Mercer recommends a methodical approach to choosing professional school targets: Students are encouraged to use the Pre-Nursing Spreadsheet (available on the Pre-Nursing Track page), which contains a tab entitled “Nursing Schools”, or use a notebook to collect pertinent information from their school searches. Compiling this information will prevent any admission pre-requisites from being overlooked, and make the application process easier.

Students should try to define their professional school targets at least a year before application. The most reliable place to find information about accredited nursing programs is the website of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN). This website offers general advice about nursing as a profession, and a search engine containing links and information about their member programs (http://www.aacnnursing.org/Membership/Member-Program-Directory).

Pre-nursing students should search for programs that offer their preferred degree (BSN or Direct Entry MSN), depending on the student’s chosen pathway to nursing, then consider the following about the programs available:

- mission,
- curriculum delivery style and structure of clinical training programs,
- length of program,
- academic and clinical resources available to students,
- other student support services,
- location (which affects housing availability and cost, as well as proximity of school to clinical training sites), and
- tuition and financial aid information.

Once a student has determined that a program is appealing in many of these areas, students should continuing compiling the following relevant information:

- admission pre-requisites,
- required entrance exam,
- application method (NursingCAS or direct to their website),
- application deadline, and
- mean or median academic statistics of their recent matriculants, to better understand the school’s expected level of academic performance.

Students are invited to keep track of their school search using the “Schools” tab in the Track Spreadsheet (available on the Track page).

Students should consult the admissions counselors of any non-Mercer target schools if there are any questions about how Mercer coursework with be applied to admission pre-requisites.