

Title:

Factors To Consider When Choosing A Nursing School

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Summary:

Nearly every major city - and a lot of not so major ones - has at least one accredited nursing school. The school that you choose to attend could be a major factor in more than just the education you receive. Graduating from a well-known nursing school can put the finishing touches on your resume and guarantee you a higher starting salary, for instance. Choosing a nursing school associated with the right hospitals for your practice work can also boost your credentials - or ev...

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Article Body:

Nearly every major city - and a lot of not so major ones - has at least one accredited nursing school. The school that you choose to attend could be a major factor in more than just the education you receive. Graduating from a well-known nursing school can put the finishing touches on your resume and guarantee you a higher starting salary, for instance. Choosing a nursing school associated with the right hospitals for your practice work can also boost your credentials - or even help you choose a specialty that you'd never have considered. If you've decided on your career, but not your education, here are some basic considerations to help you make the decision of where to go to nursing school.

Location

The most basic location consideration is how far away from home you want to be, but that's just the tip of the iceberg. A nursing school located in a busy metropolitan area, for example, can offer unexpected benefits in outside training, mentoring and hospitals/venues in which to complete your practicum. On the reverse side, a smaller, local school can offer a far more personalized approach. Take stock of what's important to you to help you zero in on schools in your desired area.

Area of Study

Speaking of areas, that's another consideration. Do you have a yen to practice

pediatric oncology? Are you interested in learning the basics of patient care in a research facility? Is general nursing exactly what you want to do? Check course listings and certifications offered by the schools that you're considering in order to determine which teach the beyond-basics things you want to learn.

Accreditation

It is important that the school you choose be accredited by one of two national organizations for general nursing (The National League of Nursing Accrediting Commission or The Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education). If you are applying to a specialized program, there are separate accrediting organizations such as the Nurse Anesthetist and Nurse Midwife, The Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs, and The American College of Nurse-Midwives Division of Accreditation.

Most schools are approved by a state board, but that's not the same as accreditation. While it will enable you to sit for your NCLEX examination, it may prevent you from using the credits and going forward for continuing education, such as a BSN or master's degree. While it is possible to get a good education from a non-accredited school, you should thoroughly investigate it to be certain that their standards meet your needs.

Hands-On Experience

You want as much experience as you can get during your training time, and that's why it's important to check out the school's clinical rotation program. This is where some schools that are affiliated with major teaching hospitals may have a major advantage, particularly if they specialize in one of your particular interests. When you're evaluating nursing schools, ask how much time you'll spend in clinical rotation, and what disciplines and specialties you may have a chance to observe and participate in.

Examination Success

Perhaps one of the most important factors in considering a nursing school is the rate at which their students pass the NCLEX exam. Obviously, a high pass rate indicates that the school's students have been well prepared, but a low pass rate should be a huge red flag. Don't be shy about asking the school to provide you with their record of examination rates for the past few years.

Tuition

Finally, the amount of money that it will cost you to attend the school will have to come into play. And because tuitions in nursing schools can vary so much, your goal should be to get the absolute best education for the least amount of money. Unfortunately, the only way you'll be able to determine this is

by doing some good research into your potential schools.

Don't let money stop you from attending the school of your choice, though. Besides traditional routes of student aid, the nursing shortage over the past two decades has opened many opportunities for education funding. Ask about financial aid and work study programs, and be sure to check with local hospitals and organizations to find out if any offer scholarships for which you can apply.