

Frequently Asked Questions about the Nursing Assistant Program

Q: What does a nursing assistant do?

The Nursing Assistant program at MSTC will prepare you to work as a health care worker in a variety of fields. Depending on the area you choose to work in, your daily tasks will be slightly different. Most of the time, a nursing assistant will help clients with activities of daily living; that means helping a person with anything he/she would have to do to get through the day. Activities such as bathing, walking, eating, toileting, and communicating are some of the things that the nursing assistant would be responsible for.

Q: Is Nursing Assistant a program or a course at MSTC?

Nursing Assistant is both a technical diploma program and a course. You must first apply for and be accepted to the Nursing Assistant program in order to register for a Nursing Assistant course.

Q: What is my first step in taking a Nursing Assistant course at MSTC?

To apply to the Nursing Assistant program, please click this link and complete the steps listed on the page: <http://www.mstc.edu/nursingassistant/apply.htm>.

Once you are accepted to the program, you will receive a letter from the MSTC admissions office which will direct you to the Nursing Assistant accepted student web page, where you will be able to view course calendars and select a course to register for.

If you still have any questions about the program admissions or registration process, please contact program coordinator Jo Ann Grode at (715) 422-5318 or joann.grode@mstc.edu or lead instructor Carrie Engelbright at (715) 422-5624 or carrie.engelbright@mstc.edu.

Q: Why should I complete the Nursing Assistant program at MSTC?

There are many reasons students complete the Nursing Assistant program. One reason is that the student wants to work as a nursing assistant within a hospital or nursing home setting. Others take this program as a prerequisite for many of the health care degree programs at technical colleges and universities. Still others take this course as an entry point into the health care system. Some students might be unsure about which direction would be right for them. The nursing assistant program is a great place to start; it has a relatively low cost when compared to other health career programs and a minimal time investment (usually about 8 weeks). You will have to opportunity to “try out” health care to see if it is the right choice for you.

Q: What kind of employment opportunities will there be for me as a nursing assistant?

Upon successful completion of the Nursing Assistant program and the state certification exam, you are able to work as a nursing assistant in a hospital, nursing home, assisted living center or for a home healthcare/hospice organization. Once you have been hired, your employer may offer extra training for specialized tasks and job responsibilities such as working on specialty units.

Q: What is the general pay scale for nursing assistants?

The pay scale varies greatly depending on what type of setting you work in. Pay is typically less in home health care and assisted living centers and greater in nursing homes and hospitals. The pay range is typically anywhere from \$8.00 per hour to \$12.00 per hour.

Q: How long does the Nursing Assistant course take at MSTC?

The Nursing Assistant course is a total of 120 hours. There are three different formats for Nursing Assistant courses at MSTC—traditional, modified and accelerated. Traditional courses occur over about an eight-week period. They are offered during day time or evening hours to better suit your school and employment schedules. Modified courses are scheduled to be completed in about half the time (usually one month) of the traditional courses. Accelerated courses are offered during the day, usually during the winter break and the summer semester. These courses are completed in about two and a half weeks. To be successful in an accelerated class, you must be a motivated self-learner.

All types of courses have the same amount of hours and the same curriculum and are offered at the Wisconsin Rapids, Stevens Point and Marshfield campuses.

Q: Do I have to take the state certification exam when I am done with the Nursing Assistant course?

You are not required to take the state certification exam upon completion of the course. At the end of the course, you will be a nursing assistant but **not a certified** nursing assistant. This will limit your employment opportunities. You will need to be certified to work in a hospital or nursing home. You do not need to be certified to work in *most* assisted living centers and home health care or hospice services.

Q: Can I get some help paying for this course?

You have the right to request reimbursement of your tuition from your employer for the Nursing Assistant course. This will only occur if you secure employment in a nursing home. Further, you can only access this reimbursement one time. Make sure to keep your receipts from your coursework. Reimbursement may be full or partial depending upon the amount you paid for the course. Contact the director of nurses upon your hire for reimbursement details.

Q: Can I use financial aid for this course?

You must be accepted into a financially aidable program (for example, the Nursing program) at the College and must have applied for financial aid in order to be eligible to receive financial aid to assist in paying for the Nursing Assistant course. If you are carrying at least a part-time credit load, you can use those monies to pay for the Nursing Assistant course. If you are not enrolled in an aidable program other than Nursing Assistant, you are not eligible for financial aid. You may be able to obtain financial assistance through your employer to help pay the costs.

Q: How long do I have to take the state certification exam after my course is done?

Once you have completed your Nursing Assistant course and have passed it with at least an 80% or greater, you are eligible to take the state certification exam. You must take this exam within 12 months of the date of the last day of your course. If you fail to do so, you will have to re-take the Nursing Assistant course again to be eligible to take the state exam.

Q: Once I am certified as a nursing assistant, what do I have to do to keep that certification?

You must work at least an eight-hour shift as a nursing assistant under the supervision of a nurse in a 24-month period in order to maintain your certification. If you fail to do so, and/or fail to complete the paperwork testifying to this, you will become expired on the Wisconsin nurse aide registry.

While employed, you must attend 12 hours of continuing education in-service per year as documented by your employer to maintain your certification.

Q: What happens if I am expired on the Wisconsin nurse aide registry?

Depending on how long you have been expired you may have to retake the entire nurse aide course, or you only have to retake the state certification exam. Please see the FAQ sheet for Nursing Assistant Refresher students for more details.

Q: Is there a waiting list for the Nursing Assistant program?

There are no waiting lists for this program—registration is on a first-come, first-served basis following acceptance to the program.

Q: Where are the clinicals for the Nursing Assistant program?

Clinicals are scheduled in nursing homes that are available for nurse aide training and in assisted living facilities. Some clinical sites do not allow students under 18 years of age to provide direct care to residents, so some students might not be able to access all clinical sites based on this age restriction. Additionally, students with criminal histories might be limited in

clinical site options or even restricted altogether from attending clinical depending on the criminal history.

Q: If I am enrolled at a university, do I need to take the Accuplacer to be accepted to the Nursing Assistant program?

You do not need to take the Accuplacer test and instead can submit a copy of your current university transcripts or a copy of your ACT scores to the MSTC admissions office.

Q: How do I know what Nursing Assistant courses have openings?

You can check to see what courses have seats available on ClassFinder at <http://e-mstc.com/>. At certain times of the year, course availability is very limited. Check ClassFinder frequently to see if openings occur due to some deciding to withdraw from courses.

Q: I applied and was accepted to the Nursing program at MSTC; does that mean I can register for a Nursing Assistant course then?

The Nursing Program and the Nursing Assistant program at MSTC are two separate programs. You must apply specifically to the Nursing Assistant program to be able to register for a course.

Q: I already took the Nursing program informational session. Do I have to take the Nursing Assistant informational session, too?

Yes, the informational sessions for the Nursing program and for the Nursing Assistant program are very different. It is mandatory that you take the Nursing Assistant informational session prior to registering for a Nursing Assistant course.