



Top Tips to navigate your NCL Graduate Guarantee recruitment



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Recruitment and North London Partners Shared Services (NLPSS)

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1. Congratulations on Getting to the End of Your Nursing Training Journey

Congratulations on moving to your final year as a student nurse. The time has finally arrived where you are preparing to apply for your Band 5 Newly Qualified Nurse (NQN) job in a North Central London (NCL) NHS Trust. You should be extremely proud of yourself.

CapitalNurse Graduate Guarantee recruitment across our NCL NHS Trusts usually lasts between March and October each year. Education, Workforce and Recruitment Teams work collaboratively to ensure that your recruitment experience is a smooth one.

In this booklet, we have prepared top tips to help you better equipped to apply for an NQN post, interview well and navigate the pre-employment checks process.

Student nurses from universities affiliated to our NCL Trusts, will be able to apply under the NCL Graduate Guarantee Scheme. The CapitalNurse NCL Graduate Guarantee scheme supports student nurses to their host Trust or any other NCL Trust.

2. Your role in the Graduate Guarantee Process

- You have a professional accountability and you have the opportunity to build a strong foundation to apply for other jobs in the future.
- Demonstrate to a potential employer why you are the best candidate for the Band 5 NQN role. Care should be taken to submit an excellent application form that is fully completed, concise, structured and informative.
- Become very familiar with the Trust values in the organisation you are applying to, as well as the Band 5 NQN job description and person specification. This will be key for gathering evidence of your ability for your application writing and interview preparation.
- Effective communication between your Education Team, the Workforce/Recruitment Team and yourself is vital to move you from application stage to start date in your new Band 5 NQN role without unnecessary delays. You will receive emails through online recruitment systems and phone calls from the recruitment teams regularly.
- Be engaged in the process as this will ease any anxiety or uncertainty, enable you to have any queries answered quickly and ensure an overall good experience.

3. Capital Nurse NCL NQN Graduate Guarantee Scheme

CapitalNurse was established in July 2015 and is funded by Health Education England. It is jointly led by Health Education England and NHS England and NHS Improvement.

CapitalNurse's vision is to 'get nursing right for London'; ensuring that London has the right number of nurses, with the right skills in the right place, working to deliver excellent nursing wherever it is needed.

The outputs of CapitalNurse are designed specifically for London nurses, but many of these also have the potential to be used with positive impacts for other workforce groups, and in other geographies.

Our CapitalNurse NCL Graduate Guarantee scheme recognises that when organisations provide a fair and streamlined employment offer to registrant graduates, there is a significant benefit to both the employer and candidate, both in feeling valued by their organisation and the organisation retaining their NQN.

4. 5-Step Graduate Guarantee Offer

Here's our offer to you – our 5-step guarantee:

- **A guarantee of an interview following submission of your full application.**
- **No assessment other than a short values-based interview. The values being either those of the Trust you are applying for or those of the NHS.**
- **We will let you know the outcome of your interview within five working days**
- **You will be supported by a 6-12 month CapitalNurse Preceptorship programme in any Trust you choose.**
- **Opportunity to work as a Band 3 Healthcare Support Worker after successful completion of your degree programme until your NMC registration is confirmed (Local variations may apply).**

5. How to Manage Multiple Offers

We are delighted to provide you with a gateway to commencing your nursing career in London. We recognise that this is an exciting time for you and understand that you may take some time to decide on the best employment offer for you.

While we hope that you choose our partner organisations to commence your nursing career, we understand that you need to make the best decision for yourself. As a result, you may want to keep your options open and hold multiple offers.

You are encouraged to take your time to make an informed decision about where you wish to start your first job in nursing. In doing so, please also consider that we have a duty to protect the workforce planning of our partner organisations. This means that clinical areas will need to know which NQNs will be starting with them in a timely manner. As part of governance, offer acceptance deadlines are set by the individual Trusts and you are expected to communicate your final decision in a reasonable timeframe.

Engaging proactively with the recruitment pre-employment checks process allows you to commence in post on time.

If you decide to take up an NQN role elsewhere, early communication about your decisions, allows a job offer to be given to another registrant graduate.

Should you feel apprehensive about informing your host Trust about taking up another offer, please be reassured that it is professional and respectful to be open about your decision. This ensures that you maintain a good relationship with the organisation as you may wish to take up employment with them in the future.

Recruiting teams will greatly appreciate that you have informed them as it allows them to manage resources effectively.



6. Top Tips for Your Band 5 NQN Application

Where to Find Your Band 5 NQN Advert

- Your Band 5 Newly Qualified Nurse Graduate Guarantee Advert is released via your **local Trust website and NHS Jobs**.
- You will be required to **complete an application form and a short values assessment**. There will be documents signposted/attached on the advert page such as the job description, person specification and Graduate Guarantee guidance and any other instructions.

Read the job description and person specification

- **Reading the Band 5 job description (JD) and person specification** is important for both the application stage and the interview stage of your Graduate Guarantee recruitment. Unfortunately, this is often ignored.
- Complete your application form against what was required for the role in the **person specification**.
- **Use the key descriptor of the role** as stated in the JD to develop examples of your practice for the supporting statement.

Supporting Information

- A section of your application form is called Supporting Information. This section is where you get to sell yourself to further strengthen your eligibility to be shortlisted. It reflects on you as a professional.
- In this section, **state the reasons why you are applying for the post**; give details of any experience gained which is relevant to the role you are applying for; give details of any relevant training, education or other interests and describe any personal attributes you have, to support your application.
- Use this section to **evidence against the job description and person specification** on how you think that you meet the Trust values and role experience. Use strong examples of events in practice that link to the key descriptors of the Band 5 NQN role.
- If your Trust offers preferences of **where you may wish to work** as an NQN/Band 5, you should state this clearly in your supporting information (local variations may apply, therefore follow the guidance of your local Trust).
- Your supporting information is one of the criteria considered in shortlisting for potential employers to decide if you have met the eligibility to be selected for interview.
- Please **take your time** to write your supporting information. If you are unsure of how to write this, do your research as there are lots of good resources online. **Ask for support**. Your university and Trust may hold preparatory workshops on this topic for you.

Application completion

Your application is not fully complete if key information is missing, or if there are numerous grammatical errors.

- Try **not to leave your application until last minute**.
- Ensure that you or a friend **proofreads** your application.
- Correct any **spelling mistakes** and other grammatical errors.
- Give **correct contact details** - include a university email address, personal email address and a contactable phone number.
- To ensure that the recruiter knows that you are an NCL student nurse, please ensure that you **state your university and programme on your application form**. This prevents delays to inviting you to an interview. Be mindful that recruiters cannot see applicant names on the application form at the shortlisting stage therefore they do not know who applications belong to.
- **References** - All job applications require applicants to submit references. As an NQN you should **submit 1 to 2 references** (as dictated by the Trust you are applying to). The first reference is required from your University, this could be your personal tutor. The second reference is required ideally from practice. Local variations may apply according to the Trust you are applying to; please **read application instructions**.

What Happens After Your Application Submission

- Once your application is submitted, it will be processed via the TRAC system.
- TRAC is an online recruitment management system that tracks all NHS job applications from vacancy to start date in role. All communication from your Trust about your application will be sent through TRAC to your email address.
- You will be required to register for a TRAC account if you have never used this system. TRAC is simple to use.
- As you go through your recruitment process, it's **good practice to get in the habit of checking your TRAC account and emails regularly**.
- Be engaged with the process.
- **Ensure that you respond to TRAC, email and telephone requests promptly**. Recruitment team will issue deadlines for certain information to be returned so it is important you are mindful of these.

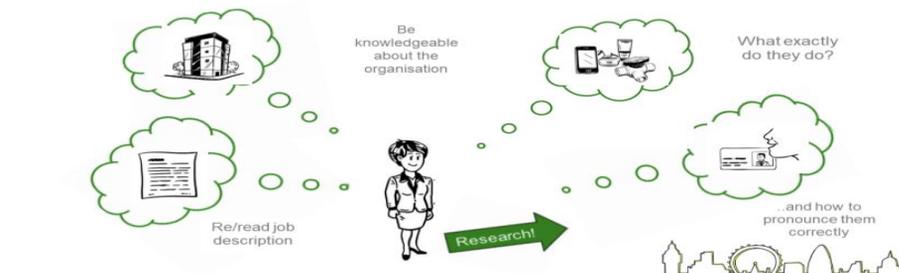
7. Top Tips for Your Band 5 NQN Interview

Your interview invite

- If you have successfully met the criteria in your application, you will receive an interview invite via TRAC.
- You will need to respond to indicate whether you will attend the interview, may require an alternative interview date and time or won't be attending the interview.

Preparation for your Interview

- **Meticulous interview preparation is very important.** *If you fail to prepare, you prepare to fail.*
- **First impressions always count!** This is possibly the most common piece of advice ahead of interview, irrespective of the industry. But it's often ignored.
- Learn as much about the NHS Trust where you have been offered an interview. Familiarise yourself with its values; aims and objectives, the population it serves and services provided. **Make sure you understand the organisation's mission and can talk about why it is important to you.**



- Interviews questions will be **values based** and structured. **A values based interview** consists of questions that offer interviewees the opportunity to demonstrate how their individual values and behaviours align with the organisation.
- Each interviewer will ask a set number of questions. Think about how you answer these questions. Don't ramble, but don't be so brief that the interviewers have to continually prompt you for more information.
- **Practice answering interview questions.** Practice, and then practice some more. Do a mock interview with a family member or friend. When you give a response, have a brief example of a related situation that you can relate it to.
- **Prepare 1-2 questions to ask the panel** at the end of the interview. This could be related to your orientation, preceptorship, learning opportunities, shift patterns or anything else relevant to understanding the NQN role. Be careful not to ask for information that has already been provided or discussed during the interview.



The interview day

- Start your day with a **good breakfast**
- Arrive at **least 15 minutes before** your interview time slot.
- **Plan your journey** if your interview is face to face. If you do get delayed, make sure you notify the appropriate person within the organisation as soon as possible.
- If your **interview is virtual, check the lighting and camera work is suitable, your mic is working** and that you're comfortable and familiar with whatever technology and software you're using.
- **Professional appearance and using positive body language suggests confidence.**
- You want to convey that you're **enthusiastic, positive and energetic.**
- **Dress appropriately** making sure that you send out the right signals about your confidence, self discipline and judgement. It might be useful to check the dress code of the organisation by looking at pictures of staff on the organisation's website or asking around. We would suggest you dress smart.
- We are not all perfect and the panel members who are interviewing there are not there to judge you. They will remain objective throughout and it's important that you **be yourself**, so the panel can sense a true reflection of your character.
- Regardless of you knowing members on the interview panel, its important you're able to demonstrate your capability and give well **thought out answers as if you are speaking to someone completely new.**
- It is important to **maintain professionalism** throughout your interview.

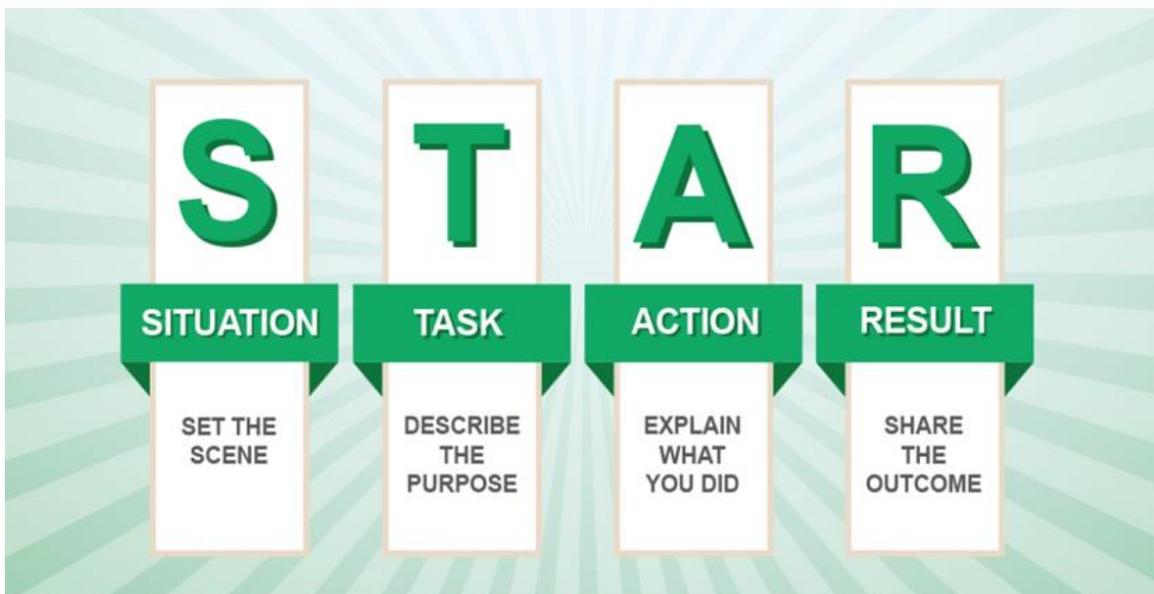


Strategies for Answering Interview Questions

- Watch the following **video on RCN Careers - Interview Skills**:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VSrrZbYVzms&t=285s>
- **Know the job description and person specification.** This is possibly the most common piece of advice ahead of interview, irrespective of the industry. Questions that you will be asked will be drawn from what is outlined in both these documents.
- We want to hear you **share your own experiences** in a way that demonstrates you are going to be a good fit.
- Try to **keep to the point** and make sure you are answering the questions.

The STAR method

Make sure you answer in an open way that allows you to expand and explain an example/scenario. Your answer should follow a succinct pattern. A good way to ensure you 'sell yourself' and make maximum impact with each answer is to articulate with the "STAR" approach. **The STAR approach is very useful for answering Competency Based questions and scenarios.** This will enable you to give well rounded and informative answers. An interview panel will not ask questions beyond your scope. Your interview is your chance to bring examples in your practice to life and give them context and relevance to how your actions benefited patients, relatives, the team and you.



Transferable skills

- This is where we want to you **think outside the box!**
- Although it is easy to only think of how great you are at your routine tasks, **think of all the skills** that you have consolidated throughout your time and how you have been able to build on these and adapt it to a task that was completely new to you. Consider your life skills too. *Example:* Leadership and management skills can include your delegating skills, being a role model, supporting students and working with the MDT. You may even have some of these skills from academics or other work.
- The panel want to be confident that you will be someone who will not only be great in learning new skills but that you will also be able to **draw on previous knowledge, and experience** to become expert in your new role.

Development focused questions

- Interviewers will want to understand **your areas for development** and how you deal with this.
- One question that may be asked is “**Tell me a time you made a mistake?**” We all make mistakes, however its how you learnt from it as a professional and how it shaped you be the nurse you are today.
- Be **honest about your weaknesses**, show you have the maturity and insight to recognize your areas for improvement.

Personal aspirations and achievements

- **Be proud** of your personal aspirations and achievements. If they are applicable to the interview, mention them. This could be as simple as how you have learnt to navigate difficult conversations in an effective way as you have become more proficient in your practice experiences.

Listen and Speak

- **Be clear and concise** in your responses. Do not waffle on and on.
- **Plan some examples** around questions you’ll think they’ll ask. If you read up on them and listen well, you that will help frame your own response and any questions you might have. It’s all about answering questions. So, be prepared to have conversations around subjects that you can predict will come up.
- **Single word answers (yes or no) are not good** for creating a conversation or rapport. Avoid this by talking about recent experiences.
- **Try to remember the questions and your responses**, as this may help you to improve your performance in the future



Always thank the interviewer for their time

Feedback after Interview

- Whether successful or not, **ask for feedback**, so you can learn from the experience and prepare for the next step.
- **Never decline feedback.** Every panel is there with good intentions to let you know what you can improve on next time.
- Remember, you may want to apply again, so **use feedback constructively**. It's not a reason to argue with the interviewer who may also be the hiring manager.
- Sometimes nerves or not fully being as prepared as you could be on the day may impact on how well you perform. This is okay! **We will always offer you an opportunity at a second attempt.**

8. Top Tips for Your Preemployment Checks

TRAC

TRAC is an online recruitment management system that tracks all NHS job applications from vacancy to start date in role. All communication from your Trust about your application will be sent through TRAC to your email address. You will be required to register for a TRAC account if you have never used this system. TRAC is simple to use. As you go through your recruitment process, it's **good practice to get in the habit of checking your TRAC account regularly**.

Once you have been successful at interview, a preemployment checks process will commence. This part of your recruitment process is managed by a Recruitment and Shared Services Team.

Notification of Interview Outcome

You will be **notified of your interview outcome within 5-7 working days** due to the large number of Part 3 students who apply within the Graduate Guarantee for NQN jobs at the same time across NCL. Various NCL Trust partners work to different caveats.

Conditional and Final Offer Letters

- **A conditional offer letter** is sent via TRAC to your email up to 10 days following your interview. You must read the instructions in this letter. You will be asked to either sign the document or respond via TRAC to state whether you accept/decline this job offer.
- **Notify your referees to complete reference checks quickly** to prevent delays.
- Preemployment checks should take approximately 20 working days to be completed unless there is a delay such as visa paperwork from Home Office.
- **If you are on a student visa**, you will require sponsorship which your hiring manager will apply for with UKVI Home Office. You can work whilst once a visa request has been submitted and application process is in progress.
- **DBS Disclosure** - if you have disclosed anything on your DBS e.g., an offence, a risk assessment will be completed by your hiring manager to determine your fitness for the area. This is a supportive process that works best when you are completely transparent about the situation.
- **A final offer letter** will be sent to you after completion of all your preemployment checks including references, receipt of NMC Pin. This is your job contract. You must follow any instructions provided and sign this document. You will not be able to start in your clinical area as a Band 5 NQN if this is not done.

Self Withdrawal Etiquette

- There may be circumstances where you decide that you cannot take the NQN role offered for various reasons. If you have decided to withdraw from the job offer, **please notify the recruitment team via TRAC as early as possible.**
- You should also inform your education team and workforce team out of professional courtesy.
- If you had met your future ward manager, and started to discuss your NQN start date, you should inform this clinical area out of professional courtesy.

Effective Communication Preemployment Checks Stage

Checking inboxes for TRAC notifications

- During the process, you will receive main communication from the Recruitment Team via TRAC. Please keep an eye out for notifications on your email and junk inbox. **You are expected to respond in a reasonable timeframe as soon as possible and within seven (7) working days.**
- **Check both your inbox and junk mail every day.** With some email addresses, TRAC correspondence may go straight to junk mail as automated messages are often filtered out of your inbox.
- TRAC will have an **opt into text messaging function**, if that is a mode of communication you are happy to use with recruitment teams.
- Please **ensure that your personal details are up to date within the recruitment system.** This is to ensure all communications can be sent to you properly and you are receiving all information in a timely manner.
- **File emails** about employment and pre-employment/compliance information electronically, so you'll be able to refer back to these important documents with ease.
- **If you do not have voicemail, we strongly advise you have this set up.** Be mindful that calls from recruitment teams may also come up as hidden or unknown numbers.
- Your offer may be **withdrawn** by the Trust on the basis of poor communication and no response.

Delays with Completion of Your Nursing Programme

If for whatever reason, there will be a delay in completing your nursing programme and getting your NMC Pin, **please notify relevant teams** such as Education, Nursing Workforce and Shared Services teams.

Recruitment Updates and Queries

- For all queries relating to advertised roles and pre-employment checks, please contact the NLP SS recruitment helpdesk on **0203 758 2060** or email: rf-tr.nlpssrecruitmenthelpdesk@nhs.net during the hours of Monday to Friday 09:00 to 17:00 (excluding Bank holidays).
- You are also encouraged to **log queries via your TRAC profile** and check for updates.
- For **quick responses, usually within 48 hours, refer to Shared Services Helpdesk** and ask to be directed to your Trust designated team.
- Please note that Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Foundation Trust, Moorfield Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, North Middlesex University Hospital NHS Trust and Whittington Health NHS Trust all have their own in-house recruitment team and *do not use* Shared Services. Therefore, **please contact these Trusts directly**.
- If you have concerns about your NQN allocation, ensure you understand the recruitment communication ladder in your Trust and speak with the relevant member of the team. This will prevent miscommunication and delays.

Paid Unregistered Post Until NMC Pin is confirmed

- You may be eligible for a paid unregistered position until your NMC Pin is confirmed. Please contact your Trust for further details or express your interest at the interview stage. Local variations may apply.
- There is a stipulation in most Trusts that you must have passed all elements of your nursing programme in order to take up this Band 3 position. Please check what the local policy is in your hiring Trust.

**Best of luck with your NQN
recruitment!**

**We look forward to you
joining our NCL clinical teams.**

9. Resources

- 1. Interview Skills:** <https://www.rcn.org.uk/Professional-Development/Your-career/Interviews>
- 2. Interview Nerves:** <https://www.rcn.org.uk/Professional-Development/Your-career/Interviews/Interview-Nerves>
- 3. Professionalism in Nursing and Midwifery:** <https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/other-publications/enabling-professionalism.pdf>
- 4. NHS Employers: Values Based Interview:** <https://vimeo.com/109135318>
- 5. NHS Employers: Behaviour Framework:** https://www.nhsemployers.org/system/files/media/VBR-Behaviour-framework_0.pdf
- 6. NHS Employers: Values in the NHS Constitution:**

Values in the NHS Constitution



WORKING TOGETHER FOR PATIENTS

Patients come first in everything we do. We fully involve patients, staff, families, carers, communities, and professionals inside and outside the NHS. We put the needs of patients and communities before organisational boundaries. We speak up when things go wrong.



RESPECT AND DIGNITY

We value every person – whether patient, their families or carers, or staff – as an individual, respect their aspirations and commitments in life, and seek to understand their priorities, needs, abilities and limits. We take what others have to say seriously. We are honest and open about our point of view and what we can and cannot do.



EVERYONE COUNTS

We maximise our resources for the benefit of the whole community, and make sure nobody is excluded, discriminated against or left behind. We accept that some people need more help, that difficult decisions have to be taken – and that when we waste resources we waste opportunities for others.



COMMITMENT TO QUALITY OF CARE

We earn the trust placed in us by insisting on quality and striving to get the basics of quality of care – safety, effectiveness and patient experience – right every time. We encourage and welcome feedback from patients, families, carers, staff and the public. We use this to improve the care we provide and build on our successes.



COMPASSION

We ensure that compassion is central to the care we provide and respond with humanity and kindness to each person's pain, distress, anxiety or need. We search for the things we can do, however small, to give comfort and relieve suffering. We find time for patients, their families and carers, as well as those we work alongside. We do not wait to be asked, because we care.



IMPROVING LIVES

We strive to improve health and wellbeing and people's experiences of the NHS. We cherish excellence and professionalism wherever we find it – in the everyday things that make people's lives better as much as in clinical practice, service improvements and innovation. We recognise that all have a part to play in making ourselves, patients and our communities healthier.