

# Where to Apply for Work If You Have Missed Out on a Nursing Graduate Program

Hundreds of thousands of students graduate with a degree in Nursing each year, but among them not all nursing students can apply and be accepted into a nursing graduate program.

According to statistics each year, about 10 – 20% of the nursing graduate students are rejected or delayed and miss the opportunity to practice and work through a nursing graduate program. If you are in this group, these tips will surely help you find alternative options and feel more confident about starting your career in nursing.

- **Become proactive in finding employment opportunities**

If you missed opportunities to apply to graduate nursing programs, do not hesitate to contact the administrators or managers who are on nursing job advertisement pages. These people could be helpful in referring you to similar programs or opportunities that are also suitable for you as a new nursing graduate. There are always alternative options and pathways to gain experience, just keep searching and applying for any possible programs, placements, or jobs.

- **Accept working in less populated areas such as small towns**

There are generally more opportunities to practice and work in areas outside of major cities, as these rural areas are in higher demand for nurses compared to clinics in cities such as Melbourne. While this means moving and living in another place, it could greatly increase your chances of finding employment or any valuable work experience. After being employed in a rural area, it would be easier to receive job offers in a bigger city in the future.

Two important things to note are, it is perfectly acceptable to not be willing to relocate yourself just for employment. Many people are willing to, but it is reasonable to want to stay where you are if you are already surrounded by friends and family. Also, it is important to only relocate if you are offered a job opportunity. Do not pack up and move to a small town and only ask for employment after you move there. This could quite possibly lead to disappointment and large financial costs. It is best to take your time to think about these big decisions before taking action.

- **Get AHPRA registered**

If you are still struggling to find any nursing work experience or opportunities, it may be a good idea to apply through AHPRA for Graduate Registration. If your application is successful, then you will be considered a Registered Nurse (RN) which will give you an advantage in many job applications. This shows employers that you will have a sufficient understanding of all areas in nursing, meaning they will likely assume you are a committed and hard-working nurse.

AHPRA works with NMBA – the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia, to manage and approve these applications to become a Registered Nurse.

- **Do not be too picky when searching for your first nursing program or job**

The pickier you are, the less likely you will be to gain any valuable work experience. It is ok to apply to or accept a job that you know you don't want to work in forever. Every nurse has to start somewhere, and it takes time to achieve any long-term nursing goals you have set for yourself. It can be a good idea to apply to any local nursing opportunities as long as you feel you can handle the work involved in the opportunity being advertised.

- **Seek supportive environments**

After you are accepted for any kind of nursing work experience, try to recognise if your work environment is treating you fairly. For example, it would be great if you have lots of friendly and helpful coworkers who make the nursing job less stressful, and that would suggest a good working environment where you could possibly keep working for a long time. On the other hand, it should not be acceptable if your coworkers or superiors bully you in any way or treat you unfairly. If this ever happens, it might be advisable to see if you can make a formal complaint or see if you can find another nursing opportunity where you would be treated better.