

Interview Tips for International Nursing Students

Having a nursing career in Australia is a goal for many international students who hope to gain Permanent Residency in Australia, or even just experience life and culture in Australia over the next few years.

To achieve this goal or dream, it is necessary to have a sufficient level of skill and ability to perform well in job interviews. Here are 10 important tips to follow that will definitely improve your job interview skills and chances of securing the job.

1. Be on time

- Being late for an interview is never good and creates a bad first impression. Not only does it reflect poorly on your time management skills as a prospective nurse, but it can also make you feel anxious and confused.
- Think about how long it will take to travel to the interview even if you are familiar with the area – you should always allow for extra time in case of any accidents or problems on the way.
- If you are late for your interview, apologise to the interviewer and try to stay calm. You cannot change anything if you are already late, so still try to do your best during the rest of the interview.

2. Outfit

- Unless there is a specific dress standard that you have been told about, go for something more formal such as a suit, tie and black dress shoes for men or a mid-length skirt, blazer, plain white shirt and flats or low heels for women.
- First impressions count, so dressing appropriately for the interview will definitely put you in a better position compared to other candidates who dress casually or informally.
- Wear something that is not only suitable for the business but also comfortable. Try to avoid wearing anything too tight or overly baggy, as you want to feel comfortable and relaxed in what you wear.

3. Make sure your phone is on silent or turned off completely

- To prevent interrupting the interview and creating an awkward situation, you should turn off your phone or keep the phone in silent mode.
- Even if you feel your phone buzz or if the interviewer is busy setting something up, you must still not check or open your phone as this is very rude in an interview.

4. What international nurses should bring to an interview

- Make sure you bring all relevant documents that have been asked of you or will be expected. This includes your proof of identification, resume, cover letter, a pen and notepad, police check, and your nursing registration documents if you currently have one. the relevant documents with you in the mail sent to you or your application with interview criteria.

- If you are unsure of exactly what you should bring to an interview, you should call the workplace and ask what you are required to bring.

5. Do not forget to practice

- Always practice for at least a few days before every interview! If possible, you can practice with family or friends, or even by yourself if that's your only option. It is a great idea to research possible questions you could be asked, and plan or think of how you would answer. Try not to memorise every word of your answer though, as this will likely throw you off when answering this way in the real interview. It is better to have a few key ideas or words you will say for each possible question.

6. Stay calm

- Do your best to relax, as interviewers can usually tell if you are stressed. Try some slow, deep breathing exercises a few minutes before your interview if you have the chance.
- Remember that it is also okay to mention to the interviewer that you are feeling anxious or nervous, just be sure to not keep talking about it.

7. Learn about the company before your interview

- In an interview, it will impress any interviewer if you can demonstrate that you know a lot about the company. This could be mentioning something such as when the company was created, its main values and/or purpose, and any awards the company has received.
- Most medical organisations will have a statement of their vision, mission and values. It will definitely score you points if you can mention these at an appropriate time during the interview. This will surely impress the interviewer as it shows you have done plenty of research.

8. Prepare an answer to at least one difficult question

- It is likely that as a recent nursing graduate, you will be asked a question about how you have resolved a situation involving conflict or any difficulty during your work experience, placements, or study.
- Prepare to answer a question like this, by thinking about what happened in that situation, how you handled it, and what you learnt from that situation. Interviewers will like it if you can say what you learnt from that difficult situation, as it will show that you are still committed to progressing and building your skills as a nurse.

9. Be conscious of your body language and posture

- It is important to smile and have open, welcoming body language.
- The interviewer is most likely looking for candidates with a welcoming and friendly attitude they could show when helping patients and their families, so it is important to show signs of this behavior during the interview.
- Be sure to not appear too "fake" though. Try to find a balance between appearing happy and confident but not too extreme.

10. Thank the interviewer/s for their time

- The final impression can be just as important as the first – this is the most prominent image that will stay in the interviewer’s mind after the interview is over.
- If you feel it is appropriate, you can shake hands with the interviewer before leaving the interview, as this shows professionalism and confidence.