



NURSE / MIDWIFE APPLICATION BASICS **101**

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Welcome to Nurse / Midwife Application Basics 101

Are you ready to take the next step in your nursing or midwifery career? This eBook is designed to equip you with the essential knowledge and practical tools to confidently navigate the application process for nursing and midwifery positions. Whether you're just starting out or aiming to step into a more specialized role, this guide will help you stand out in today's highly competitive healthcare landscape.

Inside, you'll find a comprehensive breakdown of what hiring managers look for—including how to meet key application requirements, avoid common mistakes, and present yourself as a top-tier candidate. You'll also learn how to craft a compelling CV, cover letter, and application response that truly reflect your experience, skills, and values.

Key Topics Covered:

- Essential information and strategies for applying to nursing and midwifery positions
- Understanding application criteria and how to meet them
- How to create a standout application package—including your CV, cover letter, and key selection criteria

In most healthcare settings, applicants are shortlisted based on a few critical elements:

- The content and quality of your cover letter
- Your experience in the specialty (and transferable skills)
- Your unique skills and personal attributes
- Relevant tertiary education and postgraduate qualifications
- Alignment of your values with the organization
- References that support your application

Each of these components plays a vital role in your success—and we'll guide you through how to highlight them effectively.

Let's get started and begin building a strong, standout application that opens doors to your dream role in healthcare.



HOW TO APPLY

One of the most crucial aspects of applying for a nurse or midwife position is the preparation of your application. This step is essential as it serves as the first impression potential employers will have of you. Taking the time to carefully craft and tailor your application to the specific job requirements can significantly increase your chances of landing an interview and ultimately securing the position.

Proper application preparation involves researching the healthcare facility you are applying to, understanding their values, mission, and culture. This information will help you align your skills and experiences with what the employer is looking for. Additionally, ensuring that your resume, cover letter, and any other required documents are error-free and well-written is crucial to making a positive impression on hiring managers.

By dedicating time and effort to preparing your application, you demonstrate your commitment to the profession and your suitability for the role. Ultimately, a well-prepared application can set you apart from other candidates and help you stand out in a competitive job market.

WHAT ARE EMPLOYERS LOOKING FOR?

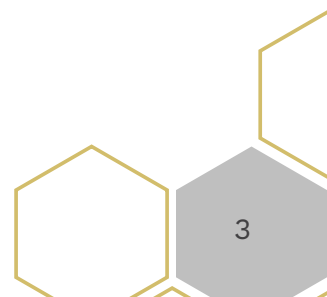


Whenever you apply for any position in nursing you need to be sure you highlight the areas that recruiters are using to shortlist applications.

All nursing positions are generally shortlisted using the following type of criteria:

- The content and standard of your cover letter (don't worry we'll go through this later)
- Experience in the specialty
- Experience with transferable skills
- Your skills and attributes
- Tertiary level education, post graduate certificates and Masters certificate generally highly desirable in many specialty areas, particularly for positions higher than base grade Registered Nurse Positions.
- Your values and how they align to the organisation
- References

Each of these components need to be highlighted in your CV and application. So lets break it down and start building your application.



CV PREPARATION

Your CV is your first point of contact with a potential employer. You use it to show your prospective employer why they should hire you and what you have to bring to the team. Spending time and energy on your CV is the first step in getting you where you want to be in your career. Your CV is your opportunity to demonstrate skills like attention to detail and to create a positive first impression. An accurate CV builds your credibility and creates trust by demonstrating honesty and integrity.

There are lots of available resources for preparing resume and cv's out there but we will be focusing specifically on nursing and how you can prep your CV so that it gives you an edge when applying for competitive nurse / midwife positions.

Let's start with a couple of do's and don'ts:

DO

- Keep it brief and to the point
- Use bullet points
- Use a profile statement that summarizes you
- Be specific about your skills
- Use information relevant to the position you are applying for
- Make it easy for the information to be found
- Use examples that align with the job you're applying for
- Use a template

DON'T

- Waffle
- Use photo's
- Add information from every job you have ever had
- Use generic information
- Lie
- Go over 2 pages in length

Structure:

Let's start with the structure of the CV

Your CV should include at a **MINIMUM**:

- **Profile statement** - always at the top of your CV
- **Contact details**- obviously essential but I have lost count of the number of applications with no way to contact the applicant
- **Education**- this should be listed in reverse chronological order
- **Clinical awards/certificates** e.g. BLS / PLS also in reverse chronological order
- **Student Placement history**: Reverse chronological order
- **Recent employment history**: Reverse chronological order

- ⦿ **Key Skills and Attributes-** these need to be relevant e.g. if applying for a nursing job and your hobby or skill is being a beer brewer this probably isn't relevant and might raise red flags whereas adding that you volunteer with a homeless charity probably is relevant.
- ⦿ **References-** Choose wisely and always have them available on your CV - You need to ask their permission first. This has multiple benefits, you can determine if they will give you a positive reference when you ask them.

PERSONAL STATEMENTS

Your professional statement is about you as a person and it's your chance to grab the recruiters attention. It needs to give them an idea of your personal qualities but also about your professional skill level.

This needs to be the first component of your CV and can be one of the most important aspects of your CV.

This needs to be a short statement and needs to give the recruiter an immediate impression of you as a professional.

Tips for a great personal statement:

- ⦿ Don't be vague or non-specific
- ⦿ Include your personal qualities
- ⦿ Include skills that make you stand out



Here is an example of a good personal statement (***This is not for you to copy but to give you an idea of the type of information that should be included in your personal statement.***)

Example:

Proficient, organised and self-driven senior RN with 15+ years' clinical management skills and pursuing new opportunities in healthcare management. Reliable problem solver seeking to lead nursing teams to provide top-quality patient service and support healthcare initiatives.

Why is this a good statement?

- ⦿ **Specific:** They have told the recruiter exactly what they want - "*pursuing new opportunities in healthcare management*".
- ⦿ **Personal Qualities:** These are clearly described "*Proficient, organised and self-drivenReliable problem solver*".
- ⦿ **Skill set:** they have succulently provided any overview of some of their stand out skills "*senior RN with 15+ years' clinical management skills*".

Jane
Doe

Registered Nurse

About Me/Profile Statement

this your section to give a brief overview of your personal qualities and your professional skills.

Be specific: include your personal qualities e.g. enthusiastic/driven; your professional skillset e.g., advances clinical specialist and a brief statement of why you are perfect for the job.

Make sure your contact details are correct
Make sure email handle is professionally appropriate

+123-456-7890

hello@professionallyappropriate.com

123 Anywhere St., Any City

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Employment history should be reverse chronological order and detail your overall role and some specifics about what you achieved in that role. They should be specific to you as a person and not about the unit itself.

Below are some samples for a suggested structure.

EXAMPLE 1

September 2019 – Present

Registered Nurse – Unit ABC - ABC Hospital

- Primary role in activities of daily living for patients
- Available to work all shifts in the roster

Key achievements in the role:

- Advanced Life Support Competency
- Involved with Comprehensive Care Audit in 2022
- Quality Improvement Initiative - Pressure Injury Prevention “turn team” (can provide more information if required).
- Unit level health and safety representative

This Section should make up the bulk of your CV No more than half a page per-role

Work Experience

| | |
|------------|---|
| 2019 -2024 | Registered Nurse Unit ABC, ABC Hospital. |
| 5 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Use bullet points to detail your key responsibilities No more than half a page perRoleList added extras such as quality activitiesList awards achieved |
| 2017-2019 | Registered Nurse Unit ABC, ABC Hospital |
| 2 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Be specificList any portfolio's you heldList any compliments receivedAny specialist skills that were requiredUse examples to elevate your statements |
| 2015-2017 | Registered Nurse Unit ABC, ABC Hospital |
| 2 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Don't go back to roles that are older than ten years in this level of detail.They can be mentioned but don't require bullet points.A role title and years in the role will suffice.You can add as asterisk and state full details can be provided if required. |

EDUCATION (ENROLLED AND COMPLETED)



It is best to place your academic qualifications, especially your tertiary education, at the top of your CV, following your personal statement. All enrolments that are yet to be completed should be listed with all completed qualifications with your estimated date of completion listed. Omitting this information may lead to the assumption that you are not currently enrolled or have not completed your education. While this may seem obvious, it is surprising how frequently this crucial detail is overlooked and this may be a pivotal piece of information for the role you are applying for. For example if you are applying for a Nurse Practitioner or Nurse Practitioner Candidate position and are yet to complete the qualifications.

Any tertiary education should be added, particularly your under graduate degree, post graduate and Masters qualifications, which are often highly desirable shortlisting criteria for positions above base grade level in specialty areas.

Most recruiters don't require your level of distinction for tertiary qualifications however if you achieved high levels this may show the recruiter your commitment to your development.

Much like your employment history, which we covered in the previous section, your education should also be in reverse chronological order with the most recent listed first.

Most recruiters aren't interested in your secondary school education so there is no need to include this and it will only take up valuable space given your entire CV should not exceed 2 - 3 pages.



This Section should be in reverse chronological order

Education

2022-2024 **Bachelor of Nursing - Enrolled* (finishing Dec 2024)**

- Just one line about the university is sufficient e.g. ACU
- *if enrolled, mark your estimated date of completion
- you can add your mark received if you wish but it is not required

Clinical Awards/accreditations/Professional Development Learning (PDL)

This section includes clinical courses e.g. BLS / PLS / ALS etc as well as any personal awards such as rising star awards etc.

Ensure you only list ones that are relevant for nursing positions in this section.

Don't use others that may polarise the recruiter but that relate to your personal interest like “psychic accreditation”, “most beers drank in 10mins awards” etc.

Don't use clinical abbreviations.



Clinical Skills/PDL

- competent basic life support
- Central Venous Access Device
 - Competent
- Intra Venous Cannulation
- Competent Advanced Life Support
- Competent

KEY SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES

This section is a list of your personal skills and attributes and can often be difficult for a lot of people to list as this is the part where you need to be able to sell yourself. Therefore for this section you need to be confident about what you have to offer. These are your core skills and personality traits that you want to demonstrate separately to your roles achievements. They are the skills that you bring to the table regardless of what role you are applying for. This is your transferable skillset.

ACTIVITY

1. Have a go at jotting down 20 things you bring to the table - If you can think of a time when you have displayed each of these skills / attributes this will assist you in owning that trait.
2. Now prioritize these in order of importance.
3. Once you have 20, start eliminating traits one at a time until you reach your top 10. These will go on your CV.
4. Now work on expanding and elaborating your top 10 so that you have the perfect list for your CV.

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REFEREES

You need to list at least 2 referees on your CV. If you have more then you can make a note on the CV such as “*further referee’s available on request”.

It’s crucial to seek permission of your chosen referees to confirm their willingness to provide a reference. This is important for several reasons, including ensuring they can offer a positive endorsement. Additionally, recruiters often request referee reports before interviewing candidates, so it’s essential to keep your referees informed to prevent any awkwardness or offense.

The best choices for referees include:

- Your line manager is essential. Not listing your line manager can be a red flag for recruiters, who may suspect an issue and will likely request your line manager’s details anyway.
- Someone that is a higher level than the one you are applying for and preferably in the same field you are applying for is best. If the position you are applying for is in a new specialty area then someone you work with closely in your current role but is also a level higher than yourself is valuable.

Ensure you have accurate details for your referee, and use their business contact information rather than personal details, unless they have explicitly given them to you for this purpose. Many individuals prefer not to be contacted on their private lines for work-related matters. If your referee is someone you know personally and you already possess their private contact information, it’s best to confirm with them which details they would prefer to have listed.

Always seek permission before listing a referee.

References



Name Surname

Job position, Company Name

Phone: +123-456-7890

Email: hello@reallygreatsite.com

Name Surname

Job position, Company Name

Phone: +123-456-7890

Email: hello@reallygreatsite.com

EXAMPLE CV TEMPLATE

Now lets put it all together and build your CV. Using the example below as well as what you have learnt about each of the sections to draft your CV.

For an easy to use template to use, we recommend [canva.com.au](https://www.canva.com). They have plenty of templates to choose from and you can create an account for free.

Jane Doe
Registered Nurse

Make sure your contact details are correct
Make sure email handle is professionally appropriate

+123-456-7890
hello@professionallyappropriate.com
123 Anywhere St, Any City

About Me/Profile Statement
this your section to give a brief overview of your personal qualities and your professional skills. Be specific: include your personal qualities e.g. enthusiastic/driven, your professional skillset e.g. advances clinical specialist and a brief statement of why you are perfect for the job.

This 1-page example of CV sections and content should be elaborated to be approx. 2 pages long.

- The sections can be moved around as you see fit.
- These sections represent the minimum content required.

Don't use clinical abbreviations.

Clinical Skills/PDL

- Non-Invasive Ventilation competent
- Central Venous Access Device Competent
- Intra Venous Cannulation
- Competent Advanced Life Support
- Competent

Key Skills/Attributes

- Core Skills (not clinical)
- personality traits that you want to highlight
- Transferable qualities
- Excellent time management skills
- Patient focused
- Adaptable
- Logical problem solver
- Advanced interpersonal skills

These skills should be re-inforced in your letter

Education

This Section should be in reverse chronological order

- 2022-2024 **Master of Nursing – Research- Enrolled***
 - Just one line about the university is sufficient e.g. ACU
 - *If enrolled, mark your estimated date of completion
 - you can add your mark received if you wish but it is not required
- 2011-2014 **Post Graduate Certificate in Oncology Nursing**
One line-As Above
- 2009-2011 **Bachelor of Nursing**
One line-As above

Work Experience

This Section should make up the bulk of your CV No more than half a page per-role

- 2019 -2024 **Registered Nurse| Unit ABC, ABC Hospital.**
5 years
 - Use bullet points to detail your key responsibilities No more than half a page per
 - Role
 - List added extras such as quality activities
 - List awards achieved
- 2017-2019 **Registered Nurse|Unit ABC, ABC Hospital**
2 years
 - Be specific
 - List any portfolio's you held
 - List any compliments received
 - Any specialist skills that were required
 - Use examples to elevate your statements
- 2016-2017 **Registered Nurse|Unit ABC, ABC Hospital**
2 years
 - Don't go back to roles that are older than ten years in this level of detail
 - They can be mentioned but don't require bullet points.
 - A role title and years in the role will suffice.
 - You can add an asterisk and state full details can be provided if required.

References

Always seek permission before listing a referee.

| Name Surname | Job position, Company Name | Phone: +123-456-7890 | Email: hello@greatsite.com |
|--------------|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Name Surname | Job position, Company Name | Phone: +123-456-7890 | Email: hello@greatsite.com |

Awards

ABC Hospital
The Nurse of the Year

COVER LETTER PREPARATION

An effective cover letter and application response to criteria can be a tipping factor for your application. An effective cover letter and/or criteria response should be customized for the position you are applying for, should be concise and to the point and should paint a clear picture of your skills and abilities with reference to the job that you are applying for. A strong application response can be the difference between getting an interview and not getting an interview.

So let's have a look at how to structure a strong cover letter for your application.

Ensuring that your cover letter is structured professionally is crucial to demonstrate to recruiters your professionalism and effective written communication skills.

So let's break down the different parts of a professional letter structure.

1. Header - Write the recipient's name, title and address (this would be the hospital). Make sure to spell it right! Spelling a recruiters name wrong is offensive and a quick way to be placed in the "no" pile, particularly if the recruiter has a large amount of applications (which is often the case with base grade positions).

2. Salutation - In a professional letter structure, the standard salutation is “Dear.” Begin your letter with “Dear [recipients full name]” and a comma following their name. You may choose to address them with an honorific such as Ms, Mrs, Mr, Dr prior to their full name.
3. Body - The body paragraphs take up the bulk of the letter and can be broken down into 3 parts:
 1. An introductory paragraph that states the letter purpose and introduces the author
 2. One or more middle paragraphs that discuss the main content of your letter, in this case is your relevant experience etc.
 3. A final paragraph that restates the letter’s purpose and offers a thanks such as “*thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you*”
4. Closing - the close of the letter should be simple and professional. Sign off’s such as the following are acceptable:
 1. Sincerely
 2. Kind Regards
 3. Respectfully
5. Signature - Always sign the letter and place your full name and title, such as “*Jane Doe, Registered Nurse*”



Your cover letter must be well-crafted, showcasing your excellent communication skills and summarizing why you are the ideal candidate. It should enhance your CV, and if a written response to selection criteria is requested by the health service, it should align with that as well. We will cover this in the next section.

- Here are some general tips for the body of your cover letter:
- Start with a short but strong introductory paragraph. This should introduce them to you with a brief sentence as to why you are the perfect candidate, much like the introduction to an assignment (only much shorter).
- Your main paragraphs should highlight your
 - skills
 - Experience (including examples)
 - Accomplishments
 - Goals
- You should detail how you align with the organisation and their values. This is where good research of the organisation you are applying for comes in very useful

APPLICATION / CRITERIA RESPONSE PREPARATION

Now that you have completed your CV and cover letter it's time to work on your response to the application.

Many nursing roles will require a specific response to set of criteria in addition to a cover letter which is a bit more generic. The hiring health service will usually specify this stating something like "Please provide a two page response on how you will meet the key requirements of the role" or "please detail how you meet our organisational values in two pages or less".

This is your chance to shine! It's also your chance to show that you can follow instructions clearly.

Please make sure you follow all of their specific instructions including format and length.

Before you start to write your application letter there are some fundamental things you should do.

- ⦿ Examine the position description (to give you an idea of what the role is)
- ⦿ Call the panel chair / hiring contact - This gives them a chance to recognise your name which is particularly important if the position is popular and has a high number of applicants. This will help you stand out from the crowd.
- ⦿ Questions you should ask the hiring manager include:
 - ⦿ "What type of person are you looking for?"
 - ⦿ "What are the key skills that you're looking for?"
 - ⦿ "What are the key priorities for your unit at the moment?"
- ⦿ If you get the opportunity during the call, tell them a bit about yourself.

After you've made the call, it's time to research before you start writing.

RESEARCH



Most healthcare organisations have their own set of values so use this knowledge to tailor your application. For this reason don't use the same application for different health services. It's a professional role, your application needs to reflect this. You have to get the tone of your response right for the specific organisation you are applying for. You are trying to find out about how you will fit into this organisation and unit. How do you align with it? What makes you the right fit? The best applications and responses paint a picture about why they want to work in the unit specifically. It makes the application stand out from the rest and makes the recruiter want to pay more attention to the application as a whole.

Here is a list of suggested places to do your research about the health service you are applying for:

- LinkedIn
- Online - Web pages
- Social Media outlets
- Strategic plans (usually published online particularly for public organisations)
- Organisational profiles e.g. QLD Nurses & Midwifery Union (QNMU), Health Service Profiles. This will tell you about the unit to which you are applying. They are full of information and you can request this of the unit when you contact the hiring manager before you apply.

What are you looking for?

- What is this organisation about?
- What is important to them?
- What are their plans? Use this to inform how you will fit those plans
- Any other interesting information e.g. that align with your goals (This organisation has a major expansion in their division of surgery and I want to be a theatre nurse so this aligns with my goals)
- Generally you are trying to understand what boxes you need to tick when writing your letter and /or response.

KEY SKILL REQUIREMENTS / VALUES RESPONSE

General Tips for Key skill requirements / values responses:

- Pay attention to what they are actually asking
- Structure your response under their exact headings as they have requested (this shows you have read the instructions). This is particularly prominent for public organisations.
- Emphasize your personal value - hiring managers are looking for problem solvers and people with a “can do” attitude.
- Use examples to move your claims from hypothetical to actual. Anyone can write, “I am an effective communicator” but without any examples to back that up it’s just a statement. Follow this statement with an example of how you achieve this and close out the example with the outcome of the incident / situation.
- Use your knowledge about what you found out during your research. Eg. what type of person they are looking for etc
- Pay attention to formatting including font and paragraph spacing
- Don’t be afraid to use bullet points (this might help you fit everything in depending on the length you have been given)
- Pay attention to the file name you have saved it under E.g. Muir’s application 5 probably isn’t as professional as M.WYNNE Key Skill Attribute Response RN ABC Hospital
- Make sure to have a section (or small paragraph) to focus it on the future if you can, what you want to achieve and learn (this demonstrates a commitment to the unit as well as describing your previous experience).

One more thing is to consider the things you need to get across in your application that are not related to your clinical skill set. These are the “other” things managers will be looking for in their applicants regardless of the job. These are important to get across in your application in addition to your skill set. Your CV has all of your clinical capability. This is your chance to shine light on your other skills and personal qualities that add to your clinical skills.

What are hiring managers looking for (aside from clinical skill)

- Adaptability
- A willingness to learn new skills
- Problem solving ability
- Enthusiasm
- Authenticity
- Maturity (in attitude not age)
- Professionalism

Suggested strategies for outlining your attributes:

- Adaptability: Most recent in health is covid. How did you adapt to the rapid change?
- Willingness to learn: How have you demonstrated this? Eg. did ALS in my own time or registered for PDL in reading ECG's because that was something I wasn't comfortable with.
- Problem Solving: What is your approach? Are you Calm? Are you Logical? Include examples
- Enthusiasm: Make it clear why you want this particular job.
- Authenticity: Mind your tone, don't go overboard with flattery or say anything that's not true or you don't mean.
- Maturity: this refers to your attitude. Eg. Not getting involved in unit politics
- Professionalism: pay attention to the language in your letter. Does it convey professionalism? Any examples to reflect this?

