

Applying for Nursing Jobs

Vacancies are advertised in the following ways:

- www.jobs.nhs.uk is the online recruitment service for NHS jobs in England and Wales and advertises some from other health organisations such as NHS Professionals (bank work), NHS Blood and Transplant.
- Jobs in Scotland are advertised at www.jobs.scot.nhs.uk and www.hscni.net has a list of job sites for Northern Ireland. The RCN is a good source of information on work overseas – www.rcn.org.uk.
- Nursing agencies recruit for both permanent and temporary positions, in the UK and overseas - see the Nursing Agencies List for directories www.nursing-agencies-list.com.
- Investigate job sites such as www.rcnbulletinjobs.co.uk, www.nursingtimesjobs.com, www.nursing-standard-journal.co.uk and www.mentalhealthjobs.co.uk to find ones that suit you.
- Check out the websites of independent healthcare providers (largest are: BMI, BUPA, General Healthcare Group and Nuffield Health). Her Majesty's Prison vacancies are advertised at <https://www.civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk> or try one of the job sites mentioned above for agency work and private prisons. Charities are also sources of jobs – many advertise on their own websites.
- The armed forces also recruit for nursing staff. Find out more: Royal Army Nursing Corps (www.army.mod.uk); Royal Naval Nursing Service (www.royalnavy.mod.uk); Royal Air Force Nursing (www.raf.mod.uk/careers).
- Look out for jobs fairs organised by the RCN (www.rcn.org.uk/events), as well as recruitment events held by employers. Many of these are now delivered as virtual events and webinars.
- Organisations are increasingly using social media to get their messages out so following on Twitter and Facebook can help you keep informed of opportunities throughout your final year. Or if you prefer sign up for email alerts where these exist. For more advice on using social media in your job search visit My Cumbria - <https://my.cumbria.ac.uk/Student-Life/careers>.

NHS jobs

Key features of www.jobs.nhs.uk:

- Once you have registered, you can set up email and/or text alerts about new jobs, re-use your applications and track applications through to interview.
- You can also post your profile on the Newly Qualified Profile Pool Database designed to support new nurses (and other healthcare professionals) secure their first job.
- The Advice section on the front page or top left hand corner contains essential information on how to complete the form.
- Advanced Search allows you to search on key words, location, band, salary.
- You can save as you go along and then there is a print button so you can keep a hard copy if you need one.

Top tip! Register now and start a “dummy” application so you are ready for when vacancies arise.

Did you know? Some NHS organisations will DISCONTINUE vacancies when they have reached a quota before the advertised deadline, so speed is key.

Before you apply

Do your research into the role and organisation:

- Visit the organisation's website, attend any recruitment events and/or talk to key people in your network such as tutors, colleagues, professionals.
- Find out about key features such as its values and mission, size, specialties and developments.
- Read the job description and person specification and any supporting information for a clear idea about what the organisation is looking for.
- Map out how you meet each essential criteria on the person specification: what experience do you have and what examples can you give?

Completing your Supporting Information section:

This is the most important sections on the form and is the information used when shortlisting applicants. One of the main issues employers complain about is that applicants don't tailor their Supporting Information section to the specific role they are applying for – so you need to apply quickly but thoroughly!

Use your Supporting Information section to show that you meet all or most of the essential criteria outlined in the person specification for the position. If you fail to demonstrate this in your answers, or you are unable to meet the criteria, it is unlikely you will be shortlisted for an interview for that post. Make sure you leave plenty of time for reading and absorbing/synthesizing the (sometimes) large quantity of information on the job description and person specification and then tailoring your Supporting Information section to their person specification.

There is usually a maximum word count for the Supporting Information section so you need to both write concisely AND make sure you address ALL the essential criteria and as many as possible of the desirable criteria. You may find it helpful to draft your statement on a word document first and then when you have checked it carefully, copy and paste it onto the form.

Top tips:

Make it easy for the short listing panel to identify and score your examples for the individual criteria by:

- Using key words from the job detail, mirroring the language of the advert.
- Using relevant sub-headings taken from the person specification.
- Where possible addressing the criteria in the same order as on the person specification.
- Putting the most important points first to grab the employer's attention.

Key elements of the Supporting Information section:

- Your reasons for applying for this role at this organisation.
- Provide evidence for how you meet the criteria through use of examples.
- Highlight your unique selling points – personal qualities, skills, experience, knowledge and expertise relevant to the role.
- Use evidence from all aspects of your life.

Relevant content

Every application is different and you need to tailor each one to the specific role. You are likely to include some or all of the following:

Clinical placements

- Focus on the highlights of your placements - achievements, responsibilities and knowledge and experience gained. Include where you were you placed and the kind of experience you gained. Any experience with the Trust/organisation you are applying needs to be emphasised.
- In particular highlight relevant clinical skills developed as outlined in the person specification.
- Make sure you show how this experience will contribute to your ability to do the job.

Relevant paid or voluntary experience

- Do you have any relevant experience gained before your degree or managed bank/part time work or volunteering alongside studying? Previous roles can help you stand out from others – and you can often show additional skills this way. Your main focus of the Supporting Information section is always your degree and clinical placements so keep the details brief.

University studies

- You can highlight your areas of interest, relevant modules, research and dissertation. Include any relevant courses attended and explain how they are relevant for the role.

Leisure interests

- You might have interests or take part in activities that can show your personal qualities, skills, achievements and commitments. For example playing an active role in a university society can demonstrate team working,
- leadership and working under pressure. You could also use relevant interests to show how you manage a work-life balance and keep yourself well.

Writing examples:

“When giving examples, ensure you describe your experience and more importantly describe what part you played, why you did what you did and what the final outcome was.” (www.jobs.nhs.uk)

A useful acronym to help you order examples is **STAR**. This works for both applications and interviews.

S	Situation	Give the context – where were you, who else was there, what was your role?
T	Task	What were you doing/asked to do, who else was involved, any challenges?
A	Action	What did you do, what steps did YOU take, use “I” rather than we
R	Result	What were the outcomes? What did you learn? What changed?

Referees

You need full details for two and the advice suggests one of them is a tutor at the university and the other is a recent employer or placement supervisor.

Language and style

- Use facts and figures to make your examples real and convincing and to provide a context to your experience.
- NHS jobs specifically ask that you do not type in capitals or use text speak.
- Grammar, spelling and punctuation all need to be of a high standard – so ask for help if this is not your strength.
- Often getting someone else to proof read the final draft highlights typos and other errors.
- Use the language/terminology used in the job advert.
- Use ‘action’ verbs wherever possible to highlight your skills and qualities. For example, ‘initiated’, ‘supervised’, ‘coordinated’, ‘organised’, ‘led’, ‘supported’, ‘reviewed’, ‘developed’, ‘implemented’.

Sources of support

- The University of Cumbria Careers and Employability Service is here to support you during your studies and for up to three years after you complete your course
<https://my.cumbria.ac.uk/Student-Life/careers/>
- Visit My Career Enriched, your career hub, for application advice, feedback on your supporting statement, view upcoming events, book appointments or to book a practice interview -
<https://mycareerenriched.cumbria.ac.uk/student/home.html>

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