



Practical Nursing (C.A.S)

CERTIFICATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE



Student Information and Application Packet

HELENA COLLEGE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA PRACTICAL NURSE CERTIFICATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE

Updated for SPRING 2026 Start

Application DUE DATE Dec 1, 2025

Applications are subject to change from year to year. It is the student's responsibility to obtain the most current information/ application packet prior to applying to the PN CAS program

Revised 3/26/2025

The practical nurse (PN) uses specialized knowledge and skills that meet the healthcare needs of people in a variety of settings under the direction of qualified health professionals. The curriculum focuses on preparation for employment. Students learn practical nursing skills through independent study, lectures, simulation demonstrations, and practice in the skills lab. Under instructor supervision, students also provide patient care in a variety of healthcare settings. The program is approved by the Montana State Board of Nursing.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Applications for the Practical Nursing (PN) program are accepted each fall for a spring semester start. The program admits 16 students (eight in Helena and eight in Hamilton-Bitterroot College) each year. PN students start classes in the spring, with completion of the program at the end of the fall semester.

All coursework is competency-based and is designed to prepare graduates with knowledge, skills, and attitudes to successfully enter the workforce after graduation.

This is a limited enrollment program. Student cohort size is limited by the availability of lab and clinical space. Because of this, the application process is competitive, and program applicants are accepted based on criteria found in this packet. **Should the number of qualified applicants exceed the available spaces, not all qualified applicants will be accepted.**

In the PN program, all didactic courses are taught in a **Virtual-Blended format (VB)** by Helena College Nursing Faculty. Nursing skills labs, simulations, and clinical experiences will occur face-to-face in the student's home community (Helena-Helena College or Hamilton-Bitterroot College).

Practical Nurse CAS Virtual Blended Remote program

In this VB remote delivery method, most of the didactic course instruction will be done in a virtual synchronous mode (**occurs at the same time**) via the internet platform TEAMS. There will be some online asynchronous assignments and coursework, which the student can complete on their schedule.

The face-to-face component of the program, when students **MUST** be on campus (Helena College or Bitterroot College), is used for simulations and hands-on skills labs. Clinical experiences are arranged in each of the two communities and may vary depending on clinical site availability.

Students commit to a full week of Class, Lab, or Clinical work each week. This program, while very exciting, is extremely fast-paced and challenging. There are many reading assignments, quizzes, and written assignments each week. These must be completed outside of class time. Students need to make sure they can dedicate enough time to being successful. A good rule of thumb is that for every class hour, at least 3 hours in preparation or the completion of assignments will be needed. Furthermore, learning in an online environment requires the student to be self-motivated, resilient, and quickly adaptable to learning new technology.

PROGRAM EXPENSES

The PN students will be required to purchase textbooks, software resources, personal equipment, supplies, and uniforms, pay fees, and pay for transportation to clinical sites. Students will need a reliable computer with a camera and microphone and access to reliable high-speed internet.

Accepted students must complete a background check prior to the start of the program. Background checks are done at the students' expense, through Castlebranch (information will be sent upon acceptance). The cost of the background check is \$75.00. If needed, students should begin planning early for financial aid to meet their educational needs.

ADMISSION TO HELENA COLLEGE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

Students must be admitted to the college prior to submission of the nursing program application and be in good academic standing with the institution. Therefore, **no applications will be reviewed unless the applicant applies first to the college and the official transcripts are reviewed by the Registrar.**

Acceptance to Helena College requires a completed admissions application file. An application to the college may be obtained by visiting the campus, calling the college (406) 447-6900, or applying online at https://helenacollege.edu/admissions_enrollment/default.aspx

All transfer work has to be from a regionally accredited institution and official transcripts are required to be on file with Helena College's Registrar Office.

ELIGIBILITY FOR ADMISSION INTO THE PRACTICAL NURSE-CAS PROGRAM

All application forms and documents are included in the application packet.

Admission to the Helena College PN CAS program is competitive. **Meeting eligibility requirements does not guarantee admission.**

APPLICATION AND PROGRAM ENTRY

The Practical Nurse Certificate of Science program prepares graduates to provide direct care to clients, individuals, or groups, in a variety of structured settings with clear policies and procedures. Due to limited clinical sites for client care experiences and State Board of Nursing regulations regarding student-to-faculty ratio, the director and nursing faculty will determine acceptance into the program.

Pre-requisite coursework must have been taken within the last fifteen years (within the last 5 years for science courses) prior to admission to the Nursing Program to fulfill program requirements. Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Nursing Program Director. This includes all general education requirements. Students may repeat TWO general education courses, to achieve a "C" grade or above, prior to the student's admission to the nursing program and courses. *Maximum of 2 prerequisite retakes allowed.* Written permission from the Director of Nursing is required before taking any pre-requisite course a third (3) time. If permission is not obtained, the second grade will be used to calculate GPA

Students must obtain a 2.5 GPA in the pre-requisite courses to apply to the LPN program

In addition to the pre-requisite coursework, students must complete the TEAS exam with a minimum score of 65%. The TEAS exam may be taken up to four (4) times and the student may submit their highest score.

TRANSFER STUDENTS

Transfer Students will be required to have their transcripts evaluated by the admissions department prior to applying to the nursing program. Transferability and acceptance of non-core curriculum nursing credits into the Helena College Nursing Program is not guaranteed.

To be eligible to apply for admission into the Practical Nurse CAS Program, applicants must have the following:

- Evidence of admission to Helena College, a completed admissions file, and being in good academic standing.
- Completed all prerequisite coursework with a “C” grade or higher, and a minimum overall prerequisite GPA of 2.50. Prerequisite coursework can be taken at other institutions, but it is the applicant’s responsibility to confirm those courses are equivalent to the program’s prerequisites and are transferable to Helena College.
 - Regarding Transferable Courses – send **official transcripts** to the Registrar’s Office.
Attach unofficial copies to this application.
- Only students in good academic standing will be eligible for program acceptance.
- Taken the TEAS and received a 65 or higher. (Sign up and pay at the cashier’s office)
- Total calculated points 45 or higher (see application scoring)
- All requirements, including immunization records, CPR certifications and others as stated in the application.

The PN applications are **DUE by 5:00 pm Dec. 1, 2025**. Completed application packets may be hand delivered to the Nursing Department in Helena College, mailed directly to the college, or submitted online.

Late applications will not be accepted.

Please send all application items as a completed packet. Items sent separately and at random are easily lost or misfiled. Incomplete applications may result in disqualification. Helena College is not responsible for any late, lost, or missing information.

CONTACT INFORMATION Program Assistant Nursing Department Room 112 406.447.6985	MAILING ADDRESS Helena College University of Montana Attention: PN-CAS Nursing Program 1115 N Roberts Helena, MT 59601	SUBMIT ONLINE Completed Applications may be submitted by the due date and time to: nursingapplications@helenacollege.edu
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It is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure that all requirements are met by the established deadline. Deadlines, guidelines, and policies apply equally to all students; thus, there can be no exceptions.

Helena College PN CAS Program does not maintain a waiting list. Applicants must reapply each fall.

NOTIFICATION OF ACCEPTANCE

Students will be notified of acceptance into the program via the email listed on the application. Accepted students must notify the nursing department of their intent to accept their admission, by the date indicated on the acceptance notification letter. **All future correspondence will be sent to the students' Helena College email address.** Accepted students should plan on attending the mandatory nursing orientation, and students new to Helena College will be required to register for and attend the school's orientation as well.

Helena College Nursing is required to comply with the vaccination policies and requirements of our clinical partners for all students doing clinicals. A complete list of vaccinations and certifications can be found on the application on page 7. **Proof of these vaccinations and certifications must be completed and submitted along with your application to the PN program.**

Helena College Nursing is not able to guarantee clinical placements for students who are not compliant with clinical agency requirements. **If a clinical agency requires vaccination for its employees, as a student learner, you will not be allowed in the facility for clinical learning unless you comply with facility guidelines.** Vaccination declinations/waivers are at the discretion of each of the clinical facilities. If you cannot complete clinicals, you will not be able to meet the course learning objectives and, hence, cannot successfully pass the course. We are committed to your education and hope that the student's clinical compliance issues can be resolved at a future date. We will make every effort to facilitate your successful re-entry into the Helena College nursing program to complete your degree. However, because of space limitations, we cannot guarantee placement or re-entry at a particular time.

NURSING PROGRAM POLICY: STUDENT BACKGROUND CHECKS

To promote patient safety and decrease institutional liability, most clinical agencies require students to have cleared a background check before students are permitted in the clinical setting. To meet these requirements, the program **requires that the background check be done prior to starting the program.**

- Background checks are done at the students' expense through Castlebranch. Approximate cost, \$75.00. Students with background checks that reveal a finding will be evaluated individually to determine whether they will be eligible for clinical placement and state licensure for their respective degree programs.
- Students are required to go to castlebranch.com to create an account for background checks. More information will be sent after acceptance into the program. **Do not do this before being accepted into the program.**

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY

The Helena College University of Montana is committed to the provision of equal opportunity for education, employment, and participation in all college programs and activities without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, creed, service in the uniformed services (as defined in state and federal law), veteran status, gender, age, political ideas, marital or family status, physical or mental disability, genetic information, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation.

Practical Nursing Curriculum

PREREQUISITE COURSEWORK

The following courses must be completed prior to admission into the Practical Nursing Program. All prerequisite work must be completed with a minimum grade of C (not a C-) in each course and a minimum cumulative GPA in prerequisite coursework of 2.50. Grades in prerequisite courses are a major factor in ranking applications for program acceptance. Applicants may retake two courses (one retake each) for a higher grade. **Maximum of 2 prerequisite retakes allowed.** The most recent verifiable grade will be used for scoring. (We use the retake grade...even if it is lower)

Students may substitute M121-College Algebra for M120-Math for Allied Health and **both** BIOH 201 A&P I /BIOH 211 A&P II for BIOH 104.

Pre-requisites		13 credits
Course #	Course Name	Credits
BIOH 104	Basic Human Biology w/Lab	4
PSYX 100	Introduction to Psychology	3
M120	Math with Healthcare Apps	3
WRIT 101	College Writing I	3

PN PROGRAM COURSEWORK AFTER FORMAL ACCEPTANCE

Once enrolled in the Practical Nursing program, a minimum of a C (Not C-) in all courses is required to continue in the program. Students must achieve a grade of 78% or higher in all courses (didactic and clinical) to successfully pass and progress to the next semester. Additionally, students must maintain a 78% average on course exams, in order to successfully pass the course.

The courses for the program are required and must be completed in the following sequence:

Semester 1	Spring	14 credits	
Course #	Course Name	Credits	Location
NRSG130	Fundamentals of Nursing	3	Virtual Blended
NRSG 131	Fundamentals of Nursing Lab	3	Helena
NRSG 135	Nursing Pharmacology	3	Virtual Blended
NRSG 136	Nursing Pharmacology Lab	1	Helena
NRSG 152	Gerontology and Community Nursing	2	Virtual Blended
NRSG 153	Gerontology/ Community Nursing Clinical	2	Helena

Semester 2	Fall	13 credits	
Course #	Course Name	Credits	Location
NRSG 140	Adult Health Nursing	4	Virtual Blended
NRSG 141	Adult Health Nursing Clinical	2	Helena
NRSG 142	Nursing Care of Women and Children	3	Virtual Blended
NRSG 143	Nursing Care of Women/Children Clinical	1	Helena
NRSG 148	Leadership Issues for Practical Nurses	2	Virtual Blended
NRSG 149	Leadership Issues for PN Clinical	1	Helena
	Total PN Program Credits	40	

The following pages are to be completed and submitted as your application.
Please retain pages 1-5 for your records and submit pages 7-12 as the application.

APPLICATION DEADLINES

Applications for admission to Spring 2026 are Due by 5:00 pm on December 1, 2025.

Please submit completed applications to the Nursing Office or mail them to Attention: Nursing Department, 1115 North Roberts Street, Helena, MT 59601. Questions? Call 406-447-6985. Applications are also accepted by email at: nursingapplications@helenacollege.edu.

PRACTICAL NURSING-CAS APPLICATION

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Full Name: _____
Last First M.I.

Address: _____
Mailing Address Apartment/Unit #

City State ZIP Code

Cell Phone: () _____ Home Phone () _____

Helena College Student ID: _____ Email: _____

Have you ever attended an LPN or RN program? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, where _____

Reason for leaving? _____

Have you **retaken** any of the prerequisites? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, which ones and when? _____

- **Max of 2 prerequisite retakes allowed.**
- For applicants who have retaken a prerequisite course, the most recent verifiable grade will be used for scoring/GPA calculations.

Application Requirements

*The items listed below are **required and must be submitted with your application** for you to be considered for program entry.*

Checklist:

- ___ Initial Admission to Helena College – letter of acceptance, or student number on unofficial transcripts
- ___ All transfer courses are officially evaluated and accepted by HC Admissions prior to application deadline
- ___ Completion of pre-requisite coursework with proof of grades (include an unofficial copy of transcripts)
- ___ Copy of TEAS Test results
- ___ Physical Form I and II completed within last 6 months
- ___ Immunization Records:
 - ___ Childhood immunizations (Polio, DPT, MMR)
 - ___ Hepatitis A
 - ___ Hepatitis B (series of 3)
 - ___ Current Flu shot or signed declination
 - ___ Documentation of COVID-19 (initial vaccination and any boosters) or signed declination form
 - ___ Negative TB skin tests (two-step at least one week apart). Negative QuantiFERON TB gold or negative chest x-ray indicating no active disease also accepted
 - ___ Varicella vaccination or titer.
- ___ Current CPR card: BCLS with AED for Healthcare providers

APPLICATION CRITERIA WORKSHEET

Please fill in the chart below **to the best of your knowledge** and submit proof of grades with the application. If you are currently taking a required pre-requisite course and will not receive a grade in that course before the application deadline, please indicate your "current" status in the chart below. As soon as your final grade becomes available, submit proof of final grade to the Nursing Department to be attached with your application.

Points and GPAs will be calculated by the Program Director and grade points will be calculated using the current catalog criteria which includes +/- weighing. Multiply grade by Credits = **calculations**. Divide by 13 = GPA

(A) = 4 (A-) = 3.7 (B+) = 3.3 (B) = 3 (B-) = 2.7 (C+) = 2.3 (C) = 2

Pre-Requisite Course		Currently Taking	Grade	Credits	Calculations	*Points Possible
BIOH 104 Basic Human Biology w/ Lab				4		
M120 Math for Allied Health				3		
PSYX 100 Introduction to Psychology				3		
WRIT 101 College Writing				3		
		Total Calculation score				
		Prerequisite GPA : Divide total calculation score by 13:				
		Prerequisite GPA points earned*: (see table below)				20-50
TEAS SCORE:		TEAS points earned*: (see table below)				10-30
Other points (See table below): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work experience (+1)• HC/BC prereqs or COLS 101 (+1)• Academic degree (up to +2)						1-4
For total score add GPA points, TEAS points and other points.						
In case of a tie, we will consider the following criteria: First : Grade in BIOH 104, Second : Grade in Math 120, Third : Veteran service with proof						45 Min. to apply
					Total score	

APPLICATION POINTS*

Selection into this nursing program is competitive. To assure you receive credit for all of your points we strongly recommend that you have ALL documentation to the nursing department by the application deadline. Use this rubric to identify points earned for each category and enter those numbers in the worksheet above. **The minimum number of points eligible to apply is 45.** The reason for this is to help ensure student success in both didactic testing and the NCLEX-PN exam required for licensure. Meeting the minimum requirements does not guarantee admission to the Nursing program.

Prerequisite GPA: 10-60 points	ATI TEAS Exam: 10-30 points	Work Experience (min 1 year): 1 point for this column	Taken at least 3 prerequisites from HC/BC: 1 point	Academic Degree: 1-2 points
3.75—4.00 50 3.50—3.74 45 3.25—3.49 40 3.00—3.24 35 2.75—2.99 30 2.50—2.74 20	85—100% 30 80—84% 25 75—79% 20 70—74% 15 65—69% 10 *Provide printout of TEAS exam results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CNA • Med Tech • CMA, Surgical Tech, EMT, Military medic. (Any other experience used will be at the discretion of the nursing program director.) *Provide documentation with nursing application	Taken at least 3 prerequisites from Helena College or Bitterroot College: OR Taken COLS101 *Transcripts	Associates= 1 Bachelor's or /higher = 2 *Provide a copy of transcripts showing the degree awarded with nursing application

DESIGNATED SITE REQUEST

I, _____, wish to be considered for admission to Helena College Nursing Program (PN-CAS) for Spring Semester 20__ at the following location:

Choose one:

_____ Helena College, Helena Clinical locations

_____ Bitterroot College, Hamilton and area Clinical locations

I understand that all didactic classes are online and that I will attend clinicals and onsite labs/simulations at my assigned campus.

HELENA COLLEGE – DEPARTMENT OF NURSING EDUCATION

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION FORM PART I (TO BE FILLED OUT BY STUDENT)-Take all 3 pages to provider appointment

Last Name _____ First Name _____ Middle Initial _____
 Primary Phone _____ Message Phone _____
 Student ID _____ Date of Birth _____
 Emergency Contact (Name and phone): _____

PERSONAL MEDICAL HISTORY: If your response to any of the following is YES, please provide additional details.

Yes	No	
		Has there been any significant medical illness, injury, weight loss in the past 12 months
		Are you taking any medication? If yes, please list:
		Are you under a physician's care for continuing medical problems
		Have you been an in-patient in a hospital in the last 12 months
		Have you ever had an accident resulting in a disabling injury
		Have you ever had a fractured bone (list and date)
		Have you ever had a surgical operation (list and date)
		Any history of a concussion, blackout, fainting, convulsion, recurrent dizzy spells, heat exhaustion/heat stroke
		Do you wear eyeglasses, contact lenses, dentures, or a hearing aid
		Do you have any allergies to medications, food, or the environment (list)
		Are you missing any organs or other body parts
		Do you have a history of high blood pressure, heart disease, irregular heart rate, palpitations, diabetes, thyroid condition, liver or kidney problems
		Any history of sudden death in your family (under age 50)
		Have you ever failed a physical exam for military service, employment, insurance, or athletic competition

LIFESTYLE QUESTIONS

YES	NO	
		Do you smoke
		Do you exercise regularly
		Do you drink alcohol or take medication to relieve stress
		Do you have a problem with your weight
		Do you go for routine medical/dental checkups
		Have you ever gone for cancer screening
		Is your immediate family in good health
		Have you or a member of your family ever been a victim of a violent crime
		Have you used the emergency room for routine medical problems

Health Insurance: Private Insurance _____ Medicaid _____ Student Health Insurance _____

ALL INFORMATION ON THIS PHYSICAL EXAMINATION FORM IS CONFIDENTIAL AND CANNOT BE RELEASED WITHOUT A STUDENT'S WRITTEN CONSENT.

The above information is complete and correct to the best of my knowledge. **I authorize the release of this information and the results of this examination to Helena College Nursing Department.**

Signature of Student _____ Date _____

STATEMENT of FUNCTIONAL ABILITIES

HC Nursing Department requires each student to be able to regularly perform the following activities:

1. Stand for long periods of time
2. Work at a fast pace for long periods of time
3. Lift heavy objects (25 pounds or more) three or more times a day
4. Speak clearly and distinctly
5. Respond appropriately to stressful situations (physically, emotionally, and mentally), including the ability to perform activities under pressure and in the presence of distractions.
6. Communicate effectively with patients, patients' families, physicians, and staff
7. Hear vital signs with a stethoscope to assess blood pressure, heart rate, and lung, vascular, and abdominal sounds; hear the telephone
8. Hear the patient calling for help
9. Hear beepers, alarms, etc., requiring quick responses
10. Read very fine or small print on medication containers, read physician's orders
11. See nurse call/emergency light
12. Visually assess the patient appropriately
13. Read monitors and other equipment
14. Demonstrate manual dexterity to don sterile gloves and gown
15. Demonstrate manual dexterity to prepare medications aseptically (i.e.: IV, PO, and IM)
16. Demonstrate manual dexterity using sterile technique (i.e.: insert catheters, IV needles, etc.)
17. Demonstrate the ability to utilize equipment needed to carryout patient care
18. Demonstrate the ability to move in small spaces in an emergency situation

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the "Functional Abilities" requirements and can perform them unless otherwise indicated.

Print Student Name _____

Student Signature _____ Date: _____

HELENA COLLEGE – DEPARTMENT OF NURSING EDUCATION
PHYSICAL EXAMINATION FORM PART II (TO BE COMPLETED BY PRIMARY HEALTH PROVIDER)

Height ____/____ Vision: Glasses: Yes ____ No ____ Contact lenses: Yes ____ No ____	
Right 20/____ Left 20/ ____	
Weigh ____ lbs. Blood Pressure _____ Pulse ____ Resp. ____	
Lab work /tests (if indicated by Health Provider):	
HB/HCT _____	UA _____ Other _____
For students over 50 years of age: EKG (if indicated by Provider) _____	

Significant Medical History

Significant Family History

Are there abnormalities in the following?

	Yes	No	Describe
Head, Ear, Nose, or Throat			
Respiratory			
Cardiovascular			
Gastrointestinal			
Hernia			
Eyes			
Genitourinary			
Musculoskeletal			
Metabolic / Endocrine			
Neuropsychiatric			
Skin			
Allergies			

Depression screening: Yes ____ Score ____ No ____

Is this person pregnant: Yes ____ No ____

Is the student currently under treatment for any medical or emotional condition? Yes ____ No ____

If yes, describe _____

Is this student physically / emotionally capable of being in the nursing program? Yes ____ No ____

Please indicate any **Restrictions / Precautions** (Refer to Statement of Functional Abilities)

 Physician/Provider Signature / Clinic Name

 Date