Nurse

Job description
Nurses work with a multidisciplinary team across a wide range of healthcare settings and in different roles. They provide preventive, curative, rehabilitative and supportive nursing care to individuals, families or groups and play an important role in health promotion. The emphasis is on caring, communication and understanding the patient's experience of illness.

Work activities
- Observing and reporting on patients' condition
- Providing nursing care, e.g., preparing for operation, caring for wounds and intravenous infusions
- Recording pulse and temperature
- Administering drugs and other medicines
- Assisting with tests and evaluations
- Providing support to patients and relatives.

Work conditions
Travel: not a normal part of the working day except for community/public health nursing and those working for agencies.

Working hours: Depending on the place of work, hours might include a shift or rota system to cover early mornings, evenings, nights, weekends and bank holidays.

Location: mainly in towns or cities throughout the country.

Opportunities for self-employment: possible.

Typical employers
- Public and private hospitals
- Nursing homes
- Residential care centres
- College health centres
- Cruise ships
- The prison service
- Defence forces
- Nursing agencies
- Industrial companies and other health department of large organisations.

Career development
Nurses can compete for promotional posts or pursue specialist posts in community nursing, teaching, research or hospital management. Continuing professional education is important for career development.

Salaries
Salaries will vary depending on employer.

Entry requirements and training

Specific degree subjects required
A Pre-Registration Honours Bachelor of Science (BSc) degree in one of the following areas is required:
- Children's and General Nursing (Integrated: RCN & RGN)

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- General Nursing (RGN)
- Intellectual Disability Nursing (RNID)
- Psychiatric Nursing (RPN).

Postgraduate study

Continuing professional development following registration is essential for nurses in order to acquire new knowledge that will enable them to practise effectively in an ever-changing health care system. Children’s nursing (not integrated with general nursing) programmes and midwifery programmes are also offered at post-registration level. Nurse tutor programmes, public health nursing programmes and nurse prescriber programmes are offered only at post registration level.

The Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisations’s (INMO) Professional Development Centre (PDC) provides high quality up-to-date programmes for their members.

The National Council for the Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery have developed an online database of courses as a resource for nurses intending to engage in continuing professional development.

Specific entry requirements

Evidence of good health and good character may be required.

Training

Nursing students normally receive a combination of theoretical and clinical instruction. During this period the student is not a paid employee of the health service. The first clinical placement occurs early in the programme, usually within three months of commencement. A continual 36-week rostered clinical placement (internship) takes place during the fourth year during which the student is a paid employee of the health service.

Tips for applications

Think about which of the branches of nursing you wish to study.

Skills and qualities

- Excellent people skills and the ability to relate well to people from a wide range of cultures and backgrounds
- Ability to remain calm in difficult situations
- Excellent attention to detail
- Confidence to make decisions and work independently, as well as part of a multidisciplinary team
- Physical fitness and emotional strength
- Empathy, patience and kindness.

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