



**OREGON HEALTH & SCIENCE UNIVERSITY**

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**School of Nursing - Ashland Campus**

# **ADMISSION INTERVIEW PREPARATION**

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## Pre-Interview Preparation

### ***Research OHSU, our School of Nursing, and Nursing***

The first good reason for this is that you want to be sure that you really want to be a nurse and why, and that you really want to attend our nursing school if you're accepted for admission. Some research up front can really help to educate you about what nursing school is like, and what the profession of nursing entails. Of course, you can use the internet to do this type of research, but it's a good idea to also talk to people who have experienced nursing school and are working in the field. Reach out to our faculty and staff, our nursing students, or a working nurse in your area. Also, look into nurse shadowing and other volunteer experiences at a local hospital or other medical facility. These things will help you get a better feel for everything nursing and nursing school entails.

- Talk to nurses and nursing students.
- Do internet research. Most nursing schools have vision and mission statements. See if they fit with what you want out of a school and your vision for nursing.

Another reason for doing your research up front is so that you have background information for interview responses. For example, you don't want the only reasons that you're interested in OHSU to be because we're the only program that's close to home and awards Bachelor's degrees. Again, the interviewer wants to know more than that. If you research ahead of time, you'll be able to explain additional reasons why nursing and OHSU are a great fit for you and vice versa.

## ***Research Interview Questions and Prepare Responses***

You don't have a way of knowing ahead of time what questions you'll be asked in your admission interview, but it is helpful to research interview questions to prepare you for the type of questions you'll be asked. Interview questions tend to be chosen to elicit an in-depth response from the interviewee so that the interviewer can get insight into the type of person the interviewee is, and whether they're a good match for the program. One good idea is to google 'interview questions' or even 'nursing school admission interview questions' and use the results to come up with a list of practice questions.



\*Make your own list of practice questions.

Practicing responding to questions will help you feel more comfortable when you arrive at the interview. Creating an environment similar to an interview environment in which to practice questions will prepare you well. Set up a table

with chairs and see if a friend or family member can help you by being the interviewer and asking you the questions. If you can't find anyone to help you, you should still practice responding to questions out loud. Wear what you would wear to an interview so that you feel more comfortable in it when the day to interview arrives.

## ***Do's and Don'ts In-Person Interviews***

- Do be sure you eat the day of the interview.
- Be punctual! This is very important.
- Plan your travel route and travel time, and plan for parking so you do arrive on time and unflustered.
- Do have a breath mint before your interview starts
- For women, if you're wearing stockings, do bring an extra pair in case you get a run on your way to the interview.

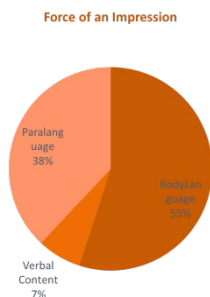
- Do not bring your cell phone or other electronics into the interview room.
- Do not bring gum or candy into the interview room.
- Do not bring soda or coffee into the interview room.

### ***Do's and Don'ts Webex Interviews***

- Download Webex ahead of time.
- Use headphones, it helps reduce feedback and background noise.
- Have a stable internet connection.
- Please be in a quiet room, free of distractions.
- Silence your phone.
- Do not eat while you are being interviewed, water is fine.

## **Appearance**

### ***Importance***



Some studies show that nonverbal communication and appearance comprise about 55% of the force of any response, whereas the verbal content only provides about 7%, and paralanguage, or the intonation -- pauses and sighs given when answering -- represents about 38% of the emphasis.

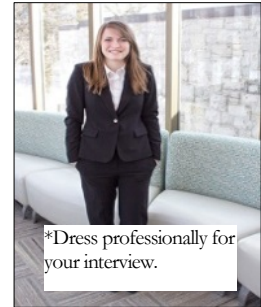
**This means that nonverbal communication and appearance are extremely important in an interview.**

### ***Guidelines***

Above all, appear neatly groomed. If you're slouchy, sloppy, or messy it won't matter how well you answer the questions. Use your appearance to communicate that you are professional and responsible.



- Wear neutral-colored, dark clothes in case something gets spilled before the interview. Dress slacks, skirts, blazers, and ties are all appropriate attire. Avoid mismatched colors or patterns.
- Keep jewelry, hair, makeup and nails VERY simple.
- Women, avoid low-cut tops or those that expose your waist.
- Skirts and dresses should be no shorter than just above the knee.
- Avoid dressy, formal clothes that are more suited for evening events.
- Consider ironing your clothes if too wrinkled.
- No perfume, scented lotion, or scented hair products.
- Don't smell like cigarettes.
- Do not wear jeans, this communicates a casual attitude toward the interview.



**It is better to be the best-dressed person in the interview group than the worst-dressed person.**

In an interview setting, you want the interviewer(s) to be evaluating you based on your responses to the questions. You don't want them getting stuck on your appearance and subconsciously evaluating you on it. The best way to keep this from happening is to have a professional but neutral appearance. Many times, we use our clothing and other aspects of our appearance to communicate our personality. An admission interview is not the place for this. In your interview, it is important that you focus on communicating your skill, professionalism, education, knowledge of nursing and experience to your interviewer(s) through both your verbal and non-verbal communication. You can do this well through your question answers, but if something about your appearance is distracting, it will be hard for the interviewer(s) to focus on what you're saying.

Use your clothing and appearance to communicate your degree of professionalism, maturity, and seriousness about nursing school, and you won't have to spend much time in your interview trying to explain those things.

### ***Local Resources for Interview Attire***

While it is important to come dressed professionally for your interview, and ideal that you wear a suit, such attire can be expensive and hard for students to access. However, it is still best to come dressed as professionally as possible. Here is a list of resources where you may be able to access appropriate interview clothing at a lower cost.

### ***Stores & Second-Hand Stores:***

- Ross (location varies)
- TJ Maxx (location varies)
- H&M Clothing (location varies)
- Maurice's (location varies)
- Goodwill (location varies)

Ebay is a good resource as well, if you purchase with enough time for your order to ship before your interview day.

## **Non-Verbal Communication**

### ***Important Aspects***

What you communicate non-verbally in your interview is just as important as what you communicate verbally. You make a substantial impact on your interviewer(s) with your non-verbal communication before you ever even open your mouth to answer a question. Therefore, it is important to be aware of what you're saying through your body language and what your interviewer is noticing about it. Here is a list of things to pay attention to in your interview.

1. Handshake- The handshake is one of the most important pieces of non-verbal communication. Please, don't use a floppy, loose handshake. When you shake hands, grip the interviewer's hand firmly (but not too strong), and shake it gently. You



want to communicate assertiveness, but not aggression, with your

\*A firm handshake is an important communication tool.

handshake.

2. Eye Contact- Make intermittent eye contact with your interviewer for a second or two. You don't need to look them in the eye the entire time they're interviewing you, as this can be quite awkward for the interviewer. However, it is important that you do make regular eye contact throughout the interview to show that you're interested and paying attention.
3. Fidgeting- Try not to fidget in your interview, it is distracting from your verbal answers to questions. Bring a pen and notepad to your interview so that you can hold them in your hands while answering questions. This will help you not to fidget. Avoid distracting habits such as pen-tapping or leg-shaking.
4. Posture- It is important to sit up straight in your interview. Good posture communicates confidence and interest in what you're discussing in your answers.
5. Politeness- You should take care to be polite to your interviewer(s) and not to interrupt them. You communicate your respect for the interviewer(s) by being polite, which is very important. You also communicate respect by being attentive throughout the interview. It will make a good impression if you thank them for their time when you leave the room
6. Voice Tone- Keep as even a voice tone as you can. It is very normal to be nervous in an interview, and most frequently your nerves are evident in your voice tone. The interviewer will understand, but it is still best to be aware of your voice tone and try your best to keep it even. Also, try your best to stay calm and not get emotional in your interview, as this will be communicated through your voice tone. When answering questions, try to avoid using situations that you have an emotional reaction to as examples. If describing a situation makes you emotional, it will be harder to keep your composure and your even voice tone.

**The best way to understand your non-verbal communication and be in control of it is to practice, practice, and practice answering interview questions!**



# Answering Questions

## *Purpose*

The purpose of an interview is to get to know more about you!

In an interview, the interviewer(s) are trying to determine whether you are a good fit for the position. In the nursing school, we have a good idea of what makes a good nurse and nursing student, but when we sit down to interview you, we don't have a good idea of who you are. Therefore, we need to learn enough about you through your question responses to determine whether you'll be a good fit. **This means that you need to answer each question with enough depth for the interviewer(s) to get to know you.** Take your time answering each question, and find a way to get some personal information about yourself across in your interview. If you answer the question in thirty seconds, odds are that you won't really be communicating enough for us to learn anything about who you are.

The interviewer will get to know you better if you can share personal information and anecdotes in your answers. It's important to list qualities about yourself that are relevant to the question being asked. However, if you can also relate a story or example of a time when you used the quality, knowledge, or skills that you just talked about, you'll be able to show the interviewer more about who you are.

Perhaps one of the best things you can do to prepare is to know exactly what you want the interviewer(s) to find out about you in the interview. Go into your interview with an idea about what you want to communicate about yourself, independent of the questions. Then as you're asked each question, you can answer it with both a direct aspect to your response, and a more broad aspect that communicates something you feel is important about yourself but also relates back to the question.

## *Remember:*

- Include personal information or a personal story.

- Be aware of the time.
- Don't answer too quickly.

### ***Important Aspects***

The following are important to consider when crafting your responses.

1. Impression is as important as content. You may feel nervous, and the interviewer(s) may pick up on that, but will be understanding and won't notice it nearly as much if you craft fantastic answers to their questions. Alternatively, if you slouch and drum your fingernails on the table, you could answer a question very well and the interviewer(s) wouldn't hear most of it.
2. Use circular answers. You should answer the question directly, then explain your answer, then link your explanation back to the question. This will keep your answer organized, and keep you from getting off the subject of the question.
3. Address both hard and soft skills. There are many skills in each of these sets that are very important in nursing, and the interviewer(s) will get a better idea of your preparation for nursing if you address both. An example of a hard skill is taking blood pressure, and empathy would be an example of a soft skill.
4. Ask questions. It shows you're interested and makes the interview more of a balanced process. Also, you could learn quite a bit by asking questions of the interviewer(s). However, be careful not to overuse this technique as interviewers want to spend this time hearing from you not speaking themselves.
5. Don't use slang. It will convey a casual attitude toward the interview.
6. Thank the interviewer(s) for their time. This will show you are a polite person with good manners and leave the interviewer(s) with a more positive impression of you.

### ***What we're looking for...***

In the School of Nursing, we're looking for applicants who demonstrate the following:

- Professionalism & Academic Readiness
- Basic understanding of the nursing role.
- A good fit for the nursing role.
- An ability to work with diverse populations.

Address these qualities in your answers. If you can figure out how to explain how each of these aspects apply to you, and relate personal stories in your explanation, you will know that you gave the best interview you could.

***Best of luck with your interview!***

**Additional Resource: Preparing for an undergraduate admission interview link –**

**<https://echo360ess.ohsu.edu:8443/ess/echo/presentation/f6a81250-e784-4c88-a56f-e919f344f3eb>**