

The Nursing Profession at a Glance

Type of nurse	Description / Scope of Practice	Education	Are there direct entry programs?*	Licensure
Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)	Clean and bathe patients or residents; help patients use the toilet and dress; turn, reposition, and transfer patients between beds and wheelchairs; listen to and record patients' health concerns and report that information to nurses; measure patients' vital signs, such as blood pressure and temperature; serve meals and help patients eat. ¹	4 - 12 week training program	—	Pass NNAAP exam to receive CNA certification
Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN)	Provide basic bedside care to patients under the supervision of a RN, physician, or other health professional, including injections and personal care; administer basic patient care, including changing bandages and inserting catheters; provide for the basic comfort of patients, such as helping them bathe or dress; discuss the care they are providing with patients and listen to their concerns; report patients' status and concerns to registered nurses and doctors; keep records on patients' health. ²	Approx. 1 year vocational course	—	Pass NCLEX-PN exam to get LVN license.
Registered Nurse (RN)	Record patients' medical histories and symptoms; administer patients' medicines and treatments; set up plans for patients' care or contribute to existing plans; observe patients and record the observations; consult and collaborate with doctors and other healthcare professionals; operate and monitor medical equipment; help perform diagnostic tests and analyze the results; teach patients and their families how to manage illnesses or injuries; explain what to do at home after treatment. ³	Associate's Degree in Nursing (ADN) or Bachelor's of Science in Nursing (BSN) or Master's of Science in Nursing (MSN)	Yes; Accelerated BSN (ABSN) and Entry-level Master's of Science in Nursing (ELMSN) programs will make you eligible to take NCLEX-RN.	Pass NCLEX-RN exam to get RN license.
Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL)	Healthcare systems specialists that oversee patient care coordination, assess health risks, develop quality improvement strategies, facilitate team communication, and implement evidence-based solutions at the unit (microsystem) level. CNLs often work with clinical nurse specialists to help plan and coordinate complex patient care. ⁴	Master's of Science in Nursing (MSN) or Post-Master's Certificate	Yes, look for MSN programs with a Clinical Nurse Leader track; See <i>USF School of Nursing's MSN Clinical Nurse Leader program</i>	Pass the CNL Certification Exam.
Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) <i>The following are all APRNs:</i>	Registered nurse with graduate academic preparation and advanced clinical skills that qualify her/him as an expert in a defined area of knowledge and practice. ⁵	Graduate nursing degree or higher	Direct-entry APRN programs prepare students for the RN licensure exam in addition to the APRN curriculum	
Nurse Practitioner (NP)	Serve as primary and specialty care providers, delivering advanced nursing services to patients and their families. NPs assess patients, determine the best way to improve or manage a patient's health, and discuss ways to integrate health promotion strategies into a patient's life. They typically care for a certain population of people. For instance, NPs may work in adult and geriatric health, pediatric health, or psychiatric and mental health. ⁶		Yes, look for MSN programs with a Nurse Practitioner specialty; See <i>Samuel Merritt School of Nursing Nurse Practitioner Specialty track</i>	
Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA)	Provide anesthesia and related care before, during, and after surgical, therapeutic, diagnostic, and obstetrical procedures. They also provide pain management and some emergency services. Before a procedure begins, nurse anesthetists discuss with a patient any medications the patient is taking as well as any allergies or illnesses the patient may have, so that anesthesia can be safely administered. Nurse anesthetists then give a patient general anesthesia to put the patient to sleep so they feel no pain during surgery or administer a regional or local anesthesia to numb an area of the body. They remain with the patient throughout a procedure to monitor vital signs and adjust the anesthesia as necessary. ⁶	Master's of Science in Nursing (MSN) w/ specialty or Post-Master's Certificate or Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)	No, applicants to Nurse Anesthetist programs must have minimum of one year full-time work experience as a RN in a critical care setting ⁶	Pass national / state board certification exams.
Nurse Midwives (CNM)	Provide care to women, including gynecological exams, family planning services, and prenatal care. They deliver babies; manage emergency situations during labor, such as hemorrhaging; repair lacerations; and may provide surgical assistance to physicians during cesarean births. They may act as primary care providers for women and newborns. Nurse midwives also provide wellness care, educating their patients on how to lead healthy lives by discussing topics such as nutrition and disease prevention. Nurse midwives also provide care to their patients' partners for sexual or reproductive health issues. ⁶		Yes, look for MSN programs with a Nurse Midwife specialty; See <i>UCSF School of Nursing Master's Entry Program in Nursing</i>	
Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS)	Provide direct patient care in one of many nursing specialties, such as psychiatric-mental health or pediatrics. CNSs also provide indirect care, by working with other nurses and various other staff to improve the quality of care that patients receive. They often serve in leadership roles and may educate and advise other nursing staff. CNSs also may conduct research and may advocate for certain policies. ³		Yes, there are some direct entry Master's programs that prepare students to take board exams to become Clinical Nurse Specialist; See <i>UCLA School of Nursing's Master's Entry Clinical Nurse Program</i>	

*A direct entry program refers to a nursing program designed for students who have a bachelor's degree in something other than nursing. These programs prepare students to take the NCLEX-RN and become a Registered Nurse.

Sources:

1. US Dept. of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics: Nursing Assistants & Orderlies
<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/nursing-assistants.htm#tab-2>
2. US Dept. of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics: Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses
<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/licensed-practical-and-licensed-vocational-nurses.htm#tab-2>
3. US Dept. of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics: Registered Nurses
<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/registered-nurses.htm#tab-2>

4. American Association of Colleges of Nursing: Frequently Asked Questions
<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/cnl/frequently-asked-questions>
5. UCSF Master's Entry Program in Nursing
<https://nursing.ucsf.edu/academic-program/masters-entry-program-nursing-mepn>
6. US Dept. of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics: Nurse Anesthetists, Nurse Midwives, and Nurse Practitioners
<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/nurse-anesthetists-nurse-midwives-and-nurse-practitioners.htm#tab-2>