

# National Student Nurses' Association

## Career Counseling Center *Find your First RN Position*

### Definition of a resume:

- Summary of a person's background including education, work, history, and other professional qualifications for a job
- Concise factual presentation of educational and professional history
- First introduction of you to a prospective employer
- A tool for presenting yourself to a potential employer
- Generally only 1 or 2 pages

### Definition of a Curriculum Vita:

- Translates into "course of your life"
- Much more comprehensive than a resume
- Lists every job, all papers published, presentations made, awards received, etc.

### Definition of a Candidate Profile:

- Not an application for employment
- Often includes demographic information
- Often done on-line
- May contain signature for verification that information is truthful
- Employer will ask applicant to rank themselves on job related characteristics such as managing stressful situations and problem solving ability to separate potential candidates and to narrow field of applicants
- Used before the resume is reviewed

### Resume Tips

1. Should be one pages at least for new graduate, whenever possible
  - a. As career matures, pages will increase accordingly
2. Should be in chronological order beginning with the most recent
  - a. This is the most common type
  - b. Like an employment timeline.
3. Should be Functional
  - a. Used to down play time gaps
  - b. Used to highlight skills and expertise instead of just where you have worked

4. Neat and visibly appealing
  - a. Remember you want your resume to stand out in a good way
5. White Paper
6. Have someone proofread
  - a. Use spell check
  - b. Number 1 reason for “resume tossing” is spelling errors
7. Use 12 point type, MS Word is the standard

### **Cover Letter Tips**

1. Don't overuse “I”
2. Strong opening sentence
3. Don't omit your top selling points
4. Keep short and to the point
5. Cover letter should not repeat the resume
6. Don't be vague
7. Customize for the particular job
8. End on a strong note such as, “I will follow up in 3 days.”
9. Courteous, “thank you for your time”
10. Signature at end

### **Interview Tips**

1. Rehearse with a friend, mentor or family member
2. Dress professionally
3. Make eye contact
4. Research the agency before you go, find out as much as possible about the agency and the person who will interview you- i.e. what is their philosophy of nursing care and who is the chief nurse officer?
5. Have a firm handshake!
6. Have at least 3 questions ready to ask
7. Take notes
8. Look and act confident
9. Follow-up with a thank you note

### **Common Interviewer Questions**

***Describe your practicum experience.***

***Describe your job experience(s), health related or not.***

***What are your strengths and weaknesses?***

*How have you functioned as a team member in the past?*

*Describe any management/leadership experience you have?*

*Where do you see your career in five years?*

*What do you have to offer our institution?*

*Why should we hire you?*

*In this particular clinical situation (and the interviewer will describe one), what would be your priorities? How would you intervene?*

### **Inappropriate/Illegal Interviewer Questions**

*What is your marital status?*

*What is your age?*

*What is your religious affiliation?*

(Interview questions excerpted from Marshall, Lois. (2010). *Take Charge of Your Nursing Career: Open the Door to Your Dreams*. Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing, Indianapolis. <http://www.nursingknowledge.org>)

### **Miscellaneous:**

- Be sure to include leadership skills and highlight leadership experiences (i.e. those gained in NSNA leadership roles at school, state and chapter level).
- Make a pro/con list once you have completed all of your interviews to help you make the best decision for you
- Find a mentor who can assist you every step of the way!
  - Use resources through NSNA, Sigma Theta Tau, National League for Nursing and through your own contacts to assist you in this search.
- Monitor your social networking sites to make sure that you are properly portrayed and use discretion when posting photos and stories on your personal sites as well as your friends' sites.
- Remember that what you post on social networking sites is there for the world, including potential employers and current employers and current employers to see
- Don't post comments, grievances, etc. about places you have or are currently working; school; etc. Use good judgment.

***Always tell the truth!***

Resources:

Critical Portfolio (free online resource for NSNA members)

<http://www.nsnaleadershipu.org/NSNALU/Default.aspx?tabid=136>

NSNA Career Center

[http://www.nсна.org/career/ultimate\\_adventure.asp](http://www.nсна.org/career/ultimate_adventure.asp)

*Imprint* Career Planning Articles (scroll down to bottom of website page)

[http://www.nсна.org/career/ultimate\\_adventure.asp](http://www.nсна.org/career/ultimate_adventure.asp)

Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing

[www.nursingsociety.org/careermap](http://www.nursingsociety.org/careermap) or [www.nursingsociety.org/studentcenter](http://www.nursingsociety.org/studentcenter)

Job Search <http://jobsearch.about.com/od/cvadvice/a/cvadvice.htm>

National League for Nursing

<http://www.nln.org/careers/resources.htm>

[www.careerbuilder.com](http://www.careerbuilder.com)

[www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com)

