

RN to BSN: Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What are my options for getting a Bachelor's of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree?

A. RN-to-BSN programs may be face-to-face, online, or hybrid.

There are approximately 700 RN-to-BSN programs available across the country.

<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/research-data/RNBSN.pdf>

There are two RN to BSN programs within the state of Oregon: Oregon Health & Science University and Linfield College.

Q. What are my options for ways to pay for advancing my nursing degree?

A. First, it is important to check with your employer (human resources) to see if there is a tuition reimbursement plan for employees who advance their education.

Secondly, federal financial aid is available to students who qualify. Be sure to take time to fill out a FAFSA form to see if you qualify (<https://fafsa.ed.gov/>). The U.S. Department of Education has a tool available to assist you to find out the cost of college, the "Net Price Calculator", available here: (<http://collegecost.ed.gov/netpricecenter.aspx>)

Lastly, when you do the research to find the right program and school for you, ask to speak to the staff in the financial aid office. They may have some additional resources for you.

You can find information about available scholarships and other funding here:

<http://www.allnursingschools.com/nursing-careers/article/nursing-financial-aid/>

<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/students>

<http://www.hrsa.gov/loanscholarships/scholarships/nursing/>

Q. Will my employer allow me to work full/part time?

A. Investigate options through your manager and department of education or human resources. Consider the flexibility of online programs.

Q. How long will it take for me to get a BSN?

A. Many schools have flexible, online course delivery options and take from 12 to 24 months to complete. There are programs that are part-time or full-time.

If you are also working, you will want to find the best "fit" for you and for your schedule. It is a good idea to also talk to other nurses who have gone back to school.

Q. What are the advantages of earning a BSN degree? Why should I go back to school?

- Possible increased salary now and in the future
- More options for employment and career opportunities
- Leadership skills enhancement and improved critical thinking abilities
- Improved ability to use evidence to support your work
- Professional preparation for roles in nursing management, population health, and research
- Personal satisfaction and sense of accomplishment
- Many employers now require nurses to have at least a BSN degree
- Improved patient safety outcomes in inpatient acute care facilities

Q. Have I been out of school too long to return?

A. It is never too late to get your BSN! Many nurses are earning a BSN degree from all ages and work settings.

Some questions to think about:

What if I have been out of school for a long time and I am not comfortable with computers?

Most programs provide support if you have difficulties with writing, computer, or study skills. Ask about this specifically when applying to a program.

Have I reached my goals as a professional nurse?

Having a BSN degree can expand your career options and help you reach your goals. Many positions require the BSN or strongly prefer to hire those with a BSN.

Can I afford or am I planning to retire in the next 5 to 10 years?

If not, then maybe returning to school would be a good idea. Check with your employer to see what his/her vision for the future is. If you choose not to return to school, what will happen? Your employer may require that you have a BSN in your current position or require you to have it to change to a new position. With a BSN, you can feel confident whatever the future holds.

Q. I am too busy already. How can I fit classes into my schedule? Why should I do this?

- You might be surprised by the flexibility and accessibility provided by many RN to BSN programs that are designed to meet the educational needs of working RNs
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- If you have always wanted to advance your education to the BSN (or higher), don't want to make these positive changes in your career. A BSN will make more things possible!
- You will become immediately more qualified for a variety of positions and opportunities.
- Your confidence will grow as you increase your skills in evidence-based practice and creating positive changes that affect individuals, families, and communities as well as the healthcare system.

Think about your goals for professional development and career mobility. Find a program that will be a good "fit" for you!