



Why Choose a Two-Year Nursing Program? Frequently Asked Questions

An AAS (Associate of Applied Science Degree) in nursing is a two-year program while a BSN (Bachelors Degree in Nursing) is a four-year program. Just as each two-year program is unique, baccalaureate programs also vary from college to college. Below are some of the general differences between the two types of degrees.

Q. *What are the differences between BSN and AAS programs, other than length?*

A. There are three big differences:

1. General education courses. BSN programs contain considerably more liberal arts classes such as history, economics, foreign language, etc. than AAS programs. On the other hand, AAS programs usually include more total clinical time.
2. How quickly you start nursing. BSN programs typically don't start you in nursing classes or nursing clinicals until the third year. AAS programs include clinical courses and patient assignments in the first semester.
3. University atmosphere. The BSN is often offered at larger colleges and universities. So if a big school atmosphere is important to you, then a BSN program may be right for you. However, AAS programs are typically offered at smaller colleges often with lower student-to-faculty ratios. So if this is important to you, then Carolinas College may be the perfect fit.

Q. *Is there a difference in the nursing education I'll receive?*

A. Not really. Both programs provide the theory and practice you need to take your nursing licensing exam and become a practicing RN after graduation.

Q. *Does a new nurse with a BSN make more money than a new nurse with an AAS?*

A. Not usually. Most health providers, including Carolinas HealthCare System, have a flat rate "new RN" salary which is exactly the same, regardless of academic preparation. For long-term career mobility, however, the BSN offers more flexibility. Carolinas College encourages all graduates to continue their education while working as a nurse at the same time.

Q. *How long will it take to finish a BSN once I have an AAS?*

A. A student who comes to Carolinas College with just a few college classes will take from one to two years after the AAS to complete the BSN. It varies depending on which college you select to continue your education. Many of our graduates work full-time while finishing their BSN.

Q. *My goal is to earn a BSN; am I better off starting in a BSN program?*

A. Not necessarily. Most RN-to-BSN bridge programs allow you to work full-time as a nurse while taking courses. You are in the workplace, earning a salary two years earlier. Some AAS nurses even go straight into an MSN program.

Q. *How do I know which is best for me?*

A. If getting the full college experience is important to you, then look into BSN programs. If a small school environment, entering the workplace as soon as possible, and total clinical time are important, then Carolinas College may be what you're looking for.

For more information:

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