



How to Write a New Grad Nurse Resume that Gets You Hired

Writing a new-grad nursing resume is a daunting task for most new-grads. The fear of having no experience and being unqualified leaves many wondering [what details to include](#). Moreover, many new-grads wonder how to structure their nursing resume in a way that best conveys their current skill-set and value to prospective employers. A well-crafted resume is key to landing your first position in a hospital setting.

5 Essentials for Creating the Ideal New Nurse Resume

#1 - Follow standard resume etiquette.

Don't get so concerned about the details of your new nurse resume that you forget the basics. Unless you are given specific guidance to the contrary, stick to generally accepted resume norms:

- Keep your resume to one page. You will see guidance that this isn't of concern anymore, but we hold that it's best to adhere with standard practice. Plus, your resume will likely be reviewed alongside a full nursing application, so there will be plenty of information provided to the hiring manager.
- Use "clean" fonts only, such as Times New Roman, Arial, or Calibri.
- Use only one font on your resume. If you need variation, use bold or italics.
- Do not include text smaller than 10 pt font or larger than 12 pt font (excluding headers).
- PROOFREAD. Your resume should be free of typographical errors and spelling mistakes.
- Save and upload/email your resume as a PDF so that your formatting doesn't change when it's opened on another computer.

Remember, whether you're considering font choice, language, layout, or something else, your resume should be professional and concise.

#2 - Layout matters.

First, the overall layout of your resume is important because if it's sloppy or unappealing, it's likely a nurse manager won't bother to consider what it actually says. Common wisdom holds that nurse managers spend about six seconds reviewing each resume. Consider reviewing resume templates to find one that has aesthetic appeal and a sensible layout.

Second, the sections you choose to include - and the order you put them in - is important. We recommend something similar to the following:

Headings that every new-grad nursing resume should include (Required)

Every new-grad resume should include the following headings (we'll discuss why we recommend these headings and provide tips for each below):

1. Summary/Objective

Your resume summary or objective should be a few sentences that give measurable goals. Articulate what you want from the nursing job you're applying for, and what you believe you bring to the table that makes you the right person for the job.

2. Licenses and Certifications

List out your **certifications** (and licences once you have it) with the full name of the license or certification followed by the parenthetical abbreviation (the reason for this will be detailed when we cover candidate screening software below), the full name of the issuing body, and the expiration date. For your nursing license, include the state and license number. Also make a note if your license has **compact nursing state privileges**.

Example for when you have your license:

2019 - Present Registered Nurse Licensure, Alaska
BLS, expiration date 11-12-2020

Licensure Number: 55552323555

3. Education

For your schooling, include all relevant education. This means you shouldn't include things like your high school diploma, but should include your Bachelor of Science in Biochem. Make sure to make it clear whether you have an ADN or a BSN (and don't use those acronyms without writing them out first!).

4. Clinical Rotations and/or Experience

Even the newest of new nurses has nursing experience!

Very few nursing schools lack a component of clinical rotations, practicums, or other training that involves hands-on nursing care. Maybe you weren't paid for it, but - THAT IS EXPERIENCE. Be sure to specify what kinds of experience, and build your action-word-packed bullet points (more on this below) to demonstrate how this experience 1) is indicative of the quality healthcare you're capable of, and 2) is going to help you succeed as an RN.

In the experience section, make sure to include details like type of work, start and end dates, weekly number of hours worked, name of the hospital or facility (plus city and state - "St. Joseph's" doesn't tell anyone anything), and name of your unit or department (Similarly, don't provide a "5S" unit label! Stick to names that will be meaningful to your audience - "Med/Surg," "Stepdown," etc.).

Experience

This is a great time to describe any experience you have had for the last few years. This could be fast food, serving or even babysitting. All of these provide skills that many nurse recruiters will look for.

Optional headings for your new-grad nursing resume

Each of the following headings should be considered and included based on whether or not you have relevant details to include:

1. Affiliations
2. Volunteer Activities
3. Honors and Awards
4. Skills Summary
5. Languages
6. Basic Contact Information

In this section, include your full name, email address (if you don't have one, get a professional-sounding email - not partynurse94@something.com), and phone number in a way that stands out. Sometimes you'll see full addresses included in this section - we highly recommend not including this for privacy reasons. Instead, just list your city and state.

New nurses sometimes decide to link to their social media here, particularly with LinkedIn. If you choose to do so, make sure your social media is professional. One questionable post or photo could take you out of consideration.

7. Activities

This section is definitely optional, but it's a chance to demonstrate to the hiring manager that a nursing career isn't just a job for you. Think of those leisure activities, enrichment projects, or volunteer hours that tie in to your passion for nursing. Maybe you subscribe to a nursing magazine? Go on medical missions trips? Have you joined a nursing association? Let the nurse manager see your commitment in this section.

Depending on who you are and what you've done so far, you might want to add other sections. If you've won relevant awards, speak a second (or third, or more) language(s), have relevant publications, you might decide to add a section to highlight these skills or accomplishments.

For all of these sections, consider listing items in reverse chronological order, as this will likely put your most intriguing information on top while keeping your narrative in a sensible order.

Advice from a Nurse Manager:

It is also important to include areas of clinical rotations/senior preceptorship -- if they are in the area of specialty to the job you want. For example, if you worked as a CNA in a related unit, it will let the manager know you have already experienced working in that particular specialty. Provide a skills summary, including computer skills, along with certifications pertinent to your nursing practice. For example, EKG; NIHSS; BLS; ACLS; IV certification etc." - Bonnette Villalba Novak, BSN, RN, PCCN-K (Clinical Account Manager at American Traveler)

#3 - Choose your language carefully.

The language that you choose to communicate your skills and experience is important. Try to use action words that show initiative instead of passive words or words that imply you were just following orders.

Example of Passive Language (BAD): Was responsible for caring for 5-10 patients per shift.

Example of Active Language (GOOD): Assessed and provided care for 5-10 patients per shift.

Additionally, using quantifiable words - as in, actual numbers or ranges - is always better than using general words like "many," "frequent," "all", or "a lot."

Example of General Words (BAD): Educated many parents on healthy lifestyle changes and proper medication administration to facilitate improved health and wellbeing for their child

Example of Quantifiable Words (GOOD): Educated more than 30 parents on healthy lifestyle changes and proper medication administration to facilitate improved health and wellbeing for their child

#4 - Tailor your resume to the specific employer and job posting.

One resume does not fit all nurse jobs. It's important to customize your resume for the specific position you're applying for. But don't despair! This doesn't have to be as bad as it sounds. Here's what we suggest -

Create a master resume that goes into excruciating detail on what you've done and where and to what extent (remember, using action-packed verbiage and lots of numbers!). Don't worry about length. The goal is just to have everything on there! Save this resume as a master, and then each time you apply for a new nurse job, you can save a version of this master and then start chopping.

Here are a couple of things to keep in mind as you do this:

1. You can include details about your previous hospital or healthcare facility employers to either build common ground with your new potential employer, or to impress them. What do we mean by this?
To build common ground - Maybe your last job was in a critical access hospital in Kansas, but now you're looking at a nursing job in New York City at a massive trauma center. You think there's no commonality here, but with a little research, you realize both facilities use Meditech EMR systems. This is something you will build into your bullet points.
To show off - If you have experience at a very small hospital (sell as: I can do anything, because I had to be versatile!) or at a very large hospital (sell as: it was fast-paced, and I kept up!), at a teaching hospital, trauma center, or **Magnet facility**, there's something you can pull into your experience to say, "Look at me, if I could this, I can do what you'll need me to do."
2. Take note of the job requirements. Does the job posting say, "Looking for a new nurse with a desire to hit the ground running?" Guess who you are! That's right,

new-nurse-with-a-desire-to-hit-the-ground-running. This can also help you get through any applicant screening software (see below).

#5 - Set yourself up for success with applicant screening software.

Many hospital employers use applicant screening software to weed out unqualified candidates before a person ever sees their resume. These systems aren't perfect, and are often just looking for key words and phrases.

There are two key ways you can adapt your resume to include your chances of screening success:

1. It's important to pull words and phrases directly from the job posting you're applying for and include them in your resume.

Example: Your actual title at your last nursing job was "Clinical Nurse II," but the current position you're applying for is looking for "Floor Nurse." Consider using this title instead, so that the software recognizes your experience as relevant to the current opening.

2. Include non-acronym and acronym versions of text, where possible.

Example: List "American Heart Association (AHA) Basic Life Support (BLS)" under your "Licenses and Certifications" section, so that whether the software is screening for "Basic Life Support" or "BLS," it will positively ID your resume.

Don't worry if you feel like your resume isn't exhaustive. First off, the **hiring manager is likely inundated** with candidates. She doesn't need to see every detail about you. She just needs the highlights! Plus, your nursing resume is nearly always accompanied by a fairly exhaustive standardized employment application that can fill in any gaps.

It's a good idea to update your resume intermittently so you don't have to recall all the various, diverse experiences you've had and skills you've learned later. And once you have a year or two of experience under your belt, you'll be ready to embark on a travel nurse career!

SAMPLE TO FOLLOW

myemail@email.com

Anytown, AK 12345

(123) 456-7890

Taylor Smith, RN

OBJECTIVE

Seeking a Registered Nurse position in an acute care setting. Special interest in Med/Surg and Telemetry units. Rated highly by supervisors and professors in ability to handle high-pressure situations, analytical skills, and building patient rapport.

EDUCATION

May 2019 Anytown College of Nursing, Anytown AK — Bachelor of Science of Nursing (BSN), May 2019

- Graduated with Honors

CERTIFICATIONS

2019 Basic Life Support, expiration date 11-12-2020

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Summer 2019 Anytown Medical Center, Anytown AK, Medical-Surgical Telemetry Unit — Nurse Intern

- Planned and provided nursing care to 10-12 patients per shift under the supervision of a Registered Nurse

June 2018 Indian Health Services, Anytown Reservation -- Nursing Externship

- Shadowed Registered Nurses and other medical professionals as they provided medical care to native communities, 20-45 patients served daily

STUDENT CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

2016 - 2019 Intensive Care Unit, Good Samaritan Hospital, Senior Clinical Practicum, 2019

Family Centered Nursing of Children, Children's Hospital of Anytown, Sep-Nov 2018, 10 hrs/wk
Nursing of Communities, Anytown Community Health Department, July 2017, 10-15 hrs/wk

- Worked in a critical care unit with ventilators, IV's and other critical care nursing procedures
- Administered medications as directed by physicians
- Provided education and after-care instructions to parents and their families

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS and ADDITIONAL SKILLS

- Sigma Theta Tau, Nursing Honor Society
- Student Nurse Association
- Medical Mission to Bangal, Bangal
- Alzheimer's Association and American Heart Association
- Bilingual - English, Spanish