

**Johns Hopkins University
School of Nursing**

**Career Action Plan
Full-time Masters Students**

With so many opportunities for nurses, effective planning is critical to identify and pursue career choices that are the best fit. By evaluating personal interests, skills, values and preferences, you will be able to clarify what will be most rewarding. A thoughtful, management plan will help you achieve it. Career management is a lifelong process, so don't wait until the semester you plan to graduate to identify and pursue your professional goals.

Year 1 - Fall term

___ Set up a meeting with your academic advisor. Let him/her know what your interests are (remember, they may change over time as you are introduced to new opportunities). Your advisor can also help you network with other nursing professionals who have experience in these areas.

___ Meet with the SON career consultant to learn about resources available to you.

___ Visit the SON career resources web site at www.son.jhmi.edu/resources/career/center.

___ During your courses, explore each area as a potential career. What appeals to you about this area? What is not attractive to you? Why?

___ Assemble and begin to use your career binder. Include information about careers of interest, summaries of your clinical rotations and courses, potential employers, networking contacts, etc. (The complete binder is available on the SON Career Resources website.)

___ Review the information on nursing competencies and emotional intelligence on the SON Career resources website. How are you stacking up? What are your strengths? What are areas of opportunity for you?

___ Get to know your classmates. Find out about their career goals. Not only will you make some great friends, you'll also begin to develop a professional network that will grow throughout your career.

___ Join professional nursing associations such as NSNA (National Student Nurses Association) and MANS (Maryland Association of Nursing Students) as well as clinical specialty and/or management organizations. Become active in SON student organizations as well. Take leaderships roles.

___ Collect information on areas of nursing or organizations that appeal to you. You don't have to do much with it now, just gather it for review at another time. Be open to all possibilities. Don't be concerned with deciding yet, you'll have time to do that later.

___ Attend the SON Career Fair to learn what's available now. You may find one or more organizations of great interest to you. You'll want to follow up with these organizations when you are ready to apply for summer positions and employment upon graduation.

___ Develop a list of potential networking contacts.

___ Begin to create and nurture relationships with your networking contacts. Ask in what organizations they are members. Share articles that you think may be of interest to them.

___ Begin to identify your career goals. How will your degree help you achieve your goals?

___ At the end of the semester, take some time to reflect upon what you learned about yourself and your course. Write it down, using the summary forms on the career binder web site.

Year 1 – Spring term

___ Meet with the SON career consultant to discuss your interests and map out a plan.

___ Update your resume including a section on selected coursework (in the education section). Have it critiqued at the Career Resource Center. Begin by visiting the SON career website. Download the resume guide and sample resumes. (www.son.jhmi.edu/resources/career/center)

___ Draft a cover letters. Visit the SON career web site for samples.

___ Visit the SON career resource web site to download the Interview guide. Develop responses to key questions.

___ Complete a course summary form after each rotation (section 5 of the SON career binder). Use this opportunity to reflect upon what you learned about yourself and the course content.

___ If you have time, consider volunteer opportunities to gain new skills.

Year 2 – Fall term

___ Evaluate your summer experience. What did you learn about the nursing profession? What did you learn about yourself?

___ What are career goals that you'd like to accomplish this year? (Remember, the most effective goals are SMART – Specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic and time-specific.)

___ Will you work part-time as you complete your program? If so, identify opportunities of interest and meet with the SON career consultant to map out a plan. Begin this process as soon as you return.

___ Continue to build your network. Include professors, classmates, preceptors, and professionals you've met during your rotations and volunteer experiences, among others.

___ Begin to write a description of the nursing position that you would like to pursue. What do you want to be sure to include? What is really important to you? Where do you want to live? In what environment would you like to work? Continuously update this section in your binder (section 4) as you become clearer about your career goals. You can use this description as a benchmark for opportunities that come your way.

____ Plan to attend the SON Job Fair. Visit the SON career website for information on preparing for a job fair. Attend the Preparing for a Job Fair workshop.

____ Complete a clinical rotation summary form after each rotation (section 5). Use this opportunity to reflect upon what you learned about yourself and that specialty.

Year 2 – Spring term

Congratulations!! You're almost there! Because of the good work you've done to this point, you should have a clear understanding of what you want to pursue upon graduation.

____ Write an effective resume incorporating experience you've gained from your courses as well as other professional and volunteer activities.

____ Identify your professional references—the people who know you and your work well and would be to describe your contributions, skills, and knowledge with enthusiasm. Ask them if they would be willing to write letters of reference. Offer to meet with them and/or send your resume to refresh their memories about your interests and skills. Tell them where you are applying and the types of positions you are seeking. Be sure to send thank you notes to all your references after you have accepted a position—include information about what you will be doing.

____ Identify positions of interest and apply for them regularly. Be sure to follow-up to let hiring managers know that you are interested.

____ Practice your responses to typical interview questions. Visit the SON Career resources website for more information.

____ Schedule share days to learn more about the opportunities in which you are interested.

____ Speak to people in the field—conduct informational interviews to learn more about a profession of interest.

____ Join professional organizations in your area of interest. Attend programs—get to know those working in the field.

____ Complete a clinical rotation summary form after each rotation (section 5). Use this opportunity to reflect upon what you learned about yourself and that specialty.

____ Evaluate the offers that you've received and decide which is best for you based on your personal and professional goals.

Congratulations! Take time to celebrate your accomplishments.