C.A.S. - Practical Nursing
CERTIFICATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE TO BECOME AN L.P.N.

Students from class of December 2023

Student Information and Application Packet

Helena College University of Montana Certificate of Applied Science Practical Nurse

Updated for **SPRING 2026 Start**

Application DUE by Dec 1, 2025 5:00 pm

Revised 7/18/2025

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 C.A.S.- PN Program

OVERVIEW

The C.A.S. - 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, simulations, 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 C.A.S. - Practical Nursing (PN) Program are accepted each fall for a spring semester start, with completion of the program at the end of the fall semester.

The program admits up to 16 students each year. 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***.

C.A.S. Practical Nurse Virtual Blended Remote Program

All coursework is competency-based and is designed to prepare graduates with knowledge, skills, and attitudes to successfully enter the workforce after graduation. 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 primarily in Helena and the surrounding area. There are times when an exception can be made for some clinicals to be arranged in the student's hometown at the discretion of the program director.

In this VB 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.

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 weekly reading assignments, written assignments, and quizzes that must be completed outside of class time. Students need to make sure they can dedicate enough time to being a successful student. 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 adapt to learning new technology.

PROGRAM EXPENSES

The C.A.S. – Practical Nurse student will be required to purchase textbooks, software resources, personal equipment, supplies, and uniforms, pay any associated student tuition and course 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. No application will be reviewed if the applicant has not applied to Helena College. Please allow yourself time to obtain all official transcripts and/or transfer information from prior college courses to be submitted prior to your application, and allow time for the Registrar's office to review and approve your official transcript and transfer information. Transfer work must be from a regionally accredited institution.

An application to the college may be obtained in one of three ways: 1) by visiting the campus, 2) calling the college (406) 447-6900, or 3) by applying online at https://helenacollege.edu/admissions_enrollment/default.aspx

ELIGIBILITY FOR ADMISSION INTO THE C.A.S. - PRACTICAL NURSE PROGRAM

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

Admission to the Helena College C.A.S. - PN Program is competitive. **Meeting eligibility requirements does not guarantee admission**.

APPLICATION AND PROGRAM ENTRY

The Certificate of Applied Science - Practical Nurse 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.

Prerequisite 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. This includes all general education requirements. Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Registrar's Office and may include discretion of the Nursing Program Director on a case-by-case basis. 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. A *maximum of 2 prerequisite retakes will be allowed*. Written permission from the Director of Nursing is required before taking any prerequisite 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 prerequisite courses to apply to the C.A.S. - PN Program.

In addition to the prerequisite coursework, students must complete the TEAS test with a minimum score of 65%. The TEAS test may be taken up to four (4) times, and the student may submit their highest score. Please go to the Helena College Cashier's Office to sign up and pay for the TEAS test, and contact the Testing Center at 406-447-6946 or testingcenter@helenacollege.edu with any questions or to change your scheduled date. Give yourself plenty of time to take (and retake) the test prior to application.

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 C.A.S.- Practical Nurse Program, applicants must:

- Have evidence of admission to Helena College with a complete admissions file. (Please check that you have provided all required documentation before submitting your application.)

- Be in good academic standing with Helena College.

- Have 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 with the Registrar's Office that transfer courses are equivalent to the program's prerequisites and are transferable to Helena College.

    o Regarding Transferable Courses – send **official transcripts** to the Registrar's Office. *Attach unofficial copies to this application.*

- Print a copy of the TEAS test results with a score of 65% or higher to attach to the application.

- Achieve Total calculated application points of 45% or higher (see application scoring).

- Submit all required documents, including immunization records, BLS/CPR certification, and others as stated in the application.

APPLICATION DEADLINES

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

Please send all application items as a completed packet. Incomplete applications may result in disqualification. Helena College is not responsible for any late, lost, or missing information.

Please submit completed applications to the Nursing Department in person, by mail, or online with the information below:

CONTACT INFORMATION	MAILING ADDRESS	SUBMIT ONLINE
Program Assistant Nursing Department Room 113 406.447.6946	Helena College University of Montana Attention: C.A.S.- PN Nursing Program 1115 N Roberts Helena, MT 59601	Completed Applications may be submitted by the due date and time to: nursingapplications@helenacollege.edu

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. **Late applications will not be accepted.**

Helena College C.A.S.- PN 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. Students who are accepted to the program 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 C.A.S. - 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 the 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 are 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.

Prerequisites		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

C.A.S. - 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.

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

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

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

*PLEASE RETAIN PAGES 1 THROUGH 6 FOR YOUR RECORDS AND SUBMIT APPLICATION PAGES 7-12.

HELENA COLLEGE – DEPARTMENT OF NURSING EDUCATION

C.A.S. - PRACTICAL NURSE 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? (Max of 2 prereq. retakes allowed) ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, which ones and when? _____

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

Applicant Requirements

Required Documents Checklist: must be attached to your application *for you to be considered*

___ 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

    ___ 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: BLS with AED for Healthcare providers (must have in person skills test/online only courses not accepted)

APPLICATION CRITERIA WORKSHEET

Please fill in the chart below to the best of your knowledge and submit proof of grades with the application. Use the points worksheet on the net page to calculate points. 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 the Nursing Department to be attached to your application. Grade points are calculated using the current catalog criteria, which include +/- weighing (i.e., B+ = 3.3, B = 3, B- = 2.7). **Grade x Credits = Calculations**. Add up all Calculations for the Total Calculation Score. Divide by 13 = prerequisite GPA

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

Prerequisite 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 (Sum of all Calculations)				
	Prerequisite **GPA**: (Divide total calculation score by 13)				
	GPA points earned: (*see table below)				20-50
TEAS SCORE:		**TEAS points** earned: (*see table below)			10-30
Other points earned (*see table below): • Work experience (1 point) • Prerequisite courses taken at HC / or COLS 101 (1 point) • Academic degree (1-2 points)					1-4
Total Score: add **GPA points** + **TEAS points** + **Other points**. In case of a tie, we will consider the following criteria: **First:** grade in BIOH 104 **Second**: TEAS score **Third:** Veteran service with proof				**=Total score**	45 minimum required to apply

*APPLICATION POINTS

Selection into this nursing program is competitive. To assure you receive credit for all earned points, please have **ALL** documentation attached to your application 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 into the Nursing Program.

Prerequisite **GPA points:** 20-50 points	**TEAS points:** 10-30 points	**Other Points: Work Experience (min 1 year):** 1 point	**Other Points: Prerequisites from HC:** 1 point	**Other Points: 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	• CNA • Med Tech • CMA, Surgical Tech, EMT, Military medic. (Other experience used will be at the discretion of the Nursing Director.)	Taken at least 3 prerequisites from Helena College: or Has taken COLS101	Prior C.A.S. or Associates Degree(s)= 1 Bachelor's or /higher = 2
*See Catalog for Criteria	*Attach printout of TEAS exam results	*Attach documentation	*Attach copy of HC Transcripts	*Attach Transcripts showing the degree awarded

HELENA COLLEGE – DEPARTMENT OF NURSING EDUCATION

PHYSICAL EXAM FORM- **PART I** (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 checked YES, please provide additional details.

Yes	No	
		Has there been any significant medical illness, injury, or 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 inpatient 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, & IM)

16. Demonstrate manual dexterity using sterile technique (i.e., insert catheters, IV needles, etc.)

17. Demonstrate the ability to utilize equipment needed to carry out 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 healthcare provider)

Height _____/_____ Vision: Glasses: Yes _____ No _____ Contact lenses: Yes _____ No _____

Right 20/_____   Left 20/_____

Weight _____ lbs.   Blood Pressure _____   Pulse _____ Resp. _____

Lab work /tests (*if indicated by Health Provider*):

Hgb/Hct _____UA _____Other _____

For students over 50 years of age: EKG (*if indicated by Provider*) _____

Significant Medical History

_____

_____

Significant Family History

_____

_____

Are there abnormalities of 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