16 Common Nursing School Interview Questions & Answers

by TheCommuter, BSN, RN @ allnurses

Most reputable nursing programs will require each candidate to undergo an interview prior to enrollment. This pre-admission nursing school interview might seem like a thoroughly nerve-wracking experience. However, the applicant can shine during this process with adequate preparation prior to the actual interview. This piece discusses the 16 most common nursing school interview questions and answers.

Are you planning to submit applications to one or more nursing programs in the near future? If so, you probably already know that most reputable schools of nursing will require you to undergo an interview with the nursing program director, assistant director of nursing education, nursing department chair, or some other similarly titled official.

The interviewer essentially wants to attain a sense of your presence or lack of interpersonal skills, realism, problem-solving capabilities, moral fabric, and views on conflict resolution. Hence, here are some questions you might be asked during a typical nursing school interview.

1. Tell us why you’d like to become a nurse.

An answer to this question that has become cliché and overused throughout the years is, “I want to help people!” Be honest, but specific. Furthermore, the interviewer is not going to want to hear that you want to be a nurse because your mother, aunt and maternal grandmother were nurses.

2. What are some of your hobbies or passions?

The answer to this question can give the interviewer deeper insight into the applicant’s personal interests. There is no incorrect answer to this particular question because we all enjoy different pastimes. One applicant might like cooking, whereas another person may be an avid musician. Again, be honest and forthright.

4. A nurse at a clinical practicum site is acting unethically. What would you do?

This question also assesses your moral compass and ethical viewpoints. While the interviewer will not want you to remain quiet about the situation, he or she probably will not want you to skip the chain of command, either.

(continue)
5. What are your personal strengths?

This question has no correct or incorrect answer because we all have various strengths to bring to the table. Some candidates are excellent orators, whereas other candidates have the uncanny ability to soothe peoples’ anxieties. Some people are great at problem-solving, while other people are outstanding at solitary pursuits such as reading and computer skills.

6. What are your personal weaknesses?

First of all, every single person in existence has one or more weaknesses. However, for the purposes of this upcoming interview, you will want to present one or two socially acceptable weaknesses along with an action plan to address them. Also, please refrain from uttering outrageously cliché phrases such as "I work too hard!"

7. What would your previous bosses or classmates say about you?

The answer to this question will give the interviewer some insight regarding your perceived work ethic and other peoples’ perceptions of you. Direct quotes will convey your point strikingly well. "My current supervisor, Jane Smith, would describe me as a dependable employee who never calls out."

8. Why do you want to be admitted into our nursing program?

You have the opportunity to shine when you show the interviewer that you have conducted some prior research about the school. "This school of nursing has produced many fine nurses since it first graduated its first class in 1978, and I would be totally honored to receive my nursing education here."

9. What would you do if you find yourself struggling in a nursing course?

The answer to this question attempts to assess your resourcefulness and inclination to proactively seek help as needed. Students who take ownership of their learning and speak up when they are not understanding are preferred over those who passively wait for events to transpire. In other words, the interviewer wants to attain a sense of your coping skills during rough times.

Additionally, interviewers will not be particularly fond of candidates who display the tendency to externalize their problems. "I got a D grade in anatomy because I had a bad professor" is a statement that may or may not come from a candidate who copes by externalizing personal problems.

10. What would you do if you have a conflict with a professor?

When asking this question, the interviewer is attempting to ascertain your maturity level, interpersonal skills, and your personal approach regarding conflict resolution. Mature students will try to resolve conflicts without escalating the issue too high on the chain of command. In other words, attempt to resolve the issue with the professor before running to the director of nursing education, nursing department chair, or dean.

11. Tell us why you'd be the best candidate for our nursing program.

This is the time to absolutely sell all of your positive qualities. Show the interviewer that you would be an asset to the school of nursing. Convey that you will be a future asset to the nursing profession. Communicate your enthusiasm. Point out that once you start a venture, you would not abandon it until the mission is accomplished.

(continue)
12. **Do you have any questions for us?**

Now is the time to ask questions about scheduling, exit exams, clinical practicum sites, and any reasonable question about the nursing program that has piqued your interest. You may appear as if you lack interest or curiosity if you do not have one single question to ask of the interviewer.

13. **What is your proudest achievement to date?**

As with previous questions, this one has no incorrect answer. Some candidates would say that their prior MS degree in mechanical engineering was their proudest achievement. Others will say that starting a family has given them the greatest sense of pride and an enhanced understanding of the human experience. You will also want to discuss why the achievement brought about a sense of pride.

14. **What qualities do you think a good nurse should possess?**

The answer that you furnish will give the interviewer a sense of your realism or idealism and as your presupposed views on nurses. I will reiterate that this is another question with no incorrect answer. I personally think that nurses should be smart, intellectually curious, and able to perform under pressure. Then again, that was my opinion. The answer to this question should be completely reflective of your opinions.

15. **What would you do if a patient or family member threatened you?**

The answer that you furnish will provide the interviewer with a sense of your ability to deal with emotionally-charged situations and think outside the box to address interpersonal conflicts. Preferably, the interviewer will want you to convey your maturity and ability to de-escalate the situation before it boils over.

16. **Do you have dependable transportation?**

In addition to classroom attendance, students must travel to various clinical practicum sites. Dependable transportation is vital during nursing school. For most of us, this means that you drive a vehicle that is in good condition. A smaller number of people depend on public transportation such as city buses and/or subways.

**RESOURCES**