\*Welcome to our online version of the Nursing Information Session for Tacoma Community College.

My name is Theresa James, I am the Nursing Pathway Specialist.

\*When you consider enrolling in a nursing program, it is important to know a bit about the profession. Nursing programs are rigorous and will require a significant investment of your time and resources. And, not everyone has a good understanding of the types of work a nurse will do in the course of his or her work. Although incredibly rewarding, nursing is challenging and not everyone is cut out for it. You need to determine if nursing is the right fit for you.

In fact, we strongly encourage all prospective students to spend some time researching their future occupation of choice to ensure they have a good understanding of the career. A great web page I recommend is Career Coach. You can find this on the TCC website at tacomacc.edu. Type in the words, “career coach” in the search bar and you should find links to the career center and/or the career coach page.

Once you are on the Career Coach site, enter Nursing. Several options will come up which include the term “nurse” in their description. I could click on any of the options, and it will provide great detail related to the daily tasks. Read through them and think about if you could really picture yourself doing this work.

We recommend this because we see a large number of students who are interested in working in health care, but many of them really don’t understand what it would be like to provide personalized services for all walks of life, when they are severely sick or injured. Often when people are receiving services, they are not happy to be there. They may be in pain, and/or experiencing significant stress, anxiety, or fear. These aren’t usually good indicators for the best behavior. Think about whether you have it within you to provide empathy to others in these types of scenarios for a 12 hour shift, and then turn around and come back and do it again the next day. Case in point, with COVID-19, health care is not a glamorous job. It can be grueling and at times, heartbreaking. You may be exposing yourself to illness, and may have to great take pains to prevent bringing it home to your family and friends. Ask yourself if you can really do it. Every day.

Other perks of the Career Coach site include typical educational attainment levels and wages for our area. What I like most about this site is it provides regionalized data. So, your research can be specialized for either the Seattle-Tacoma area, Lacey/Olympia, or Silverdale/Bremerton. Career Coach is also updated every 10 weeks.

It also will list current job postings. I think it is worth at least five minutes of your time to research the return on investment – job prospects – for the investment of your time, effort and finances to know what kinds of jobs are out there for our graduates right now.

There are many ways one can get into the nursing profession. Paths can vary depending on the amount of time one has to pursue their education before entering the workforce, or it may vary depending on the type of nursing work you want to pursue.

Associate Degrees will typically take 3+ years of training, and the baccalaureate degrees take about four years to complete. Both the Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) and Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) will enable the student to take the Registered Nurse (RN) licensing exam. The Masters in Nursing (MN) would be applicable for those wanting to work as something like a nurse practitioner, clinical nurse specialist, nurse midwife, or in educational or administrative roles. The Doctorate Prepared Nurse (DNP/PhD) would be an option if someone is considering a teaching position at the university level, research or advanced practice such as a Nurse Practitioner.

There are also several options for students who already have earned a non-nursing bachelor’s degree, which would enable them to fast-track towards an MSN.

Prospective students are encouraged to look at the [Washington Center for Nursing](file:///C:\Users\sthompson\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary%20Internet%20Files\Content.Outlook\6IW1Y9E1\wcnursing.org) website. This allows you to easily identify the various educational programs in the state of Washington. This site also includes scholarship information and interesting research studies which can be useful while you are a student.

TCC offers two different associate degree options for students.

One option is the Pre-Nursing Transfer Degree. This is a 2 year program designed for students who are planning to transfer to a Bachelor of Science in nursing program (BSN) program, to complete their nursing training at a 4-year university or college.

* **Degree requirements:** 
  + Cumulative GPA of 2.00 in all coursework applied to the degree and a cumulative GPA of 2.0 in all TCC college level courses; (Please note that a higher GPA will increase the likelihood of admission)
  + At least 30 of the last 45 applicable credits must be earned at TCC;
  + At least 90 quarter credit hours must be in courses numbered 100 or above.

Upon completion of the BSN, the student will become eligible to sit for the NCLEX certification exam. Upon passing the NCLEX, the student will be eligible to work as a Registered Nurse.

TCC also offers the RN Bachelor-Direct Transfer Degree, which we call DTA/MRP (Direct Transfer Agreement/Major Ready Program). We will spend most of this time talking about this option. The DTA/MRP is considered a 3 year + degree, which includes about a year and a quarter of pre-requisite courses, and then an additional 6 quarters once students have been accepted into the program.

Upon completion of the DTA/MRP, the student will become eligible to sit for the NCLEX certification exam. Upon passing the NCLEX, the student will be eligible to work as a Registered Nurse.

The DTA/MRP Nursing degree at TCC is approved by the **Washington State Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission** and is accredited by the **Accrediting Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN).** This is important becauseas a consumer of educational services, this tells you the program participates in a continuous review and improvement process. TCC is always looking at ways to improve the quality of their program to ensure that students are being taught at the highest level. This puts our students in the best position possible to pass their national certification exam to qualify for Registered Nursing licensure.

TCC switched to the DTA/MRP because it offered several advantages for students. This is a statewide initiative to streamline long-term transferability of associate degrees into baccalaureate programs. The DTA/MRP is currently directly transferable to 10 different university nursing programs in the state. This degree also saves money for students who transfer. Upon completion of the DTA/MRP, the student will only need an additional 45 credits to earn the BSN (about one year).

\*So, to recap –

There are two different associate degree options at TCC: The Pre-Nursing Transfer Degree, which will be accepted at a number of different colleges for students pursuing their BSN and to complete their nursing training; or the DTA/MRP at TCC, which essentially enables students to become RN eligible upon completion of the degree and passing the certification exam. It also has ten university transfer options.

\*In order to apply for the DTA/MRP, students will not need to complete an interview, submit a resume, pay an application fee, write essays, or obtain letters of recommendation. But, there are a few things you do need to take care of before you may apply.

\*The minimum qualifications for application to the DTA/MRP include:

1. Obtain cumulative college-level GPA of 2.5
2. Complete factored program prerequisites with a “B” or better within two attempts in last 5 years.
3. Complete non-factored program prerequisites with a “C” or better.
4. Achieve satisfactory scores for ATI TEAS exam
5. Correctly complete an online nursing program application by the published deadline.

Let’s look at those a bit more closely.

\*Factored Pre-Requisites:

For factored program pre-requisites, the applicant must have received a “B” or better. TCC will accept online courses from Washington state public colleges. TCC will also accept courses from regionally accredited institutions that match course learning outcomes of the TCC equivalent course. These aligned courses are identifiable as evidenced by the “&” symbol. TCC will accept other courses without the “&” symbol, courses from private or out of state colleges, but the applicant should know that these will be reviewed for consideration with much closer scrutiny.

There is no expiration date for courses. So, even if the course was taken over ten years ago, those courses will still count provided you received a grade of B or better. However, depending on how long ago the course was taken, you may want to consider taking the course to refresh the level of knowledge.

Applicants are only allowed to attempt a factored program pre-requisite two times within a five year period. For example, if you have attempted BIOL& 241, and received a D, then re-took the course the following quarter and still didn’t get a B grade, a third attempt would not be considered valid. If five years passes from the date the first BIOL& 241 grade was received, the first attempt will be forgiven and the third attempt would be allowed for consideration.

* **CHEM& 121** **Introduction to Inorganic Chemistry or CHEM& 161 General Chemistry w/lab**
  + *If you have already taken CHEM& 161, TCC will accept it in lieu of CHEM& 121.*
* **BIOL& 241 Human Anatomy and Physiology I***Prerequisite: CHEM& 121 and BIOL& 160*
* **BIOL& 242** **Human Anatomy and Physiology II***Prerequisite: BIOL& 241*
* **ENGL& 101 English Composition I**
  + **ENGL& 102, ENGL& 103 or ENGL& 235** may be substituted for ENGL& 101.
* **PSYC& 200** **Lifespan Psychology**  
  *Prerequisite: PSYC& 100*
* **BIOL& 260** **General Microbiology**

*Prerequisite: CHEM& 121 and either BIOL& 160 or BIOL& 222. Recommended, but not required: CHEM& 131*

Now let’s talk about what we call “Non-Factored” Pre-requisites. These courses should also be done prior to applying, but they are not factored into the admission lottery process. Grades for the non-factored program pre-requisite courses must be a “C” or better. So what are they?

* **BIOL& 160 General Cell Biology or BIOL& 222 Introduction to Cell Biology or BIOL& 211 Majors Cellular Biology (Recent change: This course has the option to be challenged through the TCC Biology department)**
* **PSYC& 100 General Psychology**
* **CMST& 210 Interpersonal Communication**
* **NUTR 101 or 250**
* **MATH& 146 Introduction to Statistics**
* **ENGL& 102 or 103 English Composition II, III or recently added option: ENGL& Technical Writing.**
  + *You can switch this with your factored English course if you received lower than a B in ENGL& 101 and you received a B or higher in one of these three English courses.*
* **Humanities Course (5 credits)**
  + Discuss with your advisor. There are many Humanities courses to choose from.

It should be noted that if you have one non-factored program pre-requisite course to complete, you would still be allowed to apply to the program. If there is space available, TCC will consider your application for admissions, if there is space available. More information related to pre-requisites and the nursing application can be found on our DTA/MRP Associate Degree in nursing web page: <https://www.tacomacc.edu/academics-programs/programs/nursing/>

NURSING ASSISTANT CERTIFICATION

* **Nursing Assistant Certification is required (see Department of Health website for NAC program list)**

The Nursing Assistant – Certified or NAC program is offered in a variety of different ways. The program can be completed within 5 weeks at the Gig Harbor campus. If you are seeking regular NAC programs quickly, please go to the Washington State Department of Health website [www.doh.wa.gov](http://www.doh.wa.gov) and search for the “NAC Program List.”

ATI TEAS Exam:

The Test for Essential Academic Skills (TEAS) assesses reading, mathematics, science, and English language skills. This assessment tool is used in over 600 nursing programs nationally. Prospective students may sign up at ATItesting.com by choosing their nearest testing location. If testing accommodations are needed, please set those up through ATI, not through the testing site. Study packages are very highly recommended and can also be purchased through ATI. It has also been shared that these study packages might be found at a lesser price if one is willing to shop around for a better deal.

There are minimum scores required for the TEAS in order to apply for the nursing program.

* + Student must obtain an overall score of 70% or better.
  + Student must obtain the following minimum scores on each section:
    - Reading 75%
    - Math 72%
    - Science 63%
    - English 70%

All scores must be met within one testing session. For example, if you fell below the minimum required score for English, you would need to take the assessment in its entirety again – not just the English portion. Applicants are allowed two attempts of the TEAS per year (from the date of the application), and scores expire after four years (Note: this is a recent change from three year expiration, which was previously in place). More information on the TEAS can be found on our Nursing pre-requisite web pages, including details related to registration, study preparation, and remote testing options.

Once a student has submitted his/her application to the program, they will be provided with a weighted score. Things that can add weight to your application include the number of college level credits taken at TCC, US Military Service, and factored program Biology pre-requisite grades. Conversely, the factored program Biology pre-requisite grades can adversely impact applications, by subtracting 5 points for each retake. Again, if the retake occurred outside of five years, it will not be considered.

All students meeting the pre-requisites will have a starting base score of 40 points.

Things that add or subtract points:

1) Biology factored pre-requisites (241,242, 260):

* + A- (3.7) or better: +10 points each course
  + Retakes: -5 points each course

2) Military Experience: +10 points

* + Past or present US service, honorable discharge
  + Does not apply to family members.
  + Documentation from Veteran’s Services, Bldg. 14

3) College-level credits taken at TCC:

* + 15-29 credits = +5 points
  + 30+ credits = +10 points

NOTE: If you are already an LPN, we have a one-year, LPN to RN Bridge program. The entrance requirements are the same except for the licensing requirement. Instead of a Nursing Assistant Certification, you would need to have an unencumbered WA state LPN license.

To apply to the nursing program, one must apply for admission to TCC first. This step is fairly straightforward, but it could take 2-3 days for processing. This will provide access to the student portal, and provide the student with a TCC email. TCC email will be the primary way we communicate with prospective students regarding their application status. Therefore, it is important to check TCC email very regularly after submitting the application to remedy any problems that may come to light.

The applicant will need to upload all ATI TEAS exam results, proof of military experience (or a page with “no military”, if applicable), proof of the current NAC credential or active LPN credential, and a list of schools where official transcripts are coming from.

Prior to application submission, students are expected to review their application and supporting documentation to ensure legibility and accuracy.

When the application is complete, a confirmation email will be received in your TCC student email. It is important that you check for this. Please save this email for your records. If you didn’t receive your confirmation email, please try and apply again. If you still don’t receive this, you must reach out to [nursing@tacomacc.edu](mailto:nursing@tacomacc.edu) so they can help you. For students transferring in credits, please ensure official transcripts are received at the Enrollment Services office (building 7) by the published deadline. They can either be hand delivered, or they can be sent directly to TCC from your previous college. It is recommended to save documentation of any requests to forward transcripts, just in case they are not received by the published application deadline.

\*Application windows for general DTA/MRP students are subject to change. Currently they are:

* + Fall and Winter : (June 1- July 1)
  + Spring: (Dec 1 - Jan 7)
* **LPN to RN Students:**
  + Winter: (July 1- Oct. 1)

\*After the deadline passes on the last day of the application window, TCC will begin review of all applications. Disqualified applicants will be notified of their status via TCC email, after about 3-4 weeks. All qualified applicants will get an email with a link, letting them know that their lottery number (the last six digits of your student ID) is listed with their weighted score. You will have time to dispute your score, if you think there is an error in scoring.

After the review period, all qualified applicants will be entered into our admission lottery. The lottery utilizes a sophisticated computer software program written by the TCC Math department. The lottery process is taped and available for viewing upon request. The results are verified by witnesses.

Many people find it easier to consider that the lottery computer program is like a raffle drawing. If you have a low amount of tickets (or points), you still have the opportunity to be selected. If you have a large number of raffle tickets (or points), you will have a slightly improved chance of being selected.

\*All qualified applicants will be notified by TCC E-mail whether they have been selected or not.

Selected students must confirm their intent to occupy the slot they have been offered within the designated time frame.

* + If any student refuses offer, the next student drawn will be offered a slot until all open slots are filled.

I would like to share with you a few things that need to be in place once you are accepted into the nursing program. Our clinical partners all require our students to be current on their immunizations or be able to prove their immunity by titer. I am not suggesting you rush out and get all of your immunizations, unless you want to. What I am suggesting is that, the next time you are at the doctor’s office, you might request copies of your immunizations and start keeping a file of those records. This makes it a lot easier to identify what immunizations would still be needed before you can attend the clinical portion of your education.

I would also say, too, that the tuberculosis TB test is a very detailed process. Any variation from the established protocol will entail a redo. Again, if you want to go out and get tested for TB, please feel free to do so. However, it is very likely that you will need to redo it when you are admitted to the program.

To participate in clinical practice, it is also required that students participate in a comprehensive criminal background check. So, if there is something in your background that you think could possibly show up on a background check, it is important to research now if this will serve as a barrier to employment or licensure.

If there is something in your history which could be flagged during a comprehensive criminal background check, please contact Jill Edwards, the Associate Dean for Nursing at [JEdwards@tacomacc.edu](mailto:JEdwards@tacomacc.edu) to inquire into whether this could be a factor for participation in the program, and/or potential licensing.

Also, TCC cannot require their students to participate in a drug screen, but our clinical partners can and some may require it. I share this story regularly, but I will not forget attending a meeting with a local hospital and they were discussing their current need to hire more RNs. They said they interviewed one particular nurse and they absolutely loved her. She started going through the hiring process, and she tested positive for nicotine. They had to ask her to please reapply in six months.

TCC has adopted what is called a “flipped classroom model” in its concept-based nursing curriculum. This is a departure from the traditional face-to-face lecture model, in that the student takes responsibility for learning by engaging in independent study outside of the classroom. Then while in class, the educator facilitates and guides learning as students apply and reinforce concepts in lab.

TCC’s nursing program is highly rigorous. The flipped classroom model has a high homework load. Each quarter, the students will be taking 12 credits. This will include 4-5 days/week on campus, 5 hours/week in lecture, 4-6 hours/week for lab/clinical, and at least 3-4 hours of study/prep time per credit. It is not recommended that students work more than 12 hours per week while enrolled in the program. Per TCC Policy, students may not work for at least 8 hours immediately prior to any clinical shift.

The number of applications has decreased during the COVID pandemic and we are fortunate that we have been able to place every qualified applicant within the last year. In the event that TCC has more qualified applicants than there are spaces available, we encourage students to consider a Plan B, or even a Plan C. We are honored that you are interested in trusting your education to us and would love for you to be at TCC. However, we want you to plan ahead and create options, in case space is not available. Consider looking at other nursing programs in our area and apply there, also. There are other health science programs as well. For example, here are the other health care career options available just at TCC.

* Respiratory Care Program
* Radiology Science Program
* Diagnostic Medical Sonography
* Health Information Technology/Health Information Management
* Emergency Medical Services (EMT/Paramedic)

If you are a transfer student, that is to say you have credits from another institution of higher learning and you would like to transfer those credits in for consideration of credit at TCC, your first step is to apply for admission to the college. Please note, this is a separate admission process to be a TCC student. This is very different from the nursing program admission processes I talked about today.

The next thing would be to submit your official transcripts for consideration to our Enrollment Services office. Official transcripts are obtained when you request copies from your previous college and they either send them directly to our Registrar, or they send them to you and you bring the sealed envelope to our Enrollment Services office. There is also a form you would need to submit that formally requests evaluation of your credits.

Then, we highly recommend that you schedule an appointment with a TCC Healthcare advisor and bring your unofficial transcripts with you to that appointment. Students who have taken this advice have later told me this was very beneficial for them. Advisors can look at your unofficial transcripts, and assist with education planning so you take the right classes when you need them.

For new students, that is to say, you have never ever attended college, your steps will be a bit different. You will also apply for admission to the college. Your welcome letter will have next steps for you.

Lastly, there are the continuing students out there. These are the students who have already attended TCC. Your next step will be to schedule an appointment with a Healthcare advisor. Here again, they will be available to answer questions and help with educational planning and registration. Aside from that, we strongly encourage all prospective applicants to review the Nursing program web pages and review the various nursing program application packets for updates.

Here are a few of the frequently asked questions:

**Can I still be taking pre-requisite courses at the time of application?** Yes, currently the nursing program is accepting student applications if they are enrolled in their final non-factored pre-requisite course, based on space available your application would be considered.

**Are there any extra points awarded for additional relevant experience or coursework?**  No, although there are many traits that would be beneficial for a nurse to have, they are not considered in the objective scoring of applicants.

**How do I know if the courses I have taken at another college are equivalent to the pre-requisites for the TCC Nursing program?** It is highly encouraged that you meet with a Healthcare advisor at the TCC Advising office. Please bring your unofficial transcripts with you

**What do I do if my Nursing Assistant class was canceled or I am unable to take the State Exam?**You will need proof of passing/successfully completing the Nursing Assistant Exam at minimum, by the application deadline

At the time of Application, students will need to submit one of the following for the NAC requirement as follows:

* Submission of an active Washington State NAC license
* Submission of passing scores of NAC skills and written tests from Credentia (you are required to submit your NAC application to WA state Dept. of Health)

We appreciate your attendance and sticking through to the very end! I hope that I have answered your questions and provided some insight to help you get started on next steps towards a career in nursing. We hope to see you soon!