

VA Student Trainee Experience Program (VA-STEP)

For more than 20 years, the VA has offered this exciting, year-long clinical residency for BSN students between their junior and senior years. VA-STEP is designed to increase participants' clinical skills, clinical judgment, and critical thinking while caring for our nation's Veterans. This program provides opportunities for learning including didactic or classroom experiences and clinical practice with a qualified RN (Registered Nurse) preceptor. Students recruited for the program must have completed the final semester or quarter of the junior year in an accredited baccalaureate nursing program. Students are appointed during the summer months for 400 hours. This experience may continue during their senior academic year on a part-time basis to no more than 800 hours.

VA-STEP Eligibility Requirements

- Be currently enrolled in an accredited Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN);
- Have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, with no grade lower than a B in any nursing course;
- Have completed the final semester/quarter of junior year prior to the program start date;
- Be eligible to graduate by the following June;
- Have had at least one clinical experience in a medical center or hospital;
- Be a U.S. Citizen;
- Provide documentation of immunization status and current Health Care Provider BLS training;
- Submit all application materials by the deadline;
- Not have a service obligation to any Federal, state, or private institution or be a recipient of any Federal scholarship that incurs a service obligation;
- Be able to work full-time during the summer months and part-time during the academic year.

FAQs

Are VA-STEP students paid?

Yes. VA-STEP students are paid as hourly, intermittent employees. VA-STEP students are NOT eligible for overtime pay, holiday pay, or shift differential. VA-STEP students are not eligible for benefits until selected for a Graduate Nurse Tech (GNT) position upon graduation. The rate of pay changes each year. For fiscal year 2023, the VA-STEP students were paid more than \$23/hr.

Can VA-STEP students choose the unit where they work?

VA-STEP students may express a preference for a unit, but they will be placed according to preceptor availability and unit needs. VA-STEP students will have rotations to other units for observational and learning experiences (ICU, Bone Marrow Transplant, Cath Lab, Dialysis, ER, etc.).

- Nashville Campus – Medical/Surgical Units, Acute Mental Health, and other specialty areas.
- York Campus – Medical/Surgical Units, Mental Health Units, Hospice, and the Urgent Care Center.

Can I apply for VA-STEP if I am in an accelerated BSN Program?

Students in an accelerated BSN program CAN apply for the VA-STEP IF they meet the program requirements and are available to work full-time hours from June-August of the program start year.

How can I make my application competitive?

First, assure you have submitted all the required materials. Seek recommendations from faculty or instructors who will give positive feedback about your performance in nursing school. Assure your resume reflects not only your clinical and health care experience, but also other paid employment, volunteer work, and extracurricular activities.

How will applicants be evaluated?

After the application packages are received, the packages are reviewed to ensure all required documents have been enclosed. The applicants are evaluated for the program based on how well the applicant meets the qualifications. Veterans will be considered first among all equally qualified student applicants.

After your application packet received, you'll be contact you by telephone or email to schedule an interview. All applicants will be interviewed by a panel of nurse educators and the VA-STEP Coordinator for positions at Nashville and Murfreesboro campus. While we will try to place you in the clinical area you request, we may not be able to accommodate every specific preference. VA-STEP students are assigned to either the Nashville or the Murfreesboro campuses.

If you are chosen to participate in the VA-STEP, you will be expected to begin the program in late May or early June and run through August.

VA-STEP Application Process

The VA's Application Management System (VA AMS) enables students to provide the required data and documents for the successful submission of the scholarship application package. The application process will require the following documents to be completed and uploaded for submission into VA AMS.

- Application (Completed by student applicant in AMS)
- Two (2) Recommendations Letters:
 - Required: Dean/Academic Faculty
 - Required: Employer/Manager/Other
- Resume
- Transcript
- DD214 (current and former service members)
- Other documents as you deem necessary.

For a detailed step-by-step process on how to apply to VA-STEP follow this link [Applicant Registration - VA AMS \(intelliworx.com\)](https://intelliworx.com/VA-STEP-Applicant-Registration)