



Introduction to general practice



Applying for a practice nurse position

Introduction to general practice
Module 5: June 2009

Learning objectives

On completion of this module participants will have :

- an understand the importance of maintaining a thorough professional portfolio
- skills in preparing a professional portfolio and resume or curriculum vitae (CV)
- understand the process of job searching, interpretation of advertisements and job descriptions, job application, interview skills and terms of employment negotiation
- developed interview skills
- developed employment negotiation skills.

Professional portfolio

- A professional portfolio can be defined as *a private collection of evidence which demonstrates the continuing acquisition of skills, knowledge, attitudes, understanding and achievement. It is both retrospective and prospective, as well as reflecting the current stage of development of the individual (Hull & Redfern, 1996)*

Professional portfolio (cont'd)

- records of formal qualifications: practicing certificate(s) and academic programs
- any service records
- reports or commendatory statements, prizes, awards, scholarships
- copies of appraisals
- records of professional activities.

Professional portfolio (cont'd)

- records of participation in courses, study days, conferences, seminars
- records of any conference presentations or publications
- records of any participation in research
- evidence of membership of professional organisations
- evidence of subscription to professional journals.

Curriculum vitae (CV)

- curriculum vitae or resume accompanies a job application
- documents professional and educational accomplishments
- curriculum vitae (resume).

Sample curriculum vitae

- full name:
- address:
- contact phone numbers (home, business, mobile):
- email address:
- professional license number:
- driver's license (type and number):
- details of professional registration: including years registered.

Example: Mary Smith Registered Nurse List A, NSW. 1991.

Sample curriculum vitae (cont'd)

- **Educational achievements:** (List highest qualifications first)

Example:

- Bachelor of Nursing, University of the World. 1991.
- Graduate Diploma in Critical Care, University of the World, Green Garden Hospital. 1993.

- **Details of any awards or prizes:**

Sample curriculum vitae (cont'd)

- **Employment:** (List latest first)

(If you were unemployed for a period then explain, for example, maternity leave, child rearing)

- **Professional Development:**

List membership of any professional organisations, professional presentations, committee memberships, publications and research in which there has been participation.

Sample curriculum vitae (cont'd)

- **Specific attributes:**

(Here you should provide a brief description of any particular attributes and skills that you would bring to the position. For example, in the above example, the discharge planning and liaison would be an advantage)

Sample curriculum vitae (cont'd)

- **References:**

- many position descriptions will provide information on how many referees are required.
- include accurate contact details for your referees.
- always make sure that your referees have agreed to act in this capacity, can make a positive contribution and understand the job description and your attributes for the position, so provide them with the details of the job.

Application letter

An application letter would include:

- your name
- your address
- phone number
- email address
- date
- name of contact person on the job advertisement
- contact person's address
- re: position title, number.

Application letter (cont'd)

- a sample letter is included in your course notes.

Most common application mistakes

- too long
- disorganised: information scattered
- poorly typed and printed, hard to read (hand written application are not acceptable)
- over written: long sentences poorly structures
- too sparse: not enough detail
- accomplishments and attributes inadequately highlighted
- too many irrelevancies
- poorly proof read
- presentation overdone (coloured paper, icons, photos)
- misdirected application.

How to apply for practice nursing positions

- check advertisements in local newspapers or job agencies on the internet
- check professional journals and websites such as the Australian Practice Nurses website (APNA)
- contact your local division of general practice
- identify positions of interest.

Hypothetical advertisement

The Sunnyside General Practice has a position for a registered nurse for five sessions a week. This is an opportunity for a dynamic person to work in a multidisciplinary team.

(Please contact XXX on XXX for more information)

Essential Criteria

- current authorisation to practice as a registered nurse (with the state registering authority)
- minimum two years experience as a registered nurse
- ability to undertake triage of clients, in particular those contacting or presenting to the practice with acute or emergency health problems
- demonstrated patient focused approach in nursing care
- excellent interpersonal and communication skills.

Hypothetical essential criteria (cont'd)

- ability to work in a multidisciplinary team as well as independently without direct supervision
- prepared to visit patients in their homes
- ability to prioritise and organise responsibilities
- demonstrated commitment to ongoing professional development
- an understanding of general practice and primary health care
- willingness to develop new knowledge and skills on the job
- CPR certificate or willingness to obtain certification within specified time period
- computer literacy
- possession of a current drivers licence.

Hypothetical desirable criteria

- previous experience in general practice or community nursing
- previous experience in Accident and Emergency nursing (or other specialties considered valuable)
- previous experience or an expressed interest in patient education
- knowledge of sterilisation protocols and procedures
- knowledge of immunisation protocols and procedures
- current wound care knowledge.

Duties and responsibilities

- duties and responsibilities may be listed in the advertisement but are more likely to be made available in a job description
- it is important to ensure that you are familiar with the expectations of the position.

Preparing for the interview

- prepare application letter and curriculum vitae (resume)
- review job description and selection criteria and then prepare examples of answers to questions to demonstrate your knowledge, skills, experiences, strengths and weaknesses
- contact the practice for further information
- prepare questions you would like answered at the interview.

The interview

There may be an interview panel. Sample questions may include:

- tell us why you are the best person for the job.
- what particular skills would you bring to this position?
- having seen the job description are there any areas where you feel that you have a particular flair?
- having seen the job description are there any areas where you feel you might need some support and assistance?

Questions for applicant

Prepare a list of questions you may wish to ask:

- particular unique aspects of the practice and its services
- confirming terms of employment (hours of work, remuneration, leave entitlements)
- continuing education and, or professional development.

Employment contract

Is there an employment contract ?

- Does that contract include:
 - position title
 - terms of employment
 - remuneration
 - superannuation
 - hours of work
 - leave entitlements.

Other considerations

- is there an orientation program?
- is there a policy and procedure manual?
- what is the policy on professional development?
- if you are a solo nurse, is there access to a mentor?
- is there access to adequate supervision by a registered nurse for enrolled nurses?
- insurance coverage.