

GRADUATE FACT SHEET:

SUPPORT FOR EARLY CAREER NURSES AND MIDWIVES IN SECURING EMPLOYMENT

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on successfully completing your nursing or midwifery studies. Securing employment as an early career nurse or midwife can be difficult, however not getting into a new graduate/transition program is not the end of the world. There are many opportunities to explore with plenty of ways you can gain a job and contribute to your profession. This fact sheet has been developed for those who are registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) and to date have been unsuccessful in obtaining a new employment position.

Myth Busters about doing a new graduate program the NMBA's position

The NMBA does not mandate that a registered nurse, enrolled nurse or midwife is required to complete a graduate/transition program. However, a level of support to assist you to transition from a student to registered nurse, enrolled nurse or midwife into the workforce will help.

As a new graduate registered with the NMBA nurses and midwives are eligible to start working as a nurse or midwife as soon as your name is published on the national register.

Resources:

Fact sheet from NMBA here <https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines-Statements/FAQ/Graduate-Applications-FAQs-NMBA.aspx>

ANMF MythBusters document <https://www.anmf.org.au/resources/information-sheets>

Career pathways

Keep your horizons broad!

Be opened minded to all your opportunities. You may have really wanted to work in a particular area of nursing or midwifery and unfortunately you haven't been successful to date. Although it is important not to give up on trying to achieve your goals, you may need to think about other opportunities of employment that interest you.

One of the most important parts of your first 12-months of professional practice is to gain employment and start getting on-the-ground experience.

You can change career paths many times over your career, the opportunities are plentiful.

There are many opportunities for nurses and midwives outside the hospital system. If you're willing to go beyond your limits, you might find there are positions in areas you never thought to look before.

For example many rural and regional hospitals and facilities don't fill their new graduate placements or their nursing and midwifery positions. If you're keen for a little adventure, see what options lay in facilities outside the big metropolitan areas. The knowledge you could gain from this experience could be invaluable. Contact the Director of Nursing (DON) and show your interest.

Or you could consider the opportunities of one of the following supported transition programs:

- Primary Health Care - a role in general practice, school nursing, refugee health or telehealth could be for you. Check out further information on primary health care <https://www.apna.asn.au/profession/what-is-primary-health-care-nursing> or
- You could also use your local PHN's (Primary Health Networks) to ask about opportunities in primary health care in your area. To find your local PHN click here. <https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/phn/your-local-PHN/> or
- Aged Care - a role in aged care for registered and enrolled nurses has many opportunities to work in either the community setting or in a nursing home. The Commonwealth Department of Health are currently funding transition programs. For further information - [transition program in aged care](#) or
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives - you could consider a [Cadetship and Transition to Professional Practice Programs](#). This national resource focuses on what supports success in Cadetship and Transition to Professional Practice (TPP) Programs that are specifically for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander participants. Success means it is a culturally safe experience for participants, they complete the program and stay in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce. The resource is inclusive of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students involved in a range of health professional training and builds on existing good practice. These programs will guide new nurses in their first year of clinical practice through mentorship, professional development, and specialist clinical training.

TIPS FOR THE APPLICATION AND INTERVIEW PROCESS

Curriculum vitae (CV) and essential criteria what you should put in your application.

Your CV and essential criteria may include:

A commitment to nursing or midwifery demonstrating all of the following attributes:

1. Registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia.
2. Demonstrate a patient/consumer focused approach to care.
3. Demonstrate a positive approach to ongoing self-education and skill development.
4. Demonstrate a flexible, innovative team-oriented approach in their ability to provide patient/person centred care.
5. Demonstrate a positive approach to change and diversity.
6. Demonstrate a commitment to quality, best practice and environmental safety.
7. Demonstrate a working knowledge of legal and ethical requirements for the nursing and midwifery practice.

8. Demonstrate the knowledge about the NMBA's professional standards and ability to understand the importance of organisational policies and procedure to support practice.
9. Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively in both written and verbal forms.
10. Well-developed interpersonal skills, commensurate with the job role.
11. A commitment to successfully completing the prescribed Graduate Nurse/Midwife Program including all educational, professional, and clinical hurdles.
12. Commitment to quality improvement.
13. Understand the mission and values of the organisation.
14. Desirable but not essential:
A sound understanding or interest in digital health technologies including IT clinical systems, and their applications relevant to the management of patient/consumer care, rostering, and risk management reporting.

Being proactive during the hiring process

Be proactive during the hiring process: Approach the Nurse/Midwife Unit Manager or the contact person listed in the advertisement. Be prepared and make a good impression, they may be willing to give you the opportunity you are hoping for.

This is your opportunity to sell yourself, your strengths, and your skills.

Interview processes

The interview process is a formal process that occurs prior to potential employment. It can be a one-to-one interview, a panel interview involving several people, Café style interview or virtual (video or Zoom). **BE PREPARED!!** Practice interview questions. Research the role and the organisation, including:

- their expectations (Call the contact person and ask this question before)
- their history
- their values
- their structure
- their culture
- their strategic plan
- your potential role and the selection criteria that you may have had to address.

If you are asked to demonstrate or provide an example, a scenario or situation to answer an interview question, reflect on your experience and how you managed that situation, how you communicated, and what you learnt from the experience.

Most behavioural interview questions asked are based around the following themes:

- Teamwork
- Clinical/Patient care
- Adaptability
- Conflict
- Time management
- Communication
- Work, Health and Safety (WHS)
- Organisational core values and how you affiliate with these.

When providing examples, you may find the S-T-A-R (situation, tasks, action-steps and results) format of assistance - this will ensure your story is direct, concise and to the point.

Always prepare questions to ask at the end of the interview. This shows that you are interested in the role and engaged in the recruitment process. Asking relevant, engaging questions is imperative.

Examples of these could be:

- Can you describe how preceptorship will support me in the role?
- Does the organisation have an induction program for graduates?
- What strategies do you have in place to support work-life balance within the organisation?
- What career development opportunities are there for me as a graduate?
- What is the organisation's expectation of the role?
- Timeframe for the application process. When will a decision be made?

If you are unsuccessful, ask for feedback.

Feedback is not a criticism but constructive advice for you to work on and apply with your next application.

OTHER OPTIONS

Apply for non-new graduate positions

Where a job advertisement may request a candidate has 12 months experience, it does not mean that a potential employer will not consider a candidate who may not have this experience. Some services may struggle to attract suitably qualified candidates to fill nursing and midwifery positions for their requirements. Consequently they may consider employing a qualified candidate without the requisite practical experience. You might not always get the job – but it doesn't hurt to try! Often the interview experience can also aid in building confidence in the application and interview process.

Please note that being employed directly as a nurse or midwife without a graduate/transition program can be extremely daunting. It's important you are supported so ask about the support being offer, will it include supernumerary days, training courses and access to clinical educators.

Be Persistent

When everything seems not to be progressing the way you had hoped, keep going. It might seem like a hard slog, but there are opportunities there for you. Send another email, make another phone call, apply for another job – you never know what opportunities might present themselves if you just keep going.

Get in touch with the health facilities where you completed placements

The networks you build during clinical placements are also an important link to utilise during job searches. If you've made some good connections during your professional experience placements, get in contact with the educator, nursing or midwifery manager, or local Director of Nursing and let them know you have graduated and are seeking work opportunities. You might find they could do with an extra hand.

What if I do not get a position after 6 to 12 months?

It is recommended that you:

1. View potential employer websites and contact preferred health service hospitals or their graduate program coordinators/educators regularly to see if an opportunity has arisen.
2. Where positions have become available, contact graduate coordinators/educators, as this provides an opportunity to make a positive impression and demonstrate your enthusiasm to seek employment opportunities that may be designed to support nursing and midwifery graduates who have not secured a position through the required application process.
3. Numerous private hospitals offer graduate nurse/midwife programs, but do not participate in state or territory matching processes. Applications need to be made directly to the desired health service.
4. The most popular time to commence a graduate role is at the beginning of each year, however some also offer a midyear intake.

Looking after your wellbeing

Remember you are not alone, you have support. You are encouraged to contact your education provider, your union, or your professional organisation. They are experienced at supporting nurses and midwives going through these difficulties and they can provide support and resources.

Being unable to find employment is difficult and stressful. Nurses and midwives who have experienced this identified that there is an array of emotions.

It is important that you reach out to your education provider, your union or your professional organisation and colleagues or the independent, [Nurse and Midwife Support](#) service to enable you to talk through your concerns and enable these organisations to support you when you need it most.

National Early Career Nurse and Midwife Roundtable Working Group

The national early career nurse and midwife roundtable working group is made up of over 23 different nursing and midwifery organisations, including, universities, professional organisations, unions, state and territory health departments and individuals who collaborate together for a common goal. For further information please contact: anmfederal@anmf.org.au