

Step 1: ASSESS YOUR GOALS & OPTIONS

Explore & Research

- **Areas of Interest:** Identify and learn more about programs and units of interest to you (i.e. med/surg, critical care, pediatrics, labor & delivery) Consider what you might enjoy based on past experiences, clinical rotations, classes, etc.
- **Geography:** Do you have specific geographic locations or environments that you do/don't want to work in?
- **Specific Institutions:** Are there particular hospitals and other healthcare systems you would like to target?
- **Culture fit:** Assess your values and see how they align with the hospital/health system's mission, values and goals.
- **Seek Advice & Input:** Talk to professionals, faculty and clinical instructors to assist in clarifying your goals and identifying opportunities and organizations.

Step 2: PREPARE YOUR MATERIALS & BUILD YOUR NETWORK

Prepare Your Application Materials

- Update your **resume** and know how to write an impactful **cover letter**. Tailor your materials for each role.
- Establish a **Credentials File** with the Career Center.
 - Enables you to compile all letters of recommendation to support applications in one centralized location.

Build Your Professional Network

- **Did you know?** 70% of career opportunities are found through networking (making connections with professionals and peers who can help you along your career journey).
- **Informational Interviews:** Connect with people you know - directly or indirectly - in healthcare-related fields (alumni, family, friends, faculty, clinical instructors, past employers or anyone you can identify to have career conversations).
- **In-Person & Virtual Events:** Attend employer and alumni events hosted by Villanova and/or healthcare organizations to network with recruiters, nurse managers and former Villanovans eager to meet you.
- **Career Center:** Schedule an appointment with a **Career Development Counselor** or an **Industry Advisor** in Nursing to discuss your job search plan.
- **Nova Network:** Build a profile and connect with members of the Nova Nation (join the *Villanova Nurses* group)
- **LinkedIn:** Build a profile, follow organizations of interest and connect with recruiters, alumni & other nursing professionals (join the *Official Villanova University Network & Villanovans in Nursing* groups).

Events to Attend for Networking & Recruiting

- Villanova Nursing Career Fair (fall)
- LEAD & Society Events: SNAP Convention (fall), Undergraduate Nursing Senate Externship Panel (fall)
- Employer On-Campus & Virtual Recruiting Events: information sessions, coffee chats, information tables
- Many employers host nursing-specific events (career fairs, open houses, etc) on-site at their hospital/health system

Step 3: ACTION PHASE – PUTTING YOUR PLAN INTO ACTION

Tips to Search & Apply

- Customize your application materials and submit for positions of interest.
- Common titles for summer or part-time (per diem) opportunities include: *Nurse Extern (juniors)*, *Patient Care Tech*, *Patient Care Associate*, *Nurse Assistant*, *Care Aide*, *Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA)* or *Unit Secretary*.
- Externship Application Timelines: Typically begin to open in late fall and continue to open through the early spring.

Tips to Search & Apply (continued)

- Don't wait for postings! Leverage the network you've built and contact potential employers regarding your interest in working for their organization this summer (and in the future!) and inquiring about current or upcoming positions.
- If possible, investigate part-time or volunteer positions during the academic year or breaks.
- **Specialized vs. General:** You may get advice to choose a specialty unit (i.e. Pediatrics, Labor & Delivery) over a more generalized area (i.e. Med-Surg, General Medicine) for your first role because you won't be able to switch later. Recruiters & Nurse Managers tell us this isn't the case and often recommend a more generalized unit to start – you'll get a wider range of transferable experiences and there are often more entry-level roles available than specialty units. Go after your passion if you have a unit area of interest, but also be open-minded to starting out on a more generalized unit to gain a strong nursing foundation which will open many doors as you progress throughout your nursing career!
- **Pre-Recorded Interviews:** It is common for first-round interviews of full-time opportunities to have a pre-recorded interview component, where you will record yourself answering questions and submit to the hospital or healthcare system. [Big Interview](#) is a really useful tool to practice for these and any other type of virtual or in-person interview.

Top Resources to Search & Apply

- **Hospital and Health System Websites** (Go right to the source of your target organizations!)
- **LiquidCompass** (specifically for Nursing & Healthcare jobs; access from [connections.villanova.edu](#))
- **Handshake** (Villanova's job, employer and event portal)

CAREER CENTER SERVICES & RESOURCES

At every point in your career journey, the Career Center is available to help!

- **Career Connections** (Nursing & Healthcare) - <https://connections.villanova.edu/channels/nursing-healthcare/>
 - Find jobs/externships, events, alumni connections, Nursing Industry Guides, and resources all in one place.
- **Handshake** - <http://villanova.joinhandshake.com>
- **NovaNetwork** - <https://novanetwork.villanova.edu>
- **Credentials** - <https://bit.ly/vucredentials>
- **Big Interview** - <https://villanova.biginterview.com>
 - Practice your interview skills and get virtual resume feedback through Resume AI feature.
- **Career Center Appointments** - <https://villanova.joinhandshake.com/edu/appointments/new>
 - **Industry Advising** – Discuss nursing trends, timelines, and potential Villanova recruiting contacts.
 - **Career Development** – Help with resumes, cover letters, networking, interview prep, offer/salary negotiation.
 - **Wildcat Wardrobe** – Shop our free professional attire closet for your next big professional event.
 - **Headshot Photobooth** – Reserve a time to take a professional photo for your LinkedIn profile and more.
- **Drop-in Hours** (no appt. necessary) – Meet with counselor or student ambassador with your materials/questions.
 - Monday-Thursday 12-2pm in Career Center, Garey Hall 117
 - Friday 12-2pm on Zoom (search “drop-ins” under Events in Handshake for link)