

Questions to ask during your nursing interview

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The interview is nearly over. You've done your best to answer their questions intelligently and now it's your turn. Don't pass up the opportunity – ask the right questions and it could land you the job.

'You're probably tired of talking, and this might seem like the least important part of the interview, but never underestimate the importance of asking questions,' says Ann Griffin-Aaronlahti, Managing Director at [Professional Connections](#) nurse staffing agency.

'The questions you ask should demonstrate your interest in the position, while helping you gauge whether the job is a good match for your skills, goals, personality and lifestyle.'

There's another good reason to ask carefully considered questions, as Nick Simpson, CEO of nursing agency [MSI Group](#), explains. 'Asking insightful questions will make it evident that you are engaged and have done your background research. Impress them with your knowledge of the role and it will help you stand out as a candidate.'

So what should you ask? Here are five questions you should consider posing during your nursing interview and what they reveal about you.

1. What development opportunities are there?

Asking what they offer in terms of continuing professional development shows that you're committed to learning and adding further value to the organisation.

'If they have a mentoring program, ask how nurses are kept informed about new initiatives, projects and training opportunities, as this will demonstrate your eagerness to continue to develop professionally,' says Nick.

'If they don't have a formal preceptorship scheme in place, can they give an example of how they have offered informal training or development to a nurse at a similar level? If they can't give an example, you might want to re-consider whether the role is right for you.'

2. What are your expectations of new hires during their first six months?

Will you be given a lengthy period of training and orientation or will you be expected to hit the ground running? Asking the employer what they expect of you within six or 12 months shows that you're focused on performance.

The interviewer's answer will also give you an idea of their priorities. 'For example, if they expect you to improve communication within the multi-disciplinary team, you will know what kind of challenges to expect. Don't be afraid to ask for specifics on department targets. Do you feel comfortable with the pace of work and their expectations?' says Ann.

3. What are the main challenges currently facing the department?

Asking about the main challenges of the role shows that you have realistic expectations, but why not go one step further? Asking about the wider challenges facing the department or organisation shows your ability to see your role in the context of the bigger picture.

If you came across some interesting information in your research, don't let it go to waste. For example, you might ask: 'I believe that you've recently introduced a new... What impact do you expect this to have on the ward/unit/organisation?' The interviewer's answer may reveal how your role could be affected by forthcoming changes.

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4. Could I look around the unit and speak with another member of staff in my grade?

Requesting to meet other staff on the unit, or asking about the multidisciplinary team, shows that you're aware of the importance of team dynamics.

'If you're given the opportunity to meet current members of the team, you might ask how long they've been on the unit, what the staff-to-patient ratio is, and what they consider the work culture to be like,' says Ann.

5. If I were to be offered the position, when would you want me to start?

The interviewer should tell you the next steps in the process – for example, if they will be holding second interviews, a panel interview or a test centre assessment day.

'If they don't offer the information, it's appropriate to ask when you might hear back and when you would be expected to start, if they were to offer you the position,' says Nick.

'You might also ask if there's anything you can do to prepare for the role should you be successful. This shows that you are self-motivated and keen to get the job.'

6. Questions to avoid

Finally, just as asking the right questions can help you get you the job, asking the wrong ones can count against you.

'It is important that you have researched the hospital and ward. Asking "What sort of ward is this?" shows you haven't bothered,' says Ann.

Other questions that are best avoided include: "If I get the job when can I take annual leave?", "What is the hospital accommodation like?" and "What's the maximum number of days I can take each year?"

'Don't ask questions that will make the interviewer repeat themselves, either because the information was already given in the job description or discussed earlier in the conversation. If the interviewer has to go over material again, it might appear as though you haven't fully prepared or weren't listening,' warns Ann.

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