

## **Job Search Tips for Nursing Students**

### **Getting Started**

Are you looking for an internship or job, but don't know where to start? You have many resources at your fingertips! First, you must identify what kind of job or internship you are seeking. Next, start networking to identify job openings of interest to you and employers for whom you would like to work. Potential resources to tap include the SDSU Career and Academic Planning (CAP) Center, faculty, current or former employers, professional organizations (including student chapters), family, and friends.

In addition to helping you identify job openings and employers in your field, these individuals can help you recognize your strengths and weaknesses so that you can market yourself well as you prepare your application materials. The key is knowing which skills and qualifications employers are seeking in nursing candidates and communicating those qualities effectively in your job search materials.

### **Skills/Qualifications Desired in Nurses**

The best way to discover which skills employers are seeking is to review job descriptions of interest to you. Most job descriptions will state the specific qualifications required for a particular job. When reading the description for a job that you are applying for, highlight or underline key credentials required for the position, then be sure to identify those skills in your resume and/or cover letter.

If you do not have a job description or if the job description is unclear, talk with employers or faculty in your field, or with alumni and other students who have full-time employment or internship experience. They can help you gain insight into key qualities and experiences you should emphasize in your application materials. Consider the following skills and qualities employers seek in nurses.

- Ability to operate medical equipment
- Ability to work under stress
- Analytical skills
- Attention to detail
- Caring manner
- Clinical skills related to position
- Communication skills
- Computer skills
- Critical thinking skills
- Decision-making skills
- Documentation/record keeping skills
- Flexibility
- Information gathering skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Knowledge of sciences
- Life-long learner
- Listening skills
- Organizational skills
- Patience
- Professional demeanor
- Relationship building
- Resourcefulness
- Respect for confidentiality
- Teamwork

*Source: This list of skills was adapted from various nursing job descriptions and job search websites.*

### **CAP Center Resources**

If you need help with your job search, contact the CAP Center staff. We have various resources to assist you. Through the CAP Center, you can access workshops on Resume Writing/Job Searching and Interview Skills, schedule individual appointments with one of our staff members to gather information about the job search process, have application materials critiqued or take part in a practice interview.

You also can register with our online system at <http://careercenter.sdstate.edu>. The system allows you to search and apply for jobs in your career field, post resumes and other job search documents, sign up for on-campus interviews, research employers that have recruited SDSU students, and receive notices regarding job listings, on-campus interviews, and campus events.

## SDSU College of Nursing

The SDSU College of Nursing provides resources for students seeking employment opportunities. For information about job opportunities, visit the College of Nursing Career Opportunities website at <http://www3.sdstate.edu/Academics/CollegeOfNursing/CareerOpportunities/Index.cfm>.

The College of Nursing also hosts the Nursing Career Fair each semester. The Nursing Career Fair brings many nursing employers to campus and allows students the opportunity to gather information about job opportunities and to network with employers in their field.

## Interview Tips from Nursing Employers

Nursing employers cite that, because of the nursing shortage, many nursing candidates feel overconfident about their job prospects. This high level of certainty is causing a decline in the amount of preparation candidates are putting into their job search. While the nursing shortage increases the likelihood of finding a job, it does not guarantee you the job you want. Below are some tips from nursing employers that are designed to help you prepare for a nursing interview.

- **Do Your Research:** Researching the employer and the job description will show that you are interested in the position. Various resources exist to assist you with researching an employer. For more information, view the hand-out “How to Research Employers” in the CAP Center or on our website at <http://www3.sdstate.edu/Academics/TheCareerCenter/StudentandAlumniResources/CareerandJobInformation/ResearchingEmployers/Index.cfm>.
- **Pay Attention to Your Dress:** Dress professionally and be well-groomed. Take care of details, such as polishing your shoes and removing tags from new clothing.
- **Arrive Early:** Arriving early for the interview makes a positive impression, gives you time to locate the appropriate office and parking, and allows you to organize your thoughts prior to the interview.
- **Bring Appropriate Information:** Bring documentation of current licenses and certifications, as well as additional copies of your resume and reference page. Employers may ask to make copies of licenses or may request additional copies of your resume for their files.
- **Avoid Focusing on Money:** The addition of signing bonuses in nursing has switched the focus for many candidates from the job to money. Asking about money during the first interview gives the impression that you don't value the job or career advancement, and often leads employers to think that you are seeking a short-term position that will provide immediate financial rewards.
- **Prepare for Questions You Might be Asked:** Consider the skills or qualifications required for the position and, based on that information, generate a list of questions you might be asked. Review your skills and experiences until you are confident that you can respond to the questions you created. Visit the CAP Center in Medary Commons or go to the “Interviewing” section of our website at <http://www3.sdstate.edu/Academics/TheCareerCenter/StudentandAlumniResources/CareerandJobInformation/Index.cfm> to view hand-outs with commonly asked interview questions for general interviews and for nursing interviews.
- **Be Prepared to Discuss Your Skills:** Nursing employers will ask questions to determine your level of clinical skills. Be aware of your strengths and support your answers with specific examples from your clinical experience.
- **Plan to Ask Questions of the Employer:** Prepare 5 – 10 work-related questions you can ask the employer. This will show your interest in the position and your preparation for the interview.

Sources: *Ace Your Nursing Interview with a Healthcare Recruiter's Help*, <http://healthcare.monster.com/articles/recruiterQA/TenKillerInterviewTips>, <http://www.nursingspectrum.com/StudentsCorner/StudentFeatures/TenKillerInterview.htm>

## Nursing Job Search Websites

SDSU College of Nursing Career Opportunities:

<http://www3.sdstate.edu/Academics/CollegeOfNursing/CareerOpportunities/Index.cfm>

National Student Nurses' Association: <http://www.nsna.org/>

Nursing Center: <http://nursingcenter.com/career/index.cfm>

MinorityNurse.com: [http://www.minoritynurse.com/nurse\\_emp/index.html](http://www.minoritynurse.com/nurse_emp/index.html)