

Applying for nursing

Information from Teesside University 2009. Much of the information will apply to other universities.

Whatever branch you apply for you will spend some time in each of the four branches (adult, child, learning disability and mental health) during your training.

Mental health nurses work with patients of all ages.

Learning disability nurses are also all age and work with patients in all aspects of their lives, e.g. social, employment and health.

Overall, admissions tutors are looking for

- the right attitude, qualities and behaviour
- an understanding of what the pathway entails and the demands of the course (research needed)
- that the applicant will be safe and professional in practice and trustworthy
- the potential and motivation to progress and develop over the course and complete successfully
- the desire to continue to progress and be successful over their career.

Personal statement

Start with a bit about yourself and the background to your choice to train as a nurse showing an understanding of the role of a nurse.

Go on to reasons for choosing your pathway. Show you know what it's about – use www.nhscareers.nhs.uk for information on nursing in general and branches, as well as prospectuses; pick up on the language used but don't just copy whole sentences. They like to see you have researched and gained insight into the profession and courses.

Personal experiences can help show understanding of branch and personal characteristics that make you suited to it.

Relevant achievements – make sure they're relevant to nursing and/or branch.

Outside interests e.g. job, Duke of Edinburgh, hobbies etc.

If you have long term goals you can include them, but don't worry if you don't. If you put anything, be prepared to discuss it at interview so don't just put something down to look good!

Show how your experiences are likely to stand you in good stead for nursing e.g. enhanced communication skills, time management, sense of responsibility, enhanced understanding of client group, good grades for academic demands of course etc.

Be concise, make it relevant and well structured.

Spelling, grammar and punctuation count.

Interviews

Communicate effectively, both in verbal and non verbal ways. Allow your enthusiasm and keenness to come across. They want you to be enthusiastic about nursing and becoming a nurse and to say it, sound it and look it.

Want to see knowledge of branch and that you appreciate the demands of nursing.

Looking for your potential to become a professional including some consideration of planning for your future career.

Preparation for interview:

Read all documentation prior to interview.

Ensure you have knowledge of chosen pathway.

Consider how to present yourself to the panel – look, behave etc as a professional. How are you portraying yourself as a person and individual?

Be confident. They accept you will be nervous but still be confident and try to relax.

Think about questions you could be asked:

- what is the role of a nurse in your branch?
- what qualifications/skills do you possess which you will bring to the role? Sell yourself on this one.
- why have you applied here?

Don't just answer yes or no, even when they ask a question that requires that response – justify your answer and fully discuss the points you are making.

Be prepared to ask questions at the end of the interview but avoid anything that has been clear in material you have already received as it looks like you haven't read it.

On interview day

You will usually take literacy and numeracy tests on the interview day.

Literacy is 20 minutes English test based on short case scenarios. You're not expected to write more than one side of A4. Marked before interview and any areas needing development will be discussed.

Look at use of grammar, punctuation, spelling and whether you can construct clear sentences and paragraphs.

Numeracy is 20 minutes online test. Can be given before or after interview as it's marked later. Contains 15 maths questions including addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, volume, percentages, fractions etc. You must pass 9/15. Teesside send out practice questions in advance.

Funding

Once you have been offered a place somewhere you will be contacted about applying for finance by the NHS student grant unit (this can take a while so don't panic if it's not immediate).

Information is available at www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk or by phone on 0845 3586655.

The following information is based on students starting in 2009.

Diploma: fees are paid by NHS.

All diploma students are entitled to a non-repayable bursary of £6701 regardless of household income. Paid monthly.

Dependent allowances: up to £2238 per year for spouse/partner/first child. Up to £539 per year for each extra child.

Students can still get tax credits.

Degree: Fees are paid by the HNS. There is basic entitlement to part of the bursary, but the amount is assessed against household income. See the website for amounts and examples as it can get a bit complicated. Degree students may also be entitled to part of the student loan from Student Finance England.

The amount you receive will be higher for both diploma and degree students if you study in London.

All universities have funds to help students who are struggling financially. Always seek help as soon as you realise you have difficulties.