Nurse

Nursula (aka Nurse Ursula)

Before she graduated from university she was known as Ursula. Now she’s a fully qualified nurse which gives her unrivalled magical powers as the almighty NURSULA!

Like Nursula, you nurture others as a natural instinct. You’re the first on the scene when a friend is sick or injured, offering to (quite literally) nurse them back to good health. Tolerance is your middle name; proven by the fact you’ve repeatedly suppressed the urge to choke your younger brother every time he hides your school shoes (which is a daily occurrence). White is a staple colour in your wardrobe, disinfecting benches is on your hobby list and you think Carla should be the lead character in Scrubs. In group situations, you assume responsibility and leadership, using your quality communication skills to make sure everyone does their part. You’re fair but you’re tough which means the physical and mental challenges of being a nurse are child’s play for you.

What does a nurse do?

Registered nurses care for sick and injured people alongside doctors and other health practitioners. Most commonly found in hospitals, you will also find nurses in a range of other settings such as rehabilitation centres, community mental health centres and nursing homes.

As a nurse, you can specialise in an area that interests you including: emergency, trauma, mental health, aged care, cancer/oncology, critical care, community health, and rural and remote health.

Tasks a nurse might do include:

- giving medicines and other prescribed medical treatments to patients
- monitoring and adjusting medical equipment used in patient care
- preparing patients for surgery and caring for them afterwards
- providing first aid, performing routine physical examinations, giving advice about health matters
- maintaining patient records
- supervising nursing support staff and other hospital staff.
What are my chances of finding a job as a nurse?

Your chances of finding a job as a nurse are very high. In fact, there are nurse shortages right across the country. According to the Australian Government Job Outlook website, jobs for nurses are expected to keep growing between now and 2017. Nurses are among the top 10 Health and Community Services occupations in Australia which are expected to experience the largest amount of employment growth between now and the year 2032. At last count (February 2014), there were approximately 67,500 nursing jobs in Queensland and 309,400 jobs nationally.

How much will I earn as a nurse?

According to the Job Outlook website, full-time registered nurses can expect to earn an average of $1222 per week (before tax and not including employer superannuation contributions).

How do I become a nurse?

There are a few paths you can travel to become a nurse. You could start with a:

• Certificate III in Health Services Assistance and become an assistant nurse
• Diploma of Nursing and become an enrolled nurse
• Degree in Nursing and become a registered nurse

Each qualification can be done independently or help you to progress to the next. For example, completing the Diploma of Nursing will count towards one year of your university degree, or you could enroll directly in the degree.

To be a registered nurse you will need to register with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia. For all levels of nursing you will need to get a National Police Certificate, a First Aid Certificate, a Blue Card and a range of immunisations.

If you choose to study for an OP at school, you should consider taking biology and chemistry as a good foundation for university studies.

Completing a health related Certificate III (such as the Certificate III in Health Services Assistance or the Certificate III in Basic Health Care) while you’re still at school is also an excellent way to work towards a career as a nurse. It is possible to obtain a ranking from the Certificate III that will make you eligible for the nursing courses at some universities.

Talk to your school's VET coordinator and/or your guidance counsellor to find out more before you make a decision about which path suits you best.

For more information

Visit www.workforce.org.au
Speak to your school’s VET coordinator and/or guidance counsellor

References

www.myfuture.edu.au  www.myskills.gov.au
www.careersaustralia.edu.au
www.graduatecareers.com.au