

UM Bitterroot College

Practical Nurse Program



Student Information and Application Packet

Spring 2027

Application DUE by October 30, 2026; 12:00 PM Noon

*Revised 6-29-2026 *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 Program*

Keep pages 2-8 for your records

Program Overview

The University of Montana Bitterroot Practical Nursing (PN) Program prepares students to provide safe, effective, and compassionate nursing care in today's healthcare environments. With a focus on meeting the needs of rural communities, the program emphasizes hands-on skill development, clinical judgment, and professional values that reflect the standards of practice for entry-level practical nurses.

Program Length and Format

The UM Bitterroot PN Program is a **61-week program** delivered in a flexible, blended format designed for working adults and nontraditional learners. Students participate in **one course at a time**, engaging in content through:

- **Online Theory:** Completed during the week on a flexible schedule, allowing students to manage work, family, and study commitments.
- **Skills Laboratories:** In-person, hands-on labs held on evenings and weekends at UM Bitterroot to practice and master nursing procedures.
- **Clinical Rotations:** Supervised weekend (or days that work with student/facility schedules) clinical experiences in local and regional healthcare facilities to prepare students for real-world nursing practice

Accreditation and Licensure

The UM Bitterroot PN Program is approved by the **Montana Board of Nursing** and aligns with national standards for nursing education. Upon successful completion of the program, completers are eligible to sit for the **National Council Licensure Examination for Practical Nurses (NCLEX-PN)** and apply for licensure.

Career Opportunities

Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) are in high demand across Montana and beyond. Graduates of the UM Bitterroot PN Program are prepared for employment in:

- Hospitals and acute care facilities
- Long-term care and assisted living centers
- Clinics and physician offices
- Home health and community-based care
- Rehabilitation centers

The program is especially committed to preparing LPNs to serve in rural and underserved areas, where the need for qualified healthcare professionals is greatest.

Program Expenses

The UM Bitterroot Practical Nursing (PN) Program is designed to be affordable and accessible while maintaining high educational quality. Students should plan ahead for tuition, fees, and additional costs associated with the program. Below is an outline of estimated expenses.

Tuition and Fees

- Tuition: \$2,500 per term, total \$10,000
 - Includes textbooks, digital resources, 1 set of scrubs, 2 program patches, name badge, lab supplies

Additional Program Costs

The following items are NOT included in the cost of tuition.

- **Uniforms and Supplies:** includes additional scrubs, stethoscope, watch with second hand, and other basic nursing tools.
- **Clinical Costs:** students are responsible for transportation to and from clinical sites.
- **Immunizations and Health Requirements:** may vary depending on personal insurance coverage and health history
- **Background Check and Drug Screen:** required prior to program start date for accepted applicants
- **NCLEX-PN Exam Fee and State Licensure:** additional costs are associated with licensure, including the NCLEX-PN exam, state application fees, fingerprinting, and other related requirements. Successful completion of the UM Bitterroot PN Program does not guarantee licensure as a Practical Nurse.

Financial Aid and Scholarships

Students enrolled in the PN program may be eligible for:

- Soroptimist scholarships
- Workforce development grants and tuition assistance programs (WIOA)
- Employer tuition reimbursement (if applicable)
- Student Loans through local banks and credit unions
- Military scholarships
- P.E.O. (Philanthropic Educational Organization)

Students are encouraged to meet with the office staff at UM Bitterroot early in the application process to explore available funding options.

Eligibility to Apply

To be considered for admission to the UM Bitterroot Practical Nursing (PN) Program, applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- **GPA Requirement:** Minimum cumulative GPA of **2.5** in the most recent coursework (up to 60 credits).
- **Prerequisites:** Grade of C or higher in completed prerequisite courses within the past 5 years; or eligibility under the TEAS alternative option if the prerequisites were completed 5-10 years ago.
- **Co-requisites:** Any unfinished prerequisites can be taken while in the program if approved by the Program Director.
- **Transcripts:** Applicants must submit official transcripts from every college or university attended. Unofficial transcripts are acceptable only for coursework completed through the University of Montana.
- **English Language Proficiency:** Applicants whose first language is not English must demonstrate proficiency in written and spoken English. This may be satisfied via standardized tests, prior coursework, or other evidence acceptable to the Program Director.

Meeting minimum eligibility criteria does not guarantee admission as entry is competitive and based on candidate ranking.

Equal Opportunity Policy

UM Bitterroot College is committed to the provision of equal opportunity for education, employment, and participation in all institutional 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.

Program Prerequisites

Applicants must complete the following academic coursework prior to applying to the UM Bitterroot Practical Nursing (PN) Program. Proof of successful completion must be submitted with the application or by the stated documentation deadline.

All prerequisite courses must be completed with a minimum grade of **C or higher** and within the last **5 years for science**:

- WRIT 101 – College Writing I
- M 121 – College Algebra (*recommended, other math classes are considered on a case by case basis*)
- BIOH 104N/105N – Basic Human Biology with a Lab
- PSYX 100S – Introduction to Psychology

Admission Requirements required once admitted to the PN Program

(DO NOT submit with application)

Students accepted into the PN Program are required to provide proof of the following prior to the start of the program:

- **Criminal Background Check** (through UM-approved vendor)
- **Drug Screening** (through UM-approved vendor)
- **Immunizations (or titers) and Health Records** (Hepatitis B, Varicella, MMR, Tdap; Declination Forms if applicable) *Clinical/practical/lab/internship sites may require other documentation/proof of vaccination besides those required by UM Bitterroot or the PN Program
- **Negative TB Test** (within the past year)
 - Negative PPD results **OR**
 - Negative Quantiferon test
- **Current CPR Certification** American Heart Association BLS for Healthcare Providers (No other forms of certification will be accepted and may make a student ineligible to start the program)

Active Health Insurance: Nursing program students entering the clinical setting must carry medical health insurance. Students will be financially responsible for their health care if they become ill or are injured in the clinical setting. If obtaining health insurance is an issue contact the office staff at UM Bitterroot for assistance.

Failure to provide documentation of the above requirements by the established deadline may result in forfeiture of a program seat.

Notification of Acceptance:

1. Applications will be carefully read and evaluated by the Application Review Committee. All applicants will be notified via email regarding their selection status.
2. The top-ranked candidates will receive an invitation to interview for a day/time in November. All other applicants will be notified about their status. All invited candidates are required to participate in the interview to maintain consideration. Interview appointments will be scheduled once the Review Committee decides who will be interviewed.
3. After interviews conclude, the Review Committee will make final selections about admission offers. All interviewees will be notified by email with either **a)** a letter of acceptance, **b)** an offer for placement on the alternate list, or **c)** a letter of non-acceptance. The Committee's decision is final. The committee reserves the right to decline any nursing program applicant based on the application packet, the interview process, and the best interest of the profession.

****Please do not call or email us to check on your application status-you will be apprised by email as soon as information is available****

The practical nursing program currently accepts 10 students/year. This is subject to change based on clinical placement availability.

Coursework After Formal Acceptance

Once enrolled in the UM Bitterroot Practical Nurse (PN) Program, a minimum of a "C" in all courses is required to continue in the program. Students must achieve a grade of 77% or higher in all courses to successfully pass and progress to the next term. Students must also maintain a 3.0 overall GPA after the first term.

The PN Program standards and requirements in relation to the grading scale and attendance are more rigorous and stricter than the general requirements for UM Bitterroot College. This increased level of expectation is necessary to prepare students for the NCLEX and to ensure graduates are prepared for professional employment in the field of nursing. To pass a clinical or lab, the student must meet all attendance requirements and pass all lab skills assessments.

Practical Nursing Program				
Course Title	Theory Hours	Lab Hours	Clinical Hours	Total Hours
Term I (2/2/2026)				
Fundamentals of Nursing (10 weeks)	74	36	0	110
Pharmacology (5 weeks)	30	9	0	39
Term II (5/25/2026)				
Practical Nursing I (Med-Surg Foundations)(10 wk)	36	18	60	114
Maternal & Pediatric Nursing (9 weeks)	36	18	48	102
Term III (10/12/2026)				
Practical Nursing II (Adult Health Nursing)(12 wk)	43	6	72	121
Gerontology (4 weeks)	19	4	24	47
Term IV (2/22/2027)				
Leadership & Transition to Practice (6 weeks)	30	12	24	66
Program Totals	268	103	228	599
Credit Estimates (1:15, 1:30, 1:45)	18	3	5	26

Application Requirement Summary

Please read entire page prior to submitting your application

Application Criteria Score

Paper Transcripts from ALL colleges and universities

Application Forms

Contact Information, Colleges/Universities attended & Current Courses
(Form 1)

Signed Acknowledgement of Functional Standards (Form 2)

Verification of Healthcare Experience (Form 3)

- **Complete the form** for the hours you completed. If your hours are from more than one organization, use a separate form for each organization
- **Enclose a copy of your most recent professional certification or license** (current or expired) in your application submission packet.

Essay Question (Form 4 - attach this form to your **handwritten** essay response)

APPLICATION DEADLINE - 12:00pm NOON, Friday October 30th, 2026

Applications can be dropped off at the UM Bitterroot College Office or mailed to UM Bitterroot College, LPN Program Admissions, 103 S. 9th Street, Hamilton MT 59840

UM Bitterroot is not responsible for delays in the postal service. Applications must be received by the deadline **(postmarked October 30th will not qualify)**.

Application Submission:

- All application materials **must be submitted in a sealed 9x12 inch envelope**. Items sent separately and at random are easily lost or misfiled. We are not responsible for any late, lost or misfiled information. Please only send required documentation, as other supplemental items will be discarded.
- Please note, submission of false material in this Application Packet will be grounds for non-admission or if discovered after admission, grounds for expulsion.
- All documents must be submitted as **single-sided pages** (NOT double-sided)
- Include name, full return mailing address, as well as PN Program in upper left corner

Thank you for your interest in the UM Bitterroot College PN Program

We look forward to receiving your application materials.

Application Criteria Worksheet

A. Performance in Prerequisite Courses (Approximately 40%)

Please summarize your course work in the chart below to the best of your knowledge and submit proof of grades with the application, with official transcripts on file with the Registrar if courses were taken at another institution. If you are currently taking a required prerequisite course and will not receive a grade in that course before the application deadline, please indicate your current status in the chart below and write your current grade. As soon as your final grade becomes available, submit proof of final grade to UM Bitterroot to be attached to your application. Grade points are calculated using the current catalog criteria, which includes +/- weighing. For lab courses, the emphasis will be calculated based on the ratio of appropriate credits for each course. For example:

Course	Grade/point	Credits	Total
Example Lecture (3cr)	B (3)	3	9
Example Lab (1cr)	A (4)	1	4

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

Prerequisite Course	Course #	Institution and year course was completed (note current if enrolled this semester)	Grade/Point	Credits	Total Points
Example Course	EXMP 100	UM Bitterroot, Spring 2025	B (3)	3	9
College Writing I	WRIT 101			3	
Math (<i>any of the following</i>) Linear & Probability College Algebra Math for Healthcare Or higher	M 115 M121 M140			3	
Intro to Psychology	PSYX 100			3	
Basic Human Biology	BIOH 104/105			4	
OR Human AP I&II	BIOH 201/202 & 211/212			8	

Total Prerequisite Score: _____

B. Hours of Healthcare Work Experience (Approximately 15%)

Defined as paid healthcare work experience with direct, human, hands-on patient care (not of a family member). This may include, but is not limited to, positions such as CNA, MA, EMT, military medic, etc...

Verification form is required and must be hand filled in (No Printed Job Descriptions). Work experience submitted without a completed verification form will not be considered. *Work experience is only considered within the past 5 calendar years.*

10,000 and more hours of paid work experience with direct human patient care: 3 points

5,000 to 9,999 hours of paid work experience with direct human patient care: 2 points

500 to 4,999 hours of paid work experience with direct human patient care: 1 points

C. Essay Response (Approximately 5%)

The essay portion of the application provides an opportunity to demonstrate your writing ability, clarity of thought, and personal reflection – all important skills for nurses. Essays will be evaluated on content, organization, grammar, spelling, and overall writing quality.

D. Interview (Approximately 40%)

Selected applicants will participate in an interview to assess their communication skills, professionalism, motivation for pursuing nursing, and understanding of the nursing role. Applicants should be prepared to discuss their paid healthcare experience if applicable (such as CNA, MA, EMT, or similar roles), their goals in the nursing profession, and the personal qualities they bring to the program. The interview provides an opportunity for applicants to demonstrate readiness for the rigor and responsibility of nursing education as well as their commitment to compassionate, patient-centered care. Applicants are notified whether or not they will be invited to be interviewed.

Part 1: Personal Information

Full Legal Name: _____

Any Previous Legal Name(s): _____

Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy): _____ Last four (4) digits of SSN: _____

If you are a UM Student please provide your ID (790#): _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone Number: _____ Alternate Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Part 2: Educational Background

College/University Attendance

- REQUIRED: an Unofficial transcript from each college/university attended
- List ALL colleges/universities you have ever attended, including town and state located

College/University + City & State: _____

College/University + City & State: _____

College/University + City & State: _____

College/University + City & State: _____

In-Progress Courses (Only if they don't appear on your transcripts)

Example: UM Bitterroot, BIOH 104/105, Basic Human Bio w/ Lab

School: _____ Course#: _____ Course Name: _____

School: _____ Course#: _____ Course Name: _____

School: _____ Course#: _____ Course Name: _____

School: _____ Course#: _____ Course Name: _____

Statement of Functional Abilities

The UM Bitterroot PN Program requires each student to be able to regularly perform functional nursing tasks. If you have questions or concerns about your ability to meet the technical standards with or without accommodations, or if you would like to arrange reasonable accommodations, you should contact the UM Bitterroot Director. Applicants who disclose a disability are considered for admission if they are otherwise qualified so long as such accommodation does not significantly alter the essential requirements of the curriculum and the educational program or significantly affect the safety or patient care or others.

To successfully complete the nursing program, students must demonstrate their competency in carrying out tasks necessary for safe and effective practice in the field, including:

- Stand for long periods of time
- Work at a fast pace for long periods of time
- Execute physical movements required to provide general care and treatment to all patients in all health care settings including moving and positioning heavy and/or large equipment and patients
- Speak clearly and distinctly, convey and exchange information in a clear and efficient manner
- Accurately differentiate colors
- Detect significant environmental odors and recognize patient odors
- Respond appropriately to stressful situations (physically, emotionally, and mentally), including the ability to perform activities under pressure and in the presence of distractions
- Communicate effectively with patients, patients' families, physicians, and staff
- Hear the patient calling for help, beepers, alarms, etc... requiring quick responses
- Read very fine or small print on medication containers, syringes, etc. and read physician's orders
- See nurse call/emergency light
- Visually assess the patient appropriately

UM Bitterroot PN Program Application (Form 2)

- Read monitors and other equipment
- Demonstrate manual dexterity
 - to put on sterile gloves and gown
 - to prepare medications using aseptic techniques (ex. IV, PO, & IM)
 - Using sterile technique (ex. insert catheters, IV needles, etc...)
- Demonstrate the ability to utilize equipment needed to carry out patient care
- Perform basic life support, ventilation compression (including CPR and AED), and other basic life support functions
- Coordinate fine and gross muscular movements to treat patients in emergency situations

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

Print Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Verification of Paid Healthcare Occupational Employment

The Applicant can duplicate this form for additional employers/agencies.

Applicants to the PN Program at UM Bitterroot are granted additional points toward their application point total from prior or current employment in a Healthcare Setting. The application process requires verification of paid work experience. Employers (either supervisor or human resource representative) are asked to verify the applicant's description of job duties and number of hours of patient care using this form.

Instructions:

Section I: Nursing program applicant completes **before** having the form completed by the employer.

Section II: The employer/agency official verifies information on form then **seals form in envelope, signs across the flap**, and returns the form to applicant. **No printed job descriptions will be accepted.**

Section I

Applicants Name: _____ Prior Name (if applicable): _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Applicants Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Facility Name and Type: _____

Facility Address: _____

Length of Employment (mm/dd/yyyy): From _____ To _____ Total Hours: _____

Position: _____ Supervisor: _____

Supervisor's Email Address: _____

UM Bitterroot PN Program Application (Form 3)

Complete a detailed description of Job Duties (use additional sheet if necessary: _____

I understand the submission of false material in this Application Packet will be grounds for non-admission or, if discovered after admission, grounds for expulsion. Permission has been granted for UM Bitterroot College to verify the above information.

Applicants Signature: _____ Date: _____

Section II

Facility Name: _____ Phone: _____

Supervisor of Applicant (please print): _____

I verify the information provided by the applicant to be accurate and true to the best of my knowledge. If the applicant added additional detail to the description of job duties, I have signed that addendum also. By signing below, I confirm the above-named applicant has completed the above listed hours of paid employment within 5 years prior to the date of this form.

Signature of Supervisor: _____ Date: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Essay Question for PN Program Application Packet

Please respond to the following prompt in a **hand-written**, well organized response (approximately 500 words in length)

Question:

Describe a personal experience that inspired you to pursue a career in practical nursing. Explain how this experience has shaped your understanding of the nursing profession and discuss the qualities you possess that will help you succeed as a practical nurse. Additionally, outline your short-term and long-term goals with the field of healthcare and how admission to this program will help you achieve them.

Guidelines for Response:

- Reflect on your motivations and experiences related to healthcare or helping others
- Demonstrate an understanding of the practical nurse's role in patient care
- Highlight personal qualities such as empathy, teamwork, reliability, and adaptability
- Clearly articulate your educational and professional goals
- Proofread for clarity, grammar, and spelling