

Practical Nurse

Certificate of Applied Science Degree

Interim Program Director: Heather Smith

Program Faculty: Kaylene Strutz, Julie Derby, Adriann Lewis and Kate Jones

[Program Website](#)

PN Program Application (https://gfcmsu.edu/practical_nurse_application/) (Fall 2026 Application available February 13, 2026)

The Practical Nurse degree is offered online with limited onsite and onsite.

The Practical Nurse program prepares individuals to function as entry-level practical nurses with the ability to give safe, effective nursing care. The Practical Nurse program at Great Falls College Montana State University is currently approved by the Montana State Board of Nursing.

Upon completion of the Certificate of Applied Science Degree in Practical Nursing, students will be prepared to begin a successful career as a practical nurse. Students are prepared to sit for the national licensure examination for practical nursing.

The Practical Nurse program is a limited enrollment program. Interested students must apply for entry into the program. An application packet is available on the program website. The length of the program is two consecutive semesters after a semester of pre-requisites. For students that live more than 30 miles from Great Falls, Great Falls College MSU offers Practical Nursing as a hybrid program with distance learning options. Starting Fall 2020, Great Falls College MSU will begin offering a part-time option for the Practical Nursing program, completed over four semesters (after completion of pre-requisites) to allow students more flexibility. The students in the part-time option will take classes offered in the same semesters as the full-time option.

Accepted students will be required to provide proof of Health Care Provider CPR certification, a DOT-compliant urine drug screen, a background check, and a series of other specific immunizations. Further detailed information will be included in the acceptance packet. Computer skills are highly recommended.

The Hepatitis B immunization series is strongly recommended before entrance into the program. A student may be denied access to clinical rotations without an adequate Hepatitis B titer. Students having religious or personal conflicts against receiving the Hepatitis B vaccine must sign a release form.

Outcomes

Graduates are prepared to:

- Formulate a nursing care plan, to provide clinically competent, evidence-based, safe, and quality patient care.
- Demonstrate effective, therapeutic communication skills for delivering patient care, providing patient education and advocacy.

- Practice collaboratively within the professional scope of practice when managing all aspects of holistic patient care.
- Perform nursing skills and techniques safely and correctly.

Estimated Cost

Estimated Resident Program Cost*

Tuition and Fees	\$6,042
Uniforms	\$225
Lab/Course Fees	\$105
Program Fee	\$200
Books/Supplies	\$2,003
Total	\$8,575

* Fall 2025 MUS Student Health Insurance Premiums may be changing. Please check the Health Insurance website (<https://gfcmsu.edu/home/current-students/studentengagement/wellness/student-insurance/>) and/or Student Central for confirmed premium rates.

* Part-time students may not qualify for financial aid for every semester due to limited program courses required. Please check with the financial aid department for further assistance.

Full-Time Requirements

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Many students need preliminary math, science, and writing courses before enrolling in the program requirements. These courses may increase the total number of program credits. Students should review their math and writing placement before planning out their full program schedules.

The Great Falls College Practical Nurse Program is a limited enrollment program, accepting a restricted number of students each year. Interested students are urged to contact the Practical Nurse Program Director or Advising and Career Center Advisors for student advising specific to admission requirements and criteria for program acceptance.

Prerequisite Courses

The following courses must be completed prior to admission into the Practical Nurse Program. All prerequisite coursework must be completed with a minimum grade of C (not a C-) in each course and a minimum cumulative GPA in prerequisite coursework of 2.5. Grades in prerequisite courses are a major factor in ranking applications for program acceptance.

Science courses with labs must be completed within five (5) years of application to the program, and other courses must be completed within 15 years of applying to the program.

Course	Title	Credits	Grade/Sem
FIRST SEMESTER			
PSYX 100	Introduction to Psychology +	3	_____
WRIT 101	College Writing I **,+	3	_____
Select one of the following			
BIOH 104	Basic Human Biology w/ Lab **,+	4	_____
OR BOTH			
BIOH 201	Human Anatomy Phys I w/ Lab (= 301) **,+	4	_____
AND			
BIOH 211	Human Anatomy Phys II w/ Lab (=311) **,+	4	_____

NOTE: UM Western students may substitute BIOB 160, BIOH 365 & BIOH 370 for GFC MSU BIOH 201 & BIOH 211. All 3 classes are required and must have a grade of C or higher (not C-) within the last 5 years of application.

Select one of the following

M 120	Mathematics with Health Care Applications **,+	3	_____
M 121	College Algebra **,+	3	_____
M 140	College Math for Healthcare **,+	3	_____
M 151	Precalculus **,+	4	_____
M 171	Calculus I **,+	4	_____

NOTE: STAT 216 Intro to Statistics will no longer be accepted as a math substitution effective Fall 2014. For transfer students, M 115 Probability and Linear Math will be accepted.

Subtotal		13-18	_____
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Program Course Requirements After Formal Acceptance

Once enrolled in nursing courses, a minimum of a grade of C in all courses is required to continue in the program. In the clinical setting, students must achieve a grade of 75% in all rotations of each clinical experience.

The courses listed below are required in the program of study for the Certificate of Applied Science degree in Practical Nursing. The courses are offered at GFC MSU in the following sequence:

Course	Title	Credits	Grade/Sem
First Year			
Fall			
NRSRG 130	Fundamentals of Nursing **,+	3	_____
NRSRG 131	Fundamentals of Nursing Lab **,+	3	_____
NRSRG 135	Pharmacology for Practical Nurses **,+	3	_____
NRSRG 136	Pharmacology for Practical Nurses Lab **,+	1	_____
NRSRG 152	Gerontology and Community Nursing **,+	2	_____
NRSRG 153	Gerontology and Community Nursing Clinical **,+	2	_____
Credits		14	

Spring			
NRSRG 140	Adult Health Nursing **,+	4	_____
NRSRG 141	Adult Health Nursing Clinical **,+	2	_____
NRSRG 142	Nursing Care of Women and Children **,+	3	_____
NRSRG 143	Nursing Care of Women and Children Clinical **,+	1	_____
NRSRG 148	Leadership Issues for Practical Nurse **,+	2	_____
NRSRG 149	Leadership Issues for Practical Nurse Clinical **,+	1	_____
Credits		13	
Total Credits		27	

TOTAL PROGRAM CREDITS: 40-45

Suggested Electives

These courses are highly recommended in addition to standard nursing curriculum.

Course	Title	Credits	Grade/Sem
AHMS 144	Medical Terminology	3	_____
Any NASX prefix course		3	_____
NUTR 221	Basic Human Nutrition	3	_____
Any PSYX prefix course		3	_____
NRSRG 191	Special Topics: Tools for Nursing Success	1	_____

+ A grade of C (not C-) or above is required for graduation.

* Indicates prerequisites needed.

** Placement in course(s) is determined by placement assessment.

Part-Time Requirements

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Part-time students may not qualify for financial aid for every semester due to limited program courses required. Please check with the financial aid department for further assistance.

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AND			
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NRSG 131	Fundamentals of Nursing Lab **,+	3	_____
NRSG 135	Pharmacology for Practical Nurses *,+	3	_____
NRSG 136	Pharmacology for Practical Nurses Lab **,+	1	_____
Credits		10	
Spring			
NRSG 142	Nursing Care of Women and Children **,+	3	_____

NRSG 143	Nursing Care of Women and Children Clinical **,+	1	_____
Credits		4	
Second Year			
Fall			
NRSG 152	Gerontology and Community Nursing **,+	2	_____
NRSG 153	Gerontology and Community Nursing Clinical **,+	2	_____
Credits		4	
Spring			
NRSG 140	Adult Health Nursing **,+	4	_____
NRSG 141	Adult Health Nursing Clinical **,+	2	_____
NRSG 148	Leadership Issues for Practical Nurse **,+	2	_____
NRSG 149	Leadership Issues for Practical Nurse Clinical **,+	1	_____
Credits		9	
Total Credits		27	

TOTAL PROGRAM CREDITS: 40-45

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