

Guide for students

This page provides a guide for careers advisers to use when getting students ready for the world of work.

It covers information about:

- working in health
- getting experience
- CVs
- application forms and interviews
- applying to higher education
- earning as you learn

Working in health

A health career is rewarding in several ways:

- you'll be part of a unique organisation whose purpose is to improve people's health and provide treatment and care for those who need it
- whatever job you're doing (see our [Explore roles section](#) ^[1] for ideas) you'll be helping make a difference to people's lives
- through training, mentoring and other support you will be encouraged to develop your full potential at work
- you'll enjoy excellent benefits in terms of paid holidays and an excellent pension scheme

For some, but not all, jobs in health you will have to complete a course at university or college to equip you with the knowledge and skills you'll need. Whether you're planning to apply for a place on a course or for an actual job, below are a few ideas about what employers (and universities or colleges) usually look for in applications.

The single best thing you can do is get some work experience or do voluntary work

Whether you're applying for a course or a job in health, you'll be expected to demonstrate your understanding of the NHS values and how they apply in your everyday work.

Get experience

The single best thing you can do to prepare for a health career is to get some work experience or do voluntary work in an area of health and social care.

It will show you whether you'd like to work in this sector. And experience is something that employers and universities will be looking for when you apply for a course or a job.

Your school may already have contacts with local NHS and health employers who offer work experience programmes. Talk to your careers teacher. But there is also a variety of other volunteering opportunities, for example, in local care homes, that you could look into for yourself.

Find out more about the NHS values and behaviours [2].

Find out more about getting experience of the workplace [3]

Your CV

Because you may have little, if any, experience of working other than at school, make sure your CV includes everything that demonstrates your ability to be part of a team and take responsibility for yourself and others. For example, include:

- any voluntary work you've done
- projects such as Duke of Edinburgh awards
- any work experience that shows your ability to be trustworthy and punctual
- mention of any babysitting or other caring that you've done
- any experience helping with older or ill people, family or neighbours
- participation in team games
- anything you've done to help younger students in your school

It is also vital that you think hard about why you are keen to follow a particular career and are creative in making the link between this and your own life experience so far.

• **Application forms**

Whether you're applying for a job or a college or university course, you will need to complete an application form. The work you've done to prepare your CV will help you complete it.

Remember that the purpose of the form is to present individual information in a standard way so that everyone can be considered on the same basis. Therefore, make sure you:

- follow the instructions carefully
- provide all the information the questions ask for

- give specific examples of things you've done if you're asked to show how you meet the selection criteria; your application is likely to be scored according to how closely you meet the selection criteria
- work with the space available for each section and don't miss any sections out
- make a practice copy first that you're happy with before you complete the actual application form

Most forms will give you the opportunity to say something about yourself and why you're applying. The work you've done to prepare your CV will help you with this section.

• Interviews

An interview is your chance to give a good account of yourself!

Preparation is key and you will increase your chances if you:

- check out in advance where the interview will be held, work out how to get there and arrive with plenty of time to spare. Remember that hospitals and universities can be large and busy places: you need to know exactly where you need to be for your interview
- remember the interview panel is on your side. You have been invited to the interview because they liked your application form and want to know more about you
- listen carefully to the questions they ask, and answer them as clearly as you can
- be prepared to demonstrate your understanding of the NHS values [2] and how you would apply them in your everyday work
- don't rush. Think about your answers. If there's something in the question you don't understand, ask for clarification
- think in advance about any questions you might have for the panel and take the opportunity to ask them at the end

• Applying to higher education

Get all the information you can on the career or careers you're considering, and find out which universities or colleges offer the courses that lead in this direction. Use our course finder to help you track down approved courses [4]

Universities and colleges may have different criteria for the exam grades and subjects that they look for from would-be students, as well as any particular experience of work or skills they require. Check on their website and in their prospectuses to see which would suit you best.

Ask your teacher or careers adviser for contact details.

• Earn as you learn

There are also vacancies in the NHS for school leavers. These may be in administration, in domestic and catering services, and portering and maintenance. Some health organisations also run apprenticeship, traineeship and cadet schemes [5] for trainee healthcare assistants and healthcare support staff who support nursing staff, therapists and scientists in hospitals and community settings.

In any of these roles you will have the opportunity to do training and develop your skills on the job. For more information, contact your local NHS trust [6] or visit the NHS Jobs website [7].

Source URL:<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/career-planning/career-advisers-and-teachers/teaching-resources/guide-students>

Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles> [2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/working-health/nhs-constitution> [3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/secondary-school-or-fe-college/gaining-experience> [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/looking-course> [5] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/secondary-school-or-fe-college/apprenticeships-traineeships-and-cadet-schemes> [6] <http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/thenhs/about/Pages/authoritiesandtrusts.aspx> [7] <https://www.jobs.nhs.uk/>