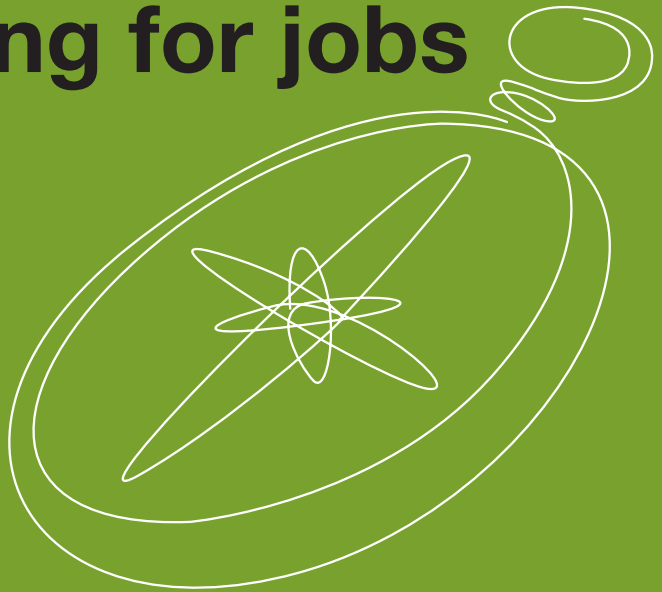


# Nurses Thinking about your career: Applying for jobs



Member Support Services



Royal College of Nursing

Professional care for  
caring professionals

# Applying for jobs

Once you have an idea of the sort of role you're looking for, it's time to put maximum effort into the job application process.

## Your CV

Whilst many jobs simply ask that you complete an application form, it's also useful to create a CV that you can include in your portfolio to present to prospective employers and useful contacts.

Successful CVs are logical, accurate and concise. Most importantly they're **tailored to the people reading them**. So make sure you adapt yours accordingly, using relevant key words for the job you're applying for.

There's no perfect format for a CV but you can use the following sections to create one that's easy to follow.

### Personal details

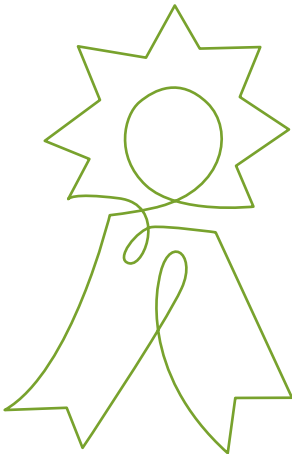
Include your name, address, preferred contact telephone number and email address.

### Opening statement/Personal profile

A couple of sentences that summarise your personal and professional qualities and career objectives. Always tailor specifically to the role to demonstrate your suitability for the job.

### Key skills and achievements

Four or five bullet points to summarise key achievements in your career. This could be to emphasise the amount of professional development you have completed, initiatives you have introduced, projects you have been involved in or skills gained through specific experience relevant to the role you're applying for.





### Employment/Experience

A chronological list of your experience and posts held, beginning with the most recent. For each post held, list the date of employment, name of employer, job title, your responsibilities and your main achievements.

Include three or four of the responsibilities you held at your most recent and two or three major achievements relevant to the position for which you are applying. Wherever possible describe what you've achieved and the skills you have gained, giving specific evidence of your competences. Go through the job description and person specification if there is one.

### Education

A chronological list of the courses you have undertaken and qualifications gained, including dates and names of educational establishments. Summarise your professional qualifications and education to date. Include your Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) pin number and expiry date.

### Professional activities

Details of events, training days or workshops you've attended, membership of professional bodies, any shadowing you've done and any RCN activities you have taken part in. Include articles published, membership of professional groups and papers delivered at conferences.

### Other activities

You may want to include extra information about your interests outside work and whether you hold a driving licence.



## Action words

**identified**

**initiated**

**established**

**organised**

**launched**

**implemented**

**successfully**

**improved**

**trained**

**managed**

**developed**

**produced**

**negotiated**

**created**

**recognised**

**fulfilled**

**co-ordinated**

## CV tips

- Try to use “action” words. These will bring your CV to life.
- Explain gaps in employment where, for example, you raised a family, went travelling or cared for a relative. Remember that these are responsible reasons that bring extra skills and experience.
- Think about any achievements you've gained through voluntary work.
- Try to use numbers to create an impact, for example, ‘managed a team of 30 staff’, ‘responsible for a budget of £500,000’.
- Don't exceed two pages – keep to the point. If you have a lot of experience, simply summarise positions you held more than ten years ago. If you have published a lot of articles, select the most important and summarise others – for example, ‘More than 20 articles published in the nursing press on aspects of diabetes care, professional development and education’
- Avoid using different font styles. Keep it simple.
- Only use abbreviations that can be recognised easily.
- Inclusion of contact details for referees is optional. At the end of your CV you could add ‘references – available on request’.
- If targeting the CV at specific employers, enclose a covering letter highlighting the main points of your CV and how they relate to the post that you're applying for.
- Don't forget to use spellcheck.
- Ask at least two people to proof read your CV for errors.
- Ask for constructive feedback, including whether it's easy to read and if it makes an impact.

## Supporting statements

The supporting information section is the most important part of your application. Go through the job description and person specification thoroughly (if they have been included) to identify the skills and knowledge that are critical to the position.. Most applications will tell you which skills are desirable and which ones are essential. Some might even stipulate if a particular aspect should be covered in the application or in the interview (or both.) NHS jobs may provide a knowledge and skills framework (KSF) outline to map your experience against.

Employers will be looking for the applicants who can best demonstrate they have the experience and skills listed in the person specification, so address every point to ensure you have the best chance of getting shortlisted. Always use specific examples or evidence, and try not to be put off because you think you can't meet some of the criteria; instead have a think about the skills or experience you possess which are "transferable." If you list your examples in the same order in which they appear in the person specification, the person shortlisting the application is less likely to miss something. You can use the examples in your supporting statement to help you prepare for job interviews.

**Example supporting statement** - Sample supporting statement for a staff nurse applying for a post on a stroke unit

I am applying for the position of staff nurse on Ward 21 as I am very keen to work with patients affected by stroke. I developed my interest in this area whilst working on a medical ward where many patients had suffered from a previous or recent stroke with varying degrees of severity. I found the experience of nursing patients following stroke very satisfying as I enjoyed helping to improve their quality of life by assisting with their communication, swallowing and mobilising skills.

I believe that I meet the requirements outlined on the person specification as follows.

### Education and Qualifications

I am an NMC registered adult nurse educated to degree level, with an overall grade of 2:1. I have completed the mentorship preparation module and have so far supported over 10 student nurses through their placement competencies. I have received positive comments from students about my patient teaching which has helped them to grow in confidence. One student wrote: 'thank you for all your support. I feel I have learnt so much from you and have learnt how to improve my management skills'

### Experience

I have four years' experience of working in an acute healthcare environment, including two years on a 24 bedded medical ward and two years on a 25 bedded cardiology ward, with a small CCU attached. During this time I have frequently been in charge of the ward, which has involved prioritising the care of patients, delegating to other nurses, health care assistants and student nurses. I have had to deal with a variety of situations such as being the most senior nurse on duty during a cardiac arrest, dealing with an episode of violence from a relative under the influence of alcohol and organising extra staff to cover unplanned sickness. These issues were resolved

successfully and I have contributed to written reports about learning from critical incidents.

I have an excellent relationship with the wider health care team including medical teams, physiotherapists, dieticians and occupational therapists. For example, I recently fed back my concerns about a deteriorating patient whose blood pressure was low and whose urine output had dropped, which resulted in a speedy and timely emergency admission to critical care. This involved liaising with a junior doctor who needed reassurance about processes for escalating concerns.

I also have experience of organising safe discharges, co-ordinating patient transport, writing discharge letters and communicating with community nursing colleagues and social workers.

My experience has enabled me to maintain clinical skills in many areas including, medicines management, (including IV drugs), wound management, male and female catheterisation, interpretation of cardiac monitors and monitoring of blood sugar levels.

### **Knowledge, Skills and Understanding**

I believe I have excellent communication skills and have always been able to deal with challenging situations. An example of this in my current role was when I had to deal sensitively with a relative who was extremely upset about the sudden death of their mother. I took the relative to a quiet office, sat with them, showed empathy and compassion and arranged for them to see the patient. The relative sent me a 'Thank You' card and said that my sensitivity had made this difficult experience more bearable than it might have been.

I also enjoy promoting patients' health and teaching about the importance of healthy eating, exercise and smoking cessation. I have put up a healthy eating notice boards on the ward with leaflets and posters in different languages. I always take every opportunity to promote any lifestyle changes that will help patients manage their condition more effectively.

I am the link nurse for infection control on my ward and have presented latest research on aseptic technique at a team meeting. I was also responsible for liaising with the Infection Control nurse specialist to ensure data for an audit on the use of hand gel in CCU was collected effectively.

I am committed to continuing professional development and have attended courses relevant to my role. For example, I have recently completed a management of long-term conditions programme which will assist me in this role. I ensure any mandatory training is up to date and use online resources such as the RCN and health care websites to actively keep informed of nursing initiatives. I have also recently attended a workshop on the NMC's revised code and revalidation project and believe that the changes are positive for improving patient care, learning from feedback and ensuring safe practice.

### **Personal qualities**

I believe that I am a cheerful, flexible and enthusiastic nurse who is approachable at all times. I try to be respectful towards all individuals from a variety of backgrounds.

I have experience of working in an inner-city hospital where I have adapted my communication skills to support patients from a wide range of cultural and social backgrounds. I ensure that I adhere to all policies, including health and safety, infection control and confidentiality.

I hope you will agree that I meet the requirements of the post and look forward to hearing from you.

# Useful resources

## RCN Direct

[www.rcn.org.uk/direct](http://www.rcn.org.uk/direct)

RCN Direct is the gateway to the RCN and provides comprehensive information and advice on a whole range of issues including:

- careers
- employment
- nursing
- membership
- journal subscriptions.

**Advice:** 8.30am-8.30pm, seven days a week, 365 days a year

**Membership:** 8.30am-8.30pm, Monday-Friday (excluding bank holidays)

**Tel:** 0345 772 6100 **Overseas:** 00 44 20 7647 3456

## RCN online

[www.rcn.org.uk/advice](http://www.rcn.org.uk/advice)

[www.twitter.com/thercn](https://www.twitter.com/thercn)

The RCN Learning Zone can help you improve your numeracy skills.

See [www.rcn.org.uk/learningzone](http://www.rcn.org.uk/learningzone)

The RCN Library has several drug calculation and numeracy skills books which RCN members can borrow: [www.rcn.org.uk/development/library](http://www.rcn.org.uk/development/library)

The Graduate Careers web site, Prospects, provides guidance on preparing for assessment centres at: [www.prospects.ac.uk/assessment\\_centres.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/assessment_centres.htm)

Careers support An RCN guide for health care assistants and assistant practitioners. See: [www.rcn.org.uk/publications](http://www.rcn.org.uk/publications)

See: [www.rcn.org.uk/careers](http://www.rcn.org.uk/careers) for more information, resources and advice on careers.

Visit RCNi at [www.rcni.com](http://www.rcni.com) for continuing professional development (CPD) resources, articles, online training and more.

## Country specific careers services

England [www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk](http://www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk)

Wales [www.careerswales.com](http://www.careerswales.com)

Scotland [www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk](http://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk)

Northern Ireland [www.nidirect.gov.uk/index/](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/index/)



