

School of Nursing

Frequently Asked Questions



Rationale

Why is a new school of nursing needed right now?

- Minnesota and the United States more broadly are experiencing a nursing shortage. In starting a new School of Nursing, St. Thomas seeks to help serve the health needs of more people and more diverse urban and rural populations by training culturally responsive nurses who proactively improve whole-person healing.
- For a long time, students have expressed interest in a nursing program at St. Thomas. Data from St. Thomas indicates that when students state "major not offered" as their reason for leaving the university, nursing is the most cited major. We believe that such a program fits perfectly with the mission of St. Thomas to advance the common good.

Timeline/Process

When will the nursing programs begin accepting applications?

- Both the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) and Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) propose accepting applications around fall 2021 or spring 2022 (pending approval of regulatory bodies) and will enroll their inaugural classes in fall 2022.

What factors contribute to this timeline?

- Before we can recruit and begin teaching our first class of nursing students, we require approvals from the following:
 - The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) as it relates to our institutional accreditation.
 - The Minnesota Board of Nursing (MN BON) for state program approval.
 - The Minnesota Office of Higher Education (MOHE) for state regulatory approval.
- While we cannot provide a definitive date for each of these approvals, our current plan is to have all approvals in place for nursing students to begin classes during fall 2022.
- We must also gain curriculum approval from the University of St. Thomas and build the faculty and staff team.

Will the nursing program be accredited?

- The School of Nursing will seek accreditation for both the proposed BSN and the proposed MSN from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). Per standard CCNE accreditation procedure, these programs will be eligible for accreditation after enrolling students for two semesters. St. Thomas is seeking to ensure that the first graduating class will graduate from a CCNE-accredited program.

Program Specifics

What programs will the School of Nursing offer?

- The School of Nursing is proposing offering a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) and a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) upon opening, pending approval of state, national, and federal regulatory bodies. Both programs will prepare students for entry into the nursing practice.

What will the nursing programs prepare students for?

- Both the proposed BSN and the MSN are "pre-licensure" programs, meaning they prepare students to sit for the NCLEX-RN® licensure exam by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing. We will prepare students throughout the program for success on this exam.
- Our nursing programs are intended for future nurses who will be prepared to work as generalists, meaning they will be able to work in a variety of settings upon graduation. The programs do not prepare students for advanced practice specialty roles (such as Nurse Practitioner roles).

Will there be any specialty tracks or areas of emphasis within the nursing programs?

- Both the proposed BSN and MSN programs will provide a unique emphasis on whole person wellness, social determinants of health and health equity, interprofessional collaboration, and advocacy and systems change. In the MSN program, students will receive enhanced coursework in these areas, known as the "interprofessional core." The programs will focus on preparing students as generalists for entry into nursing practice.

How long will the proposed BSN and MSN programs take to complete?

- The BSN is a traditional 4-year undergraduate program.
- The MSN is a 20-month program, provided students have completed the prerequisite coursework.

How many students do you expect to enroll in the proposed BSN and MSN programs?

- In the inaugural academic year of the School of Nursing, we propose enrolling 50 BSN students and 50 MSN students.

Where will you have clinical sites?

- St. Thomas is seeking partnerships with clinical sites around the region that are congruent with the mission of the university and the vision of the School of Nursing to ensure students receive a high-quality nursing education.

Who are/will be the faculty for this program?

- St. Thomas will follow the board of nursing and the CCNE standards for educationally and experientially qualified faculty. We are in the process of building a team of exceptional faculty and staff members with a wide range of experience and backgrounds who will bring diverse perspectives and approaches to providing nursing education.

Admissions/Enrollment

Will I need an undergraduate degree in nursing or experience in nursing to pursue the MSN?

- No. The proposed St. Thomas MSN program will be a "direct entry" program suitable for students with no background in nursing. The program will prepare students for licensure and entry into the practice.

What prerequisites will be required to enroll in the proposed BSN or MSN programs?

- Once the curriculum is approved, St. Thomas will release pre-requisite information. This is to ensure that information provided to students is 100% accurate. The proposed BSN and MSN curricula are very regimented, and St. Thomas wants to avoid guiding students toward courses that they may not need to obtain their degree. As soon as the curriculum and pre-requisites are finalized, they will be shared widely.
- When pre-requisites are released, if a student has successfully completed pre-requisites for the proposed MSN during their undergraduate studies, that student will not be required to take those classes again during their master's program, pending a transcript review.

What will be the application requirements for the proposed BSN?

- The School of Nursing will utilize a holistic admissions process (see description below) in its review of applications. Application requirements will include a review of the applicant's academic record and resume, personal statement, reference, and a simulated activity for assessing teamwork and collaboration. The School of Nursing admissions committee is in the process of developing the admissions criteria and process. As soon as these decisions are finalized, they will be shared widely.

Will the St. Thomas BSN program require a separate application?

- Yes. The proposed BSN will require a secondary application after admission and enrollment at St. Thomas. We expect students to apply in the spring semester of their first year of St. Thomas courses.

What will be the application requirements for the proposed MSN?

- The School of Nursing will utilize a holistic admissions process (see description below) in its review of applications. Application requirements will include a review of the applicant's academic record, resume, personal statement, three letters of recommendation, and a simulated activity to assess teamwork and collaboration. The School of Nursing admissions committee is in the process of developing the admissions criteria and process. As soon as these decisions are finalized, they will be shared widely.

Will I apply directly to the MSN program or to the University of St. Thomas?

- The proposed MSN will require just an application to the MSN program. The School of Nursing admissions committee is in the process of developing the application criteria and process. As soon as these decisions are finalized, they will be shared widely.

What is holistic review and why is it important?

- Holistic review assesses an applicant's unique experiences in addition to traditional measures of academic achievement such as grades. This review facilitates consideration of a broad range of factors reflecting the applicant's academic readiness and contribution to the incoming nursing class. Since the School of Nursing's vision includes advancing health equity and social justice, St. Thomas nursing students should possess the background, qualities, and skills to provide culturally responsive care to meet the needs of a rapidly diversifying patient population. To learn more about holistic review and the evidence for this important admission process, please visit the [American Association of Colleges of Nursing's overview](#).

Can I transfer into the School of Nursing from another university? If I have already started my education at St. Thomas, can I transfer into the nursing program?

- The School of Nursing admissions committee is also reviewing requirements for transfer students. As soon as these decisions are finalized, they will be shared widely.
- Once the program is launched, the proposed BSN is a 4-year plan.

I'm a high school senior starting college in fall 2021. Will I know if this program is an option for me before the May 1 decision deadline?

- Once we know we have the approvals from the appropriate governing bodies, we will share the program start dates widely. The School of Nursing is proposing that the BSN officially launch fall 2022.

If I am enrolled as a student at an institution within the Associated Colleges of the Twin Cities (ACTC), such as Macalester College, Hamline University, Augsburg University or St. Catherine University, will I be able to take nursing classes at St. Thomas?

- No. Only four-year, degree-seeking St. Thomas students will be able to take courses within the proposed BSN program at St. Thomas.



Note: As the School of Nursing and its proposed programs continue to develop, this document will be updated with the latest information available.