

The
Student
Nurse's
Bible

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Introduction

This book is intended only as a self study guide for all the possible difficult situations that a student nurse may come across during their rewarding career as a nurse. The solutions are practically based and are only intended to be adapted around the situation a student nurse may find themselves at any given time. All names and places have been changed for confidentiality reasons and are fictional. However they are real in terms of a) they can occur and b) they do occur. If you want to just pick out the chapter that effects you at a given time please do so, but I strongly recommend that you read the book in its entirety so that you are sufficiently pre-armed and ‘in the know’ about anything unpleasant that may come your way (which I promise will)

Nb. This isn’t all Florence Nightingale stuff.

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Part One (Getting Started)

Chapter one

Applying for the Course

So you've finally made your mind up you want to become a nurse. You've tried working in shops behind bars pizza parlours factories. But now you've finally put an end to it and decided to become a nurse. But how do you apply to become a nurse? What does it involve and how much studying might one have to undertake. You may be saying I'm not an academic. I'm useless at English and Mathematics but I still want to become a nurse. Fear not most people who endeavour on the nursing course have precisely the same fears. That is they feel they are not up to the academic work. Especially as it is now university based, and the word university strikes fear into the hearts of many a fledgling student nurse. But universities have changed dramatically in the last two decades. They are no longer the bastions of the academic genii and have become the common hunting ground for the average person from working class backgrounds. The most important quality you can take into the course is not academic know how but *Desire*. That is a drive to succeed whatever it takes. If you have that quality then welcome aboard. This will take you far into the course and even over the finishing line. My advice at this stage is to

believe in yourself. Picture yourself now as a nurse in a nurses uniform. Whether this image comes from the television programme 'Casualty' or 'Holby City' it doesn't matter. The importance of visualising yourself as a nurse is the most important image you can have. It will generate a confidence and self belief in yourself like nothing else. And this confidence will pass on to others. Focus your mind now on the end result. You going about in your nurses uniform looking and feeling important, needed by others and respected by others. Visualising yourself as a nurse will increase your confidence and self belief a hundredfold.

There has never been a more exciting time to join the nursing midwifery profession. The number of roles is huge. As a nurse it is possible to work in hospitals, G.P clinics, nursing and residential homes, occupational health services and even the pharmaceutical industry. Nurses also work in prisons, university education on leisure cruise ships or for the armed forces. Nurses focus on the needs of the individual rather than specific illnesses or conditions. By providing care and support they enable individuals and their families to live more comfortable lives.

It is possible to take either a diploma or a degree course to qualify as a nurse. Education is in universities with placements in local hospitals and community settings. The course is 50% academic, 50% practical. The first year is the common foundation programme which will introduce you to the principles of nursing. You will then specialise in either Adult; Children's; Mental health; Learning disability or even Midwifery. Full time diploma courses last three years. Degree courses last three or four years. Midwifery education is also at diploma or degree level. You will learn theory or practical for pregnant women, delivering babies educating and supporting parents. Political and cultural issues affecting maternity care are also covered.

Adult nursing

The number of opportunities for those qualifying in the adult branch are immense. This could be working in hospitals, or even in the community. In peoples homes, attached to a health centre or in nursing homes. You will care for, support and educate people of all ages. Once qualified many nurses specialise in areas such as cardiology, infectious diseases, accident and emergency and obesity clinics, practice nursing at your local G.P, health visiting or even school nursing.

Children's Nursing

Those qualified in the children's branch of nursing work with the 0-18 year olds in a variety of places. From newly born baby care units to teenagers with physical and social problems. Children react to illness in many ways that are different from adults. This is why they need to be cared for and supported by specially trained nurses who understand their particular needs. Children's nurses also support, advise and educate particularly close relatives. Once qualified it is possible to specialise in areas inside of hospitals or in the local community such as , intensive care, drop in centres and school nursing.

Learning Disability Nursing

About 2-3% of the population has a learning disability. Nurses who qualify in this help those with learning disabilities to live independent and fulfilling lives. This revolves around working with people who live in supported accommodation. Typically 3-4 people with learning disabilities live together in flats or houses with 24 hour support. Some nurses work with people who require more intensive care for instance in hospitals or specialist secure units. Other specialise in areas such as epilepsy management or working with sensory impairment.

Mental Health Nursing

Mental health nurses work with G.P's, psychiatrists, social workers and others to co-ordinate people suffering from mental illness. The vast majority of people with mental health problems are nursed in the community. Nurses plan and deliver care for people living in their own home, in small residential houses or specialist hospital services. Some are based in health centres. Specialisms include Schizophrenia, Counselling, Forensics and substance misuse.

Midwifery

Many midwives carry their own caseload of women and work in the community. Others are midwives in hospital. There are opportunities to specialise in public health, women's health, and run services such as teenage pregnancy advice.

Funding

Those who undertake an NHS funded degree course will receive a means tested bursary. The grant allowance however will depend on your income or that of your partner/parents. Those who undertake an NHS funded diploma course receive a no means tested bursary which currently stands at £5,432 (£6,382 in London). Depending on your circumstances you may for extra allowances e.g. if you have children.

Further information is available from the following organisations:

**The NHS Students Grants Unit
Rm 212c Government buildings
Norcross
Blackpool
FY5 3TA**

**Tel. 01253 333 314(Degree enquiries)
Fax. 01253 333256**

**In Wales.
NHS Wales Student Award Unit
2nd floor
Golate House
101 St Mary Street
Cardiff
CF10 1DX**

**Tel 029 2026 1495
Fax. 029 2026 1499**

In Scotland.

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