



Interview Questions

General Questions

- Tell me about yourself.
 - Why did you choose the profession of nursing for your career?
 - Why did you choose this specialty?
 - Describe your best experience as a student nurse and why.
 - What are your strengths and weaknesses?
 - How do you deal with stressful work situations?
 - How would you handle a disrespectful doctor?
 - How do you try and create a great patient experience?
 - Give an example of the most challenging patient you had under your care.
 - What communication techniques have you used to ensure that patients and families feel informed and/or cared for?
 - How do you like to be recognized for your hard work?
 - What types of technology are you most experienced with?
 - How do you work with others on a team? Give some examples.
 - Describe some attributes of a new graduate nurse that you think you possess. Give some examples.
 - What makes you an ideal candidate for this position?
-

Behavioral Questions by Subject

Tips for handling behavioral interview questions:

- Describe a specific situation
- Identify hindrances or challenges
- Explain the action taken
- Discuss the results or outcome
- Evaluate or summarize what was learned

Accountability

- Explain a situation in which you made a mistake. What did you do about it?
- This position requires you to work flexible hours, weekends and holidays. Tell me about a time you were scheduled to work and it interfered with your plans. How did you handle it?

Adaptability

- Describe a time in which you had to adjust quickly to changes over which you had no control. What was the impact of the change on you? On your work or project?
- Tell me about a time when you had to be flexible, adjusting to the needs of a patient, family member or your team.
- Tell me of a time when you were confronted with a difficult change and discuss how you were impacted. How did you respond to the change?

- Tell me about your worst shift ever and how you handled it.
- Recall a time when your leader assigned you a task that you considered outside your job description. How did you handle the situation? What was the outcome?
- Give an example of when you were flexible and organized with a very sick and indigent patient.

Analysis

- Sometimes a small problem can be identified and fixed before it becomes a major problem. Give an example of when you have done this and what the result was.
- Tell me about a time when you had trouble completing an assignment due to a system or equipment failure that impeded your productivity. Describe the situation and how you resolved it.

Communication

- Tell me about a time when you received negative feedback on your performance by a co-worker and how you handled the situation.
- Give me an example of a positive experience you had when performing discharge education for a patient. Describe an example that was not efficient/effective and what you did about it.
- Give me an example of a difficult situation and how you dealt with the issue.
- Tell me about a time when you had to access the chain of command in regards to a patient care issue.
- You have a small disagreement with a co-worker. How would you resolve it independently of your immediate coordinator?
- Please share with us a recent conflict between you and a co-worker and how you handled it.
- Listening is a valuable tool. Describe a time when good listening skills helped you overcome a communication problem or gave you an opportunity to exceed a patient or family's expectations.
- Give an example of a time when you communicated successfully with another person, even when that individual may not have agreed with your point of view.

Conflict Resolution

- Give an example of a time when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with. Why was this person difficult? How did you handle him/her?
- Tell me about a time you had to resolve a conflict involving members of your team or a patient or family.

Continuous Learning

- Describe a time when you realized you needed additional skills or knowledge to be successful. What was your approach to gaining those skills?

Coping Skills

- Describe a time when you were faced with problems or stressful situations at work. How did you work through them?
- What types of things in your work have caused stress or made you uncomfortable? What did you do when those situations happened?
- Give me an example of a time when you had to cope with strict deadlines or time demands. How did you handle it?

Critical thinking skills

- What was your most difficult decision in the last year? What made it difficult?
- Tell me about a time you had to solve a problem with very little guidance or direction.

- Tell me about a situation that did not work out as expected. How did you handle it and what were your next steps?

Customer Service

- Tell me about a situation in which you had to deal with a patient or family member that was upset. What was the situation and how did you handle it?
- Describe a time when you exceeded a patient/customer/or family member's expectations. What was the situation and what did you do?
- When working with patients or family members, tell me how you create an environment that helps them feel informed and cared for.
- Tell me about a situation with a patient, family member or customer when you were not able to meet their expectations. What did you do?
- Tell me about a time when your patience and diligence with a patient, family, or customer helped achieve an outcome.

Diligence

- Describe a time when you had to do a job that was particularly uninteresting. How did you keep yourself focused and motivated to complete the task?

Diversity

- Tell me about a time when you worked with a patient, family member, or co-worker with a different background/culture than yours. What did you do to ensure that there was good communication between you? OR What steps did you take to make the family member, patient, or co-worker feel comfortable?

Excellence

- Give me an example of a time when your work was above standards.
- Give me an example of a time when your work was below the standard.

Exercising Good Judgment

- Give me an example of a time when you had to keep from speaking or making a decision because you did not have enough information.
- Describe a situation where you handled decisions under pressure or when time limits were a factor. What was the outcome?
- How would you handle a situation where you observe a co-worker stealing drugs? What do you base your actions on?

Exercising Initiative

- At times our work load may feel unmanageable. Describe a time when you recognized that you were unable to meet multiple deadlines. What did you do about it?
- When you are at work and have idle time available (are caught up with your patient load), tell me how you utilize that time. What other tasks did you perform to fill this time?
- In our department, you are often asked to do many things all at the same time (answer the phone; enter information into the computer, etc.) Tell me how you would decide what is most important and why.
- Describe a situation when a patient could not understand how to take his/her prescribed medications. What arrangements did you take to resolve the difficulty?
- Can you tell me about a time when you went beyond your supervisor's expectations in order to get the job done?

Goals

- What personal or work related goals have you established? How successful were you in accomplishing these goals? How did you know (measure) that you had achieved the goal?
- Tell me about a specific goal and how you measured your progress for the goal. How did you establish a goal baseline and targets?

Integrity/Honesty

- Tell me about a time you displayed honesty and integrity in a work situation.
- When was the last time you “broke the rules”? What was the situation and what did you do?
- Have you ever faced an ethical or value conflict in your job? Explain the situation and how you handled it.

Leadership

- Provide an example of a time when you took on the role of a leader in a committee or group. How did you lead the team and what were the outcomes?
- How have you recognized and rewarded others for their performance?
- What is the most important skill of a good leader? Describe a time when you effectively used this leadership skill in a job.

Motivation

- Tell me about a time you made your job interesting when the work became repetitious.

Negotiation

- Tell me about a time you reached an impasse with a third party (insurance company, vendor). What was the issue and what steps did you take to resolve the issue?

Patient Services

- Give me an example when you worked with a patient that was uncooperative. What skills/strategies did you use to achieve your patient service results?
- If you were asked to perform a task outside your comfort zone, how would you handle the task?
- This position will require you to work flexible hours, weekends and holidays. Tell me about a time you were required to work and it interfered with your plans. How did you handle it?
- Tell me about a time you found the vital signs or data you collected on the patient was not normal. What steps did you take and what was the outcome?
- Describe a situation in which you gave very good customer service, and what were the key components of that encounter.
- Tell me of a time you received poor customer service. How could it have been done differently?

Planning, Organizing and Prioritizing

- You have multiple tasks, each with the same due date. How do you handle multiple tasks at one time? How do you prioritize the tasks to insure that you meet the set due dates?
- How do you schedule your time and set priorities? How do you handle 20 things at once?
- Tell me about an experience in clinical when you had multiple patient situations. How did you prioritize?
- How do you organize your work to ensure that you are the most effective and productive?
- Describe a typical work day and how you prioritize your work.

Presentation Skills

- Share with me a time when you had to make a presentation.

Problem Solving

- Tell me about a time you made someone upset when you were doing what you were expected to do, and what was the outcome?
- Tell me about a situation where you “blew it”. How did you resolve or correct it?

Respect

- Provide an example of what you have done to protect the privacy of patients.

Teamwork

- Tell me about a time when you were frustrated with a co-worker and what did you do about it?
- Tell me about a time when you followed a co-worker who repeatedly left work incomplete. How did you deal with the issue?
- Describe a time when you worked a shift where there was an unexpected staffing shortage. How did you work with team members to prioritize and complete work?
- Describe how you were successfully able to contribute to a multidisciplinary team.
- Please share an example of a situation where your team disagreed with you. How did you respond? What was the final outcome?
- Tell about a time when you demonstrated excellent team member behaviors. What was the situation and what did you do?
- Describe how you contributed to the success of a team of which you were a member. Provide specific examples.
- Tell me about a time you put the needs of a group before your own when completing a task.

Work Standards

- Give me a specific example of how you will handle our policy on not using cell phones or other electronic equipment during work hours.
- Give me some specific examples of how you exhibit excellence (adaptability, respect or accountability) in your work.
- How do you determine if the work you do is a quality job? What are some ways that you have improved the quality of your own work?
- What are some of the problems you have encountered at a job? Which one frustrates you the most? What do you usually do about it?
- Tell me about a time when your evaluation of your performance differed from your manager's evaluation of your performance. What happened?

Work Environment

- Describe the best work environment you've experienced. Why was the particular environment so positive?
- Tell me about a work environment that was not ideal. What was the situation? What did you do? What did you learn?
- What previous job was the most satisfying and why? Provide specific examples of what made the job satisfying.
- What previous job was the most frustrating and why? Provide specific examples and what you did about the situation.

Closing Questions

- Is there anything else you would like to tell me about yourself or your experience?
- Why should we hire you?
- Do you have any questions for us? (See Interviewee Questions below.)

Interviewee Questions

Plan to ask 2-3 of these questions.

Orientation and Training

- What is the length of time of orientation?
- Will my orientation take place during the shift I'll be working?
- What are the expectations of new hires during their first six months on the job?
- What qualities do most successful nurses possess?

Working Environment

- What is the nurse-to-patient ratio?
- How long are the shifts – 8, 10, or 12 hours?
- How is scheduling handled? Is self-scheduling an option, or does someone else dictate the schedule?
- How long have most nurses been on the unit?
- Will I be on-call if I accept this position? If so, what are the conditions/requirements of on-call duty?

Management and Administration

- How would you describe your management style?
- How do you motivate employees?
- Is the administration open to suggestions that would improve patient care?
- What are the plans for future growth?
- Why should I want to work here?

Questions for After the Offer is Made

- What is the salary?
- Is special compensation awarded for overtime? What is the differential for second shift, third shift, and weekend work?
- What is the benefits package?
- Do you provide financial support for continuing education?
- Is there room for advancement? What is the career path?
- How do you reward employees for exceptional work?

Things to Avoid

- Don't ask questions that are clearly stated, such as on the website.
- Avoid questions that could be considered personal.
- Think of the interview as a conversation, not an interrogation.