

**Career Management for Nursing Students  
Johns Hopkins University  
School of Nursing**

**Why career management during a national nursing shortage?**

According to a white paper recently published by JCAHO's Public Policy Initiative: *Health Care at the Crossroads: Strategies for Addressing the Evolving Nursing Crisis*, the U.S. Healthcare system is facing a nursing shortage of significant proportions. It is estimated that 126,000 nursing positions in US hospitals are currently unfilled—and this number is expected to swell to 400,000 by 2020 as 78 million baby boomers age. Hospitals are not alone in feeling this crunch as long-term care facilities and home care agencies are also affected by the nursing shortage as well.

That said, this bodes well for current nursing students and recent graduates. You, unlike many other professionals, will be in the enviable position of evaluating multiple employment offers. Looking for and accepting a nursing position should be very easy given the high demand for nurses with your knowledge and training. Why, then, should you be thoughtful about the process of finding and accepting a nursing position?

With so many opportunities from which to choose, the likelihood of making a choice that's not right for you increases. Successful career management does not begin with writing your resume. Nor does it end with finding a job. Rather, it is an on-going process in which you continuously learn about yourself and the world of work. Participating in this process helps you make the best decisions. As you evaluate your opportunities, think beyond your first job. How will it prepare you for what you might like to do in the future? What skills do you want to develop? With what population? In what environment? With careful preparation and self-reflection, you can avoid a serious mistake that many workers make—choosing a position for the wrong reasons or without enough information.

The most successful professionals constantly evaluate their careers and look for ways to learn more about themselves and potential opportunities. Your nursing career began when you decided to enroll in nursing school. From that point on, each decision you made, each course you took, each faculty interaction and each clinical rotation in which you participated, all served to help you learn about yourself and the rewarding career of nursing. The knowledge that you gained from each of those experiences will help you decide which opportunity is best for you. The more you know about yourself and your personal and professional goals, the more likely you'll accept the position—out of many—that's right for you. Doing so can help you avoid accepting a job only to find out that it wasn't what you had expected.

This binder was designed to help you better manage your career and experiences that will prepare you for your first and future nursing positions. It is our hope that you will keep this binder up-to-date and will refer to it often. We hope it will become a constant resource as you complete your coursework, accept your first position, and move forward throughout your career. It is meant to be a tool that helps you make decisions that are best for you. Good luck as you progress on this adventure!

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