degree:** A student must complete degree requirements at the College of Arts and Sciences and enter the School of Nursing after graduation from Vanderbilt.

c. **Complete 78 Hours:** It is possible to enter the School of Nursing without a plan to complete the BA, However it is not recommended.

Students choosing any of these options must satisfy admission requirements for the MSN program. Upon admission to the School of Nursing, the student will complete at least six semesters (two calendar years) of full time study to earn the MSN.
Matrix of PreSpecialty vs. Regular Options
For Peabody College and the College of Arts and Sciences

This matrix provides a visual timeline to explain the sequence in which students apply to Nursing School, complete undergraduate hours, and receive degrees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>JU YE</th>
<th>NI A</th>
<th>OR R</th>
<th>SE YE</th>
<th>NI A</th>
<th>OR R</th>
<th>Fifth 1st Year</th>
<th>2nd Year*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peabody Pre-Specialty 5-year Program</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>SP</td>
<td>SUM</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>SP</td>
<td>SUM</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>SP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply By Dec 1</td>
<td>Complete 91 hrs</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Earn 15 hrs</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Earn 14 hrs BS* May</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A&amp;S Joint Baccalaureate //MSN Option</td>
<td>Apply By Dec 1</td>
<td>Complete 105 hrs</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Earn 15 Hours BA** Dec</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular B.S. /B.A. Admission For both Peabody and A&amp;S</td>
<td>Apply By Dec 1</td>
<td>120 hrs BS/ BA May</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Peabody students enter Nursing School with 91 hours, receive credit for 29 hours for the fall and spring semester and receive BS in May of Senior year with 120 hours.

** A&S students enter Nursing School with 105 hours, receive an additional 15 hours credit for Fall semester and receive BA in December of Senior year with 120 hours.
Advantages and Disadvantages: Vanderbilt’s Five Year Program

Students often wonder whether the 5-year option is the right choice or whether they should complete the regular four year major before attending the School of Nursing. Based on feedback from several students who have elected both options, we have compiled the major advantages and disadvantages to the five-year pre-specialty Nursing program.

Advantages:

- **It’s exciting.** This challenging program allows individuals a quick route to a master’s degree and a head start on their career.

- **Courses transfer.** Courses taken during Senior year count toward the undergraduate B.S. degree and the M.S.N.

- **Very impressive.** Completion of an accelerated program demonstrates academic excellence to prospective employers.

- **Opportunity.** There are just a handful of schools approaching Nursing in this unique and innovative way.

Disadvantages:

- **Intimidation.** The majority of the student body in the nursing school is comprised of older adults with experience in the workplace, which can be intimidating and challenging for some students. The average age of the students in the Pre-specialty year is 27.

- **Limited experience.** Many jobs require three years of clinical experience as an RN. Gaining experience in the five-year program comes through volunteering at various locations during the undergraduate years and working part-time when taking nursing courses.

- **Graduate lifestyle as an undergraduate.** The Senior year experience is altered by virtue of being a graduate student while your peers are still undergraduates. This program requires a mature, adult learner.
Frequently Asked Questions about Pre-Nursing

What should be my major?

Students interested in the pre-nursing program at Peabody College major in Human and Organizational Development or Child Development. If you are interested in the pediatric or psychiatric nursing, it is recommended that you major or minor in Child Development. Students in Arts and Sciences 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 practical experience as possible to expose yourself to the various options. For information on the specialties, visit the Vanderbilt School of Nursing webpage at www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/nursing.

When should I apply?

1) Five-Year Pre-Specialty (Peabody) and Pre-Baccalaureate (A&S) Program:
   Students should apply for admission by December 1st of their Junior year.

2) Regular B.S. Graduates
   Students interested in completing the regular four-year BS degree program followed by two years of graduate work should apply before December 1st of the Senior year.

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

There are four ways to learn more about the Pre-nursing options at Vanderbilt.

1. Visit the Vanderbilt School of Nursing webpage
   www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/nursing/msn/options.html

2. You should join the Vanderbilt Pre-nursing Society

3. Contact the designated faculty person in the specialty that you are interested in attending

4. Attend at least one of the Vanderbilt School of Nursing Campus Visits held in October and March of each year
Required Prerequisite Courses

Whatever entry option you choose, the following courses are required as prerequisites for admission:

- 6 hours of English
- 9 hours of Social Science
- 6 hours of Humanities
- 3 hours of Statistics
- 11 hours of Natural Science
  (Microbiology and Human Anatomy & Physiology must be included)
- Nutrition
- Developmental Psychology

Other prerequisite requirement

- American Red Cross CPR Approved Certification  (this is required before matriculating into the nursing program, not required to apply)

Available Course for the 2006 – 07 Year (Times are available on the online schedule)

1. Nursing 150 Microbiology (3-4 variable credit) spring semester only;

2. Nursing 210a b Human Anatomy & Physiology (4 credits each) Fall/ Spring; must take N210a before N210b; must have a semester of chemistry or biology as a prerequisite; can use Nursing 150 for this prerequisite

3. Nursing 231a Intro to Nutrition (2 credits) Fall & Spring; this is the nutrition PREREQUISITE for nursing

4. Nursing 231b Nutrition & Health (1 credit) Fall & spring; ELECTIVE course in nutrition; not required prerequisite; offered for the first 7 weeks of semester

5. Nursing 231c Health & Wellness (1 credit) Fall & spring; ELECTIVE course; not required; offered for 2nd 7 weeks after N231b is finished so students can take N231a, b, & c all in the same semester if they really are interested in nutrition; N231c is in schedule as TBA so it doesn’t conflict with N231b which is at the SAME time but only runs half the semester.

Note: All nursing courses met science requirement for Peabody.
Financial Information

Peabody College

Pre-nursing students who intend on completing Peabody degree requirements will be classified as Peabody undergraduates through the Fall semester of the Senior year and will pay Peabody undergraduate tuition for that semester. Spring semester of their Senior year, they will be reclassified as graduate nursing students and will pay School of Nursing tuition for the remainder of their program of studies.

College of Arts and Sciences

The scholarship or financial aid commitment of the College of Arts and Sciences does not continue automatically beyond the seventh semester for students enrolled in the joint program. Eighth semester scholarships or other financial aid are the responsibility of the Nursing School. Prior to enrollment in the joint program, the Nursing school will advise students of the level of financial support (if any) to be provided during the eighth and subsequent semesters. This ensures that an eighth semester scholarship from the College is protected until a final decision is made by the student to enroll in the Nursing School.

School of Nursing

For more detailed information about Financial Aid and Scholarships for the School of Nursing, please refer to their website. Additional information can be obtained from the Financial Aid Officer at the School of Nursing at 615-322-8986.
Recommended Procedures for the Nursing School 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 on. 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.

Your official application must contain the following:

1. Interview Survey
2. Goal Statement
3. Official Transcripts
4. Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores
5. Letters of Recommendation
6. Cover Letter

GOAL STATEMENT AND INTERVIEW SURVEY

Your Goal Statement and Interview Survey responses should address your first choice of specialty. It is not possible to enter the program without choosing your specialty area. You should only indicate one specialty on your application. If you should desire to change your specialty, you will need to submit a revised Goal Statement and Interview Survey to reflect the new specialty. You will be reviewed by the new specialty. A student will be allowed to move to the new specialty only if your goals are consistent with the specialty and only if space becomes available. Make sure that you format this section so that the pages are numbered, your name is on each page, 1” margins on each side.

1. Interview Survey Questions

The Interview Survey is a list of questions asking 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 interview survey, applicants to the Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner specialty are required to have a personal interview with a faculty member.
2. Goal Statement

The Goal Statement 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.

Like the Interview Survey, there is no set length for this statement. Be sure that this statement directly reflects your specialty and that you have specified what you plan to do with your career. You may want to consider writing about what you are looking for in your career or what you want out of the nursing experience.

Suggestions

1. The questions included in the interview survey require you to extensively examine yourself and your role as professional. It is highly recommended that you ask yourself these questions early on and begin to cultivate answers throughout your exploration of nursing. There is no set length for each response, nor is there right or wrong answers. The key is to write concise, educated 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 goal statement and interview survey, be sure to demonstrate your understanding of the role of the advanced practice nurse and the role of the advanced practice nurse in the specialty area that 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, your special talents that would contribute to your ability to be an effective practitioner, experiences you have had working health care (with underserved populations, the elderly, children, etc). This is a competitive program with limited enrollment so be sure to differentiate yourself other applicants.
3. Official Transcripts

Applicants must submit official transcripts from all post High School studies. Students admitted into this program must have earned an undergraduate grade point average of at least a “B,” or a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. Official Vanderbilt transcripts can be obtained at the office of the University Registrar on Peabody Campus (615) 322-7701. You may also make an online request for an Official University Transcript from Vanderbilt University. The procedures are as follows:

I. Go to www.Vanderbilt.edu/aai
II. Log in with your VUNet ID and Password
III. Look at the Tabs on the Top of the Page and click: Order Transcript
IV. Fill out the instructions on the web page, and specify where you would like the transcript sent. It is recommended to have it sent to your VU campus mailbox or pick it up from the registrar’s office rather than sending it directly to Vanderbilt Nursing School because you are required to send all the materials together. Make sure to check the box “Place Transcript in a Sealed Envelope with Registrar Signature Over Flap”.
V. Click Submit

4. Graduate Record Examination (GRE)

a. General Test Information

1) Applicants take the GRE General Test, a computer-based exam, which consists of verbal, quantitative and writing sections. The Verbal and Quantitative sections have a possible value of 800 points each. A combined score of 1000 on both the Verbal and Quantitative sections is required for admission to the School of Nursing. You must have a 4.5 score on the written component.

2) The computer based exam has a fee of $115. The allotted test time is 4.5 hours. With the computer based exam, scores can be viewed on the screen immediately after completing the test. Scores are reported to institutions (designated by the student) within 10-15 working days. Like the SAT's, the test can be taken more than once.

b. Local Sites

The GRE General test, available year round in many locations, is administered in the Nashville area at:

Sylvan Learning Center or Prometric Testing Center
1685 Gallatin Pike 304 Williamson Square
Madison TN 37115 Franklin, TN 37062
(615) 860-9111 (615) 790-5018

Please visit the GRE website at www.gre.org for further information on testing centers and registration.
c. Test Preparation

A CD-ROM containing GRE POWERPREP Software-Test Preparation for the GRE General Test is sent to each individual who registers for the computer based GRE General Test. The software includes test tutorials, practice questions with explanations, two computer-adaptive tests for the verbal and quantitative sections, and sample topics and essays for the analytical writing section. The software lets users practice writing essays under simulated GRE testing conditions with the same GRE word processing and testing tools that appear on the test.

The *Practice General Test* book is sent to each individual who registers for the paper based GRE General Test. A downloadable version of this publication is also available for free. The publication includes practice questions with explanations, one test for the verbal and quantitative sections, and sample topics and essays for the analytical writing section. ([http://www.gre.org/pracmats.html](http://www.gre.org/pracmats.html))

In addition, individuals can view information about the analytical writing section on the GRE website. The materials include information about the nature of the test, directions for the two essay tasks, the topic ideas, and scoring criteria. ([http://www.gre.org/practmats.html](http://www.gre.org/practmats.html))

It is recommended that you take a GRE preparation course offered by a review company such as Kaplan or Princeton Review.

5. Letters of Recommendation

All applicants must provide three letters of professional reference. These letters should be submitted by faculty members, professional colleagues, or work supervisors who can evaluate your potential for success in a graduate program. Recommendations from friends, other students or co-workers are usually not appropriate. Additional letters from professionals will be accepted, but not required. Make sure that the people completing your references, have direct knowledge of your abilities.

Remember to complete the top section of the recommendation form. If you are not picking up the recommendation, provide a self-addressed, stamped envelope with instructions for mailing. It is important for you to indicate in the cover letter the specific date you will need the letter.
6. Cover Letter

The cover letter, or memorandum, completes the application. It should be an official letter listing all that you have included in your application. It should be placed on top of the application package with the listed documents in matching order. For example, if you wrote that you have included the Goal Statement then the Interview Survey, be sure to present them in that order. DO NOT throw all of your information into the envelope and send it to Admissions.

Faculty Contacts

**A&S Students**  
Dean Francille Bergquist  
615-322-2844  
Francille.bergquist@vanderbilt.edu

**Child Development Majors**  
Professor Vicki Harris  
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Vicki.s.harris@vanderbilt.edu

**HOD Majors (and all General Questions)**  
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Last Revision: October 1, 2006