



MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS ADVISING GUIDE: *Nursing Major (Registered Nurse)*

Registered Nurses (RNs) are the largest profession in healthcare, with over 2.6 million jobs (Bureau of Labor Statistics). Registered Nurses administer nursing care to patients, assess patient health problems and needs, educate patients and the public about health maintenance and disease prevention, and work collaboratively with other members of the healthcare team.



There are several educational pathways to becoming a **Registered Nurse**: a 2-year associate degree (ADN), a 4-5 year bachelor degree (BSN), or a 3 year hospital based diploma program. Regardless of the educational path followed, graduates must pass the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN) in order to be granted a license to practice nursing.

This advising guide includes information that will help you to explore your academic and career interests and determine whether the nursing major will support your long term goals.



EXPLORE YOUR OPTIONS WITH ACADEMIC ADVISING

Throughout each semester, meet with your advisor so that he/she can guide you through a self-exploration process that will help you identify your academic and career interests.

Beginning of Semester:

- ___ Schedule an appointment to meet with your academic advisor during the first few weeks to discuss future plans and how a Nursing Degree can help you achieve your goals.
- ___ Explore your personal interests by completing Focus2, an online career assessment tool: <https://www.middlesex.mass.edu/careerservices/focus2.aspx>
- ___ Attend an Overview of the Nursing Program session www.middlesex.mass.edu/admissionrequirements/nuinfoform.aspx

Mid-Semester:

- ___ Schedule an appointment with your academic advisor to review your academic progress, Focus2 results and create an academic plan in Degree Works.

Before Semester Ends:

- ___ Schedule an appointment with your academic advisor to discuss and register for the classes you will take the following semester. (Early November for spring, Early April for fall and summer)
- ___ Visit the Academic Career & Transfer Center or call 1-800-818-3434 to schedule an appointment.

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NURSING PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Graduates of the program are prepared to:

- Provide safe, holistic, compassionate, and coordinated care to patients, families, and communities across the lifespan. *Patient-Centered Care*
- Apply the best current evidence coupled with clinical competence and consideration of patients' preferences, experience, and values to make practice decisions to provide safe care. *Evidence-Based Practice*
- Use advanced technology to analyze information and collaborate in order to make decisions that minimize harm and optimize patient outcomes. *Informatics and Technology*
- Analyze data, using resources within their environment, to monitor the outcomes of care processes to provide care that is of optimal quality and value. *Quality Improvement and System-Based Practice*



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NURSING PROGRAM OUTCOMES (CONT.)

- Use leadership skills to influence the behavior of individuals or groups of individuals and to foster team learning and development in a way that will facilitate the establishment and acquisition/achievement of shared goals. *Leadership and Teamwork and Collaboration*
- Demonstrate the attributes of professionalism consistent with moral, altruistic, ethical, legal, regulatory, and humanistic principles. *Professionalism*
- Interact effectively with patients, families, and colleagues, fostering mutual respect and shared decision making to enhance patient satisfaction and health outcomes. *Communication*



NURSING SELF-EXPLORATION ACTIVITY (WOULD I MAKE A GOOD NURSE?)

#	QUESTION	TRUE	FALSE
1.	I enjoy helping people.		
2.	I like to work on one project at a time.		
3.	I am very organized.		
4.	I like reading and learning about new things.		
5.	I am very patient.		
6.	I am often late to class or for appointments.		
7.	I enjoy working with others to solve problems.		
8.	I get queasy when I see blood or body fluids such as throw-up or diarrhea.		
9.	I do better on essay and open book tests than on multiple choice timed exams.		
10.	I enjoy being around people with different backgrounds and beliefs than my own.		
11.	I prefer to work alone.		
12.	I often have trouble organizing my thoughts when I need to write a paper.		
13.	I always follow through on my commitments.		
14.	Having two assignments due on the same day stresses me out.		
15.	I like working in groups or on group projects.		
16.	Once I make up my mind, it is difficult to change my opinion.		
17.	If people are rude to me, I think it is OK to be rude back to them.		
18.	I do well in my science and math classes.		
19.	I tend to get stressed when people around me are stressed.		
20.	I am comfortable doing several things at the same time.		

Scoring:

1 point for each question if answered "True" to questions: 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 13, 15, 18, 20; 1 point for each question if answered "False" to questions: 2, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 19

- **12-20 points:** You have the personality to make a good nurse; nursing could be a good career choice for you.
- **0-11 points:** Nursing may not be a good fit for you. You may want to explore other career options.



IS THE NURSING PROGRAM THE RIGHT FIT FOR ME?

Often people have limited information about what it really takes to be a nurse. The popular media frequently portrays that you only need a caring attitude and a willingness to help people to be a nurse, but that is not the case. Nursing is a mentally, emotionally and physically demanding profession. Nurses need strong critical thinking skills and well developed organizational skills in order to meet multiple demands and make sound decisions in order to deliver safe and effective care in a stressful environment. Consider if you have the following personality traits and abilities.

■ **Ability to work with people:**

Do you like to help others? Are you the type of person who can maintain a calm attitude in the face of another person's anxiety? Can you keep a smile on your face and a tone of judgment out of your voice? Nurses take care of people who may be experiencing an extraordinary amount of pain and/or stress and are not always at their best. Nurses need to put themselves in that person's situation and understand where they are coming from. Good communication skills and being an empathetic listener are important skills for a nurse.

■ **Ability to act honestly and with integrity:**

Are you able to be selfless instead of selfish? Are you willing to admit when you have made a mistake and assume responsibility? Nurses have consistently outranked other professions in the annual Honesty and Ethics Gallup Poll. Nurses are frequently called upon to make decisions that affect other people. If you are able to put other people's interests ahead of your own, nursing may be a good profession for you.

■ **Ability to multi-task:**

Can you talk on the phone and exercise on a treadmill at the same time? Are you able to work on two different projects at the same time? If you can multi-task, you might make a good nurse. Nurses need the ability to handle many different tasks during the day; they may get interrupted by other patients needing attention or the phone ringing. Nurses need to be able to set their priorities and remain focused.

■ **Ability to solve problems:**

Do you like to solve puzzles? Do you feel compelled to find out why things are the way they are or how they are connected? These are important skills for a nurse. Nurses frequently have to make decisions that reflect thoughtful deliberation and sound clinical judgment and are based on the assessment and analysis of information available to them.

■ **Ability to work as part of a team:**

Have you ever been part of a sports team? Can you work on group projects in school, even if you don't necessarily like all the people you are working with? Nurses never really work alone. They work as part of a healthcare team that involves other nurses and individuals from many different professions, including physicians, physical therapists, social workers, nutritionists. You may not ever be "BFFs" with everyone on your team, but a good nurse is able to develop good teamwork strategies to provide quality care and meet established goals.

■ **Ability to stay organized and work under pressure:**

Are you constantly searching through your book bag to find your homework assignment? Do you miss deadlines when you are doing your school work? Do you always have an excuse when you are late to work? If this sounds like you, you may have to work on developing your organizational and time management skills before you can work as a nurse. Nurses are dealing with people's lives, and their actions potentially have life or death consequences. The ability to organize and prioritize under pressure are skills that you can practice and improve. But if you don't want to learn these skills, you will not make a good nurse.



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■ Ability to be flexible:

Are you someone who can adapt to change? Can you alter your plans on very short notice? Would you be willing to work nights and weekends and holidays? Nursing is a 24 hours, 7 days a week profession, particularly in hospitals or other in-patient settings. It is also sometimes necessary for nurses to work additional hours on very short notice to meet patient care needs. Nurses, particularly new nurses, often have to work the less desirable shifts, and may not get their “dream job” right out of school. Being flexible and adaptable is an important skill for a nurse.

Standard Skills for Nursing Practice:

With or without accommodation, nurses must be able to accomplish the following safely, efficiently and competently:

Physical Demands:

- Lift a minimum of 50 pounds.
- Transfer clients to and from wheelchairs, stretchers, beds or x-ray tables.
- Move/operate client conveyance devices and equipment such as stretchers, wheel chairs and monitors.
- Respond appropriately to sounds; for example, vocal sounds at a normal conversational volume, client movements and audible equipment signals.
- Manipulate dials, levers, keyboard devices and other switches and devices associated with nursing/medical equipment.
- Perform duties for a prolonged period without breaks, which involves walking, standing, stooping and bending for an eight hour shift.
- Possess visual acuity sufficient to perform tasks safely and accurately and monitor clients and equipment under low light conditions.
- Reach up to a height of six feet from the floor or safely use an adaptive device.
- Discriminate and respond appropriately to various types of client responses and distress behaviors.
- Manipulate syringes, needles and other invasive devices.

Behavioral Standards:

- Initiate and use clear, concise oral English communication within a conversational setting: comprehend and clearly and effectively communicate instructions and information in written and oral form.
- Exhibit appropriate professional and social skills in all interactions.
- Function without causing harm to self or others.

Other:

- Perform arithmetic calculations with accuracy and efficiency.
- Wear protective equipment such as surgical gloves, goggles and face shields.
- Use the nursing process problem-solving method to determine, implement and evaluate client care.
- Demonstrate knowledge and skills in computer literacy, information literacy, and the use of information technologies.
- Determine, manage and process multisensory input to prioritize nursing actions.



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THE CAREER PATH

The Middlesex Community College Associate’s Degree in Nursing program prepares graduates to take the NCLEX-RN (National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses) to become licensed as a Registered Nurse. The NCLEX is a computerized adaptive test designed to test the knowledge, skills and abilities essential to the safe and effective practice of nursing at the entry-level. It is highly recommended that graduates take an NCLEX Review Course in order to be prepared to pass the examination. After becoming licensed, graduates from the program typically gain employment in hospitals, long term care facilities, outpatient clinics and physician’s offices.

THE TRANSFER PATH

Graduates of the nursing program are encouraged to continue their nursing education in a Bachelor’s degree or Master’s degree program. Although not limited to these options, the Middlesex Community College Nursing Program has articulation agreements with several area Baccalaureate and Master’s Degree programs to provide a seamless transition for graduates to continue their education.



Transfer Planning Activities:

- ___ Work with advisor to discuss *MassTransfer*, articulations and transfer agreements
- ___ Visit your selected campus in person. Every college looks good online or in a glossy photo but you can get a better feel when you visit
- ___ Meet with transfer counselor to identify transfer scholarships
- ___ Research admissions requirements and deadlines at 4-year colleges and universities

Schools linked to the Nursing major:

- Emmanuel College
- Endicott College
- Fitchburg State University
(online BSN program)
- Framingham State University
- Regis College (RN to MSN option)
- Rivier College
- St. Anselm College
- St. Joseph’s College
- Salem State University
- SNHU
- UMass Lowell
- Walden University

CRIMINAL OFFENDER RECORD INFORMATION (CORI) CHECKS

Admitted students will complete a CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) check. The results of the CORI check may impact the student’s ability to participate in clinical courses.

RANDOM DRUG SCREENING

Admitted students will undergo random drug screening. The results of the screen may impact the student’s ability to participate in the clinical courses.

MCC ADVISING RESOURCES

- Admission Information:**
<https://www.middlesex.mass.edu/AdmissionRequirements/nursing.asp>
- Career Services:**
<https://www.middlesex.mass.edu/careerservices>
- Transfer Services:**
<https://www.middlesex.mass.edu/transfer>
- MassTransfer:**
<https://www.middlesex.mass.edu/transfer/masstransfer.aspx>
- Financial Aid:**
<https://www.middlesex.mass.edu/financialaid>
- Foundation Scholarships:**
<https://www.middlesex.mass.edu/foundation/scholarships>
- College Board Match Maker:**
<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search>

NURSING RESOURCES

- Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing:**
www.mass.gov/dph/boards/rn
- American Nurses Association:**
www.nursingworld.org
- American Nurses Association (ANA Massachusetts):**
www.anamass.org