ACE Nursing
Mini Applicant Guide

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The ACE Process

ACE stands for Advanced Choice of Employment and the process was initially developed for recruiting medical graduates into House Officer and PGY1/PGY2 positions with DHB's nationwide and has been adapted for use for employers of new graduate nurses across New Zealand.

Health Workforce Directorate funds the NETP and NESP programmes via the ACE Process and in March 2012 our DHB Chief Executives and Directors of Nursing implemented funding the pilot ACE intake. Following the successful pilot, the ACE process has been adopted as the centralised recruitment process for recruiting graduate nurses and is provisioned by the Northern Regional Alliance on contract to DHB Shared Services.

ACE is the only way to apply for a funded NETP or NESP programme in New Zealand. The ACE process serves as a single application tool that allows graduate nurses throughout the country to submit one application which is then distributed to up to three employers of an applicant's choice nationwide. Most employers are involved in two annual intakes each year.

To be eligible to apply to ACE for a NETP or NESP position you must meet all of the following basic criteria

1. Either be a New Zealand Citizen, Australian Citizen or hold a Permanent Resident Visa (Or Returning Resident Visa)
2. Be in the final year of a pre-registration nursing degree approved by the Nursing Council of New Zealand (NCNZ) leading to registration as a registered nurse or be awarded a pre-registration nursing degree approved by the NCNZ leading to registration as a registered nurse, no longer than 24 months before starting on a NETP/NESP programme
3. You must have completed your pre-registration nursing degree in New Zealand and have passed your state final exam no more than 2 years prior to starting on a NETP/NESP programme. You therefore have up to four opportunities to apply via ACE provided you still meet all eligibility criterions each time you apply.
4. You must have not practised as a New Zealand Registered Nurse continuously (full time 0.8FTE or more) for longer than six months before starting on the NETP programme.

Graduates that do not meet the ACE criteria should apply directly to individual employers for private positions. We recommend checking the Kiwi Health Jobs website or the careers websites for each DHB.

You will find all information about the ACE process at the ACE Nursing Website, nursing.acenz.net.nz. This should be the first place that you visit if you have any questions. The Applicant Guide can be found in the ACE Nursing Resources section, make sure to download a copy, it is the A to Z of the entire ACE process.

We really value your feedback and welcome any suggestions. At the end of each year ACE will distribute an annual survey which serves as a process of continuous improvement which is based on feedback from our applicants, education providers and employing recruiters involved in the ACE process.

You can contact ACE on **0800 223 236** or email nursing@acenz.net.nz, we are open Monday through Friday between 8am and 4.30pm.

ACE Application Overview

You only have 4 weeks to complete your application once applications open. During that four week period you can log in and out of your ACE profile as many times as necessary until your application is complete.

Those four weeks sounds like a long time, but you must be prepared by starting to complete your Identification and Residency documents, Academic Transcripts, Resume and Cover Letters together now if you haven't done so already.

You will select and rank up to three employers you would prefer to work with and select up to 5 practice setting preferences as part of your application.

Once your application is fully complete, ACE will extract all of your application details and documents. If your application is not complete by the cut-off date, your application will not be submitted to employers.

Once ACE has extracted all of the completed applications, ACE will assess then score your application before distributing to the employers that you've ranked in your application. The candidate profiles are then sent to employers nationwide at the same time. Provided your application is complete by the cut-off date, you can be assured that your application will be sent to the employers of your preference.

Employers then have 6 weeks to shortlist, interview and assess their applicants for selection into their NETP and NESP programmes. ACE is not involved during this 6 week interview and selection period.

Each employer will have their own recruitment processes and will have different shortlisting criteria that they are working to. If you have questions about your application at this stage, you need to contact the NETP coordinator; you can find their contact details in the Employer Contact Information section of the ACE Nursing website.

Once employers complete their interview and shortlisting process they will submit their list of preferred candidates electronically via the ACE system. Their candidates are ranked in order for both NETP and NESP intakes.

ACE will now match your application against the list of employers that you would like to work for. The ACE Algorithm begins to match candidates to their most preferred employer. This is a blind match process. Employers will not know where you have ranked them; all they will know is that they are one of possibly three employers you have preferenced.

The ACE algorithm only matches applicants to employers, it will not match applicants to practice settings. Once the match is completed, employers will know which applicants have been matched to them and they can then begin to allocate their candidates to the specific vacancies that they have available.

Offers will be sent out the day after each State Final. ACE will email all applicants the morning after your state final exam to let you know whether you've been matched to an employer or not.

For those who were successful, you will receive an email stating which employer you were matched to. For those who have not been successfully matched to a position yet, you will receive an email informing you that you'll be automatically placed into the ACE Talent Pool. The Talent Pool is then distributed to all employers, not just the employers that you ranked in your application. If you haven't received an email from ACE by 1pm on offer day, please check your spam/junk inboxes before contacting ACE.

Registration and Documents

ACE serves as an application portal in much the same way as a standard recruitment website like Seek. You are required to register and log-in to the ACE website and complete a series of questions, including our workforce questionnaires and upload your documentation.

Once you've registered your profile you will submit your Resume, Cover Letter(s), Identification and Residency documents, Academic Transcript and declare any health and criminal history declarations. All documents must be submitted in PDF format.

Your identification documents must be verified or certified. Here is a list of who can verify your documents:

- Justice of the Peace
- Lawyer
- Police Officer
- Court Registrar

If you have had a statutory name change by deed poll, please provide the proof by scanning this document together with your New Zealand Driver's License or Student Identification Card.

ACE requires the following certified identification documents:

New Zealand and Australian Citizens: The photo page of New Zealand or Australian Passport or New Zealand Driver's Licence **plus** New Zealand Tertiary Student Identification Card or New Zealand Driver's License

Permanent Resident Visa Holders: The photo page of an Overseas Passport **plus** the relevant Visa Document **plus** New Zealand Tertiary Student Identification Card or New Zealand Driver's License.

You will be required to submit your full academic transcript up to the date that you apply to ACE. These must be verified by your tertiary institute and it can take up to two weeks to process these.

When submitting your cover letters, you have two options. You can either submit one cover letter which all employers you select will be able to see or, you can write separate cover letters for each of the employers that you have selected. Writing separate cover letters is the best option! It allows you to customise your cover letter specifically to an employer.

Your Cover Letter should include:

- Brief Introduction about yourself. You can chose to incorporate a mihi and provide your whakapapa
- Your Nursing Philosophy/Kaupapa
- Brief summary of your skills and abilities
- Your main reasons for choosing each employer
- Highlight why you've chosen your practice setting preferences
- Finally, include any other details that you think are relevant to your application for a NETP/NESP position

When preparing your Resume, make sure your document is clear, concise and completely error free! Attaching a photo on your CV isn't a bad idea; just make it passport size and professional.

Full information and advice for preparing Resume's and Cover letters can be found on the ACE Nursing website. ACE has prepared templates to assist your application and is very specific to the ACE process. The templates can be found in the [ACE Nursing Resources](#) section and embedded in your application. The choice to use the ACE templates or your own documents is completely up to you.

Health and Criminal History Declarations are declarations only, you don't need to provide any supporting evidence, it's just a place where you mention whether you have anything to declare or not, and if so, what it is. So if you're not sure whether you need to declare something or not, just declare it to be safe. Be aware that most employers do perform criminal history checks and extended checks under the vulnerable children's act as part of their own HR processes.

Selecting Your Preferences

As part of your application you will nominate up to three employers and five Practice Settings to support your ACE Nursing application.

All employers participate in the End of Year Intake, but only 9 - 12 participate in the Mid-Year Intake. Check the ACE Nursing Website for details before each intake. You will select up to three employers and you are able to change the order of your employer preferences right up until the date when employers finish their interviews, which are generally seven weeks after applications close. For example, if you had an interview with your third preferred employer but not your first or second, if you believe that you have more chance of being matched to this employer, in this instance you could then contact ACE and change your employer preference to make your third preferred employer become your first preference as this may give you the greatest chance of being matched to this employer. A template of this email request can be found in the FAQ section.

Once you have chosen your preference of employer you will need to select up to five practice settings or areas of specialist practice. If there are sub-specialties you know you would like to practice in, for example Women's Health, highlight this in your cover letter, unfortunately you cannot select it as a practice setting.

Employers are encouraged to advertise their expected vacancies on their individual career websites one week before the application for each intake opens. They will also indicate the practice settings will be available to select from.

Outline in your cover letters exactly what practice setting you want to train in with that employer. Remember, there may be some differences across the employers who you have selected, in terms of which specialties that they have vacancies in. You can only select 5 practice settings in your ACE application.

If you seek further clarification about practice settings, please contact your NETP coordinator. Once applications close, you are no longer able to change your practice setting preferences. So discuss your clinical preferences in depth at the interview stage.

You can apply to both NETP and NESP programmes via the ACE Process and you can also apply for Primary Care, Aged Residential Care and Community Care positions through ACE. If you are interested in a voluntary bonding scheme position, remember to mention this in your cover letter! More information can be found on the ACE Nursing and Ministry of Health website.

To apply for NESP, you would simply rank Mental Health and Addictions as a practice setting preference. ACE recommends that NESP should rank as your number one practice setting preference if you are considering Mental Health & Addictions.

NETP covers all the remaining practice setting specialties. To apply to both NETP and NESP you would rank Mental Health plus one or two other NETP practice settings. To apply to NESP only, you would just rank Mental Health and leave the other two practice setting options blank.

Employers work in partnership with other employers in primary care, aged residential care and community care in order to recruit new graduates, so if you rank one of these practice settings in your application, the employer will forward your application to those facilities.

To apply to Department of Corrections, please select Primary Care. Primary Health Care positions include Practice Nursing; Iwi Providers; Pacific Providers; School Nursing; Well Child Tamariki Ora providers (e.g. Plunket); GP and Hospice. Make sure that you highlight any Primary Care organisations that you would work for in your Cover Letter as per the instructions in the ACE Nursing Cover Letter Template.

References, Interviews & Assessments

You are required to select one Clinical Tutor from your nursing school and the other must be a Nurse Preceptor employed by the organisation where you completed your transition placement in your final year. It is mandatory that you use referees from your final placement in your third year.

The following nursing cohorts have been identified by ACE and the ACE Nursing Reference group as starting their final placement late during the ACE nursing intakes for **2019**. It was agreed that these students were not reasonably expected to be able to provide high quality references from their final year placements before the traditional application closing date. The students enrolled with these nursing cohorts will be granted permission to use references completed by their preceptors and tutors from the placement immediately prior to their transition placement as part of their application. These students MUST have all other aspects of their ACE nursing application completed before the traditional application closing date.

End of Year 2019

- Southern IT, UCOL and Otago Polytechnic

Both references must be requested, completed and returned via the ACE system within the four weeks that applications from when applications open in order for your application to be deemed complete and to progress to the next stage of the process.

For information on how to request references please see the ACE Applicant Guide or the Reference Section within your ACE application. If you are having difficulty getting in touch with your referees, or your referee's are not completing your references, please contact the ACE centre on **0800 223 226**.

ACE strongly suggests you speak with your referees prior to nominating them within the ACE system either via email or calling them to ask them for permission. We recommend that you ask your referees the date when you could expect that they can complete your references for you

Once you enter your referees email address in your ACE application, an automated email will be sent directly to your referee. The email will contain a link that is unique to your ACE profile. Applicants are able to check this 'live' in their applications.

Your referees will be asked a series of questions based on the following four Nursing Council competencies:

- Professional Responsibility [5 questions, 25 points]
- Management of Nursing Care [5 questions, 25 points]
- Interpersonal Relationships [2 questions, 10 points]
- Inter-professional Relationships [2 questions, 10 points]

Each question is graded on a likert scale of 1 – 5 across nationally agreed ratings of performance for a 3rd year student.

Both references must be requested, completed and returned via the ACE system within the four weeks that applications are open in order for your application to be deemed complete and to progress to the next stage of the process.

If you are re-applying for any future intakes and wish to enter new referee details, you will need to edit the pre-populated details of your previous reference and enter the new reference details. All applicants are solely responsible for referees completing the referee report before the ACE applications close.

Employers will have 6 weeks to shortlist, interview and rank graduates during each intake. Not everyone will be interviewed. Applicants who meet the locally applied criteria are interviewed and employers can then use their own interview or assessment process to determine which graduates to employ.

Before your interview, always be prepared and expect the unexpected. Be prepared to talk about your nursing philosophy, clinical knowledge and your experience as an undergraduate nurse. Also be prepared to answer behavioural questions. Ask the interviewer about their vacancies and specialties first, that way you know what their vacancies are before you tell them what specialties you really want.

When interviewing it is a good idea to discuss with the employer their available specialties and the support offered for new Graduate Nurses, that way you can make a more informed decision regarding how best to order your most preferred employers.

Employers will interview differently. Some may hold panel interviews and others may hold one-on-one interviews while larger employers may choose to run an assessment centre to consider all of their applicants.

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Be conscious of your personal presentation. Remember that this is a professional interview so present yourself professionally and arrive on time! The interview is an opportunity for you to ask them questions too! There is a wide variety of resources online to assist you with job interview techniques and your tertiary provider will give you access to career advisors who have access to a wide range of tools to help you during the interview process.

The Interview Process generally happens in this order…

1. Employers interview graduates: Note that each employer runs their own process and interviews may therefore occur at any time throughout the 6 week period.
2. Applicants may re-order their preferred employers if they wish. To do this, you must email ACE to request the change.
3. Employer's shortlist and rank their candidates in preference order once interviews have been completed.
4. Employers submit rankings: At the end of the 6 week period employers must submit to ACE their final list of graduates in ranked order together with their number of NETP and NESP vacancies.

ACE is not involved in the employers short-listing process so we can't tell you why you've not been invited to interview. If you have questions during interview stage you will need to direct these to the NETP or NESP coordinators of the DHB, Southern Cross or Ryman Healthcare.

If you are a good candidate for both NETP and NESP, it is possible for you to be ranked in both lists and if you are ranked for both NETP and NESP positions, you'll most likely be matched to NESP because the ACE algorithm gives preference to Mental Health as it is typically a more difficult specialty to fill.

ACE Score & Employer Spreadsheet

In this section we will discuss your ACE Score and the Employers Spreadsheets.

The ACE score of your application is sent to each employer that you prefer and is made up of the following nationally agreed upon criterion; referee report card (140 points), fitness to practice (5 points), your academic transcript (3 points) and finally your scholarship (3 points) towards your nursing degree if applicable. While this score is not critical to your application, this does provide and indicate to NETP coordinators and recruiters a snapshot of the strength of your application. Historical surveys show that employers place highest importance on your interview, Resume, Cover Letter, your reference check from your preceptor and finally your practice setting preferences before you get to the interview and selection stage. It is generally accepted that your success for obtaining a NETP or NESP position is based upon the strength of your interview and/or assessments; therefore it is critical that you perform well during this stage.

The referee report card will need to be completed by two referees of your choice. The first referee will be your Clinical Tutor from your final year and the second referee will be from a Nurse Preceptor who supervised you in your final year, preferably from your final or clinical placement.

We use a standardised reference check form and questions are divided into the 4 Registered Nursing competencies and these questions were constructed by the DON's

•   Professional Responsibility [25 points]
•   Management of Nursing Care [25 points]
•   Interpersonal Relationships [10 points]
•   Inter-professional Relationships [10 points]

Each question is graded on a likert scale of 1 – 5 across nationally agreed ratings of performance for a 3rd year student and the maximum score you can receive is 70 points per referee. The maximum combined score from both referees is 140 points which carries a combined weighting of 70%

The reference form will also ask the question is this nurse fit to practice? You will be awarded five points for "Yes" and minus five points for "No."

Once ACE has scored your referee report card we then assess your grades however, we don't award three points for being an A student and one for being a C student, you are awarded three points for correctly attaching your verified academic transcript with your most current results.

Finally, you will get a maximum of three points if you were awarded a scholarship for your Bachelor of Nursing degree. Book grants or a one-thousand dollar government grant won't count. ACE will assess and research each scholarship individually to determine whether it meets the criteria which grants you the three points. You don't get additional points for having had more than 1 scholarship, regardless of whether you had one or three scholarships; you'll get three points as this is the max you can be awarded for this section.

ACE will then compile this information into regional spreadsheets generated for each employer taking part in the ACE Nursing intake. Each employer will receive a spreadsheet with their applicant's ACE Score ranked in descending order. The ACE Score is simply an indication to an employer about how each applicant is performing against the levels expected of a third year Bachelor of Nursing student. Accompanied with the Employer Spreadsheet is each applicants ACE Profile and documentation.

ACE Match Algorithm

This section sets out to explain the ACE Match Algorithm and the impact that it has for all students. The Match algorithm is formulated to ensure that candidates are matched wherever possible to their first preferred employer and ensuring that each successful candidate receives one job offer only. The algorithm operates based on 4 main principles:

1. The employer ranking of applicants takes highest priority. This way, the employer's highest ranked applicants have the best chance of being matched to a position
2. The applicant's employer preference takes second priority. This way, if an employer prefers an applicant, the algorithm favours the applicant's choice of employer from 1st to 2nd to 3rd
3. The algorithm will only match applicants to a NESP position if they and the employer have preferenced them for a NESP position. The same applies for NETP positions. This way, only applicants that employers preferred for NESP can be matched to NESP positions. Applicants who rank Mental Health and Addictions as their first choice practice setting have the best chance of being considered for NESP positions
4. Each applicant can only be matched to one employer

The ACE algorithm first identifies all the highest ranked applicants who were ranked above that employer's "Quota Line" (the quota line refers to that employer's number of vacancies).

The ACE algorithm first aims to match all applicants ranked above the quota line for each employer to their first preferred employer where possible. It then runs through any remaining applicants still above the quota line of each employer and matches them to their second preferred employer where possible. If there are still applicants ranked above the quota line that are not matched yet, it will match them to their third preferred employer.

At this point, if there are still vacancies remaining, the algorithm then looks at applicants ranked below the quota line. For example, if Auckland DHB has 30 positions but has ranked 60 applicants, all applicants ranked from 31 – 60 will therefore fall below the quota line. If this were to be the case, the algorithm will look at each applicant below the line in employer preference order, i.e. it will try to match applicant number 31 first, then 32, and so on, always aiming to match the applicant to their highest preferred employer where possible. The algorithm runs the above process twice, first for all applicants ranked by an employer for NESP positions, and secondly for all applicants ranked by an employer for NETP positions.

Once the match algorithm is complete, the match results are then sent to the individual employers who will send out job offers and subsequently move forward with on-boarding and induction. Those graduates not successfully matched in the ACE match will go into a Talent Pool for later consideration for additional places as they arise.

Here is some general advice about the ACE Match Algorithm...

- Candidates should only prefer employers that they are happy to work in.
- To have the best chance of securing a position, applicants should preference more than one employer.
- It is important that applicants consider the practice settings where employers indicate that they have vacancies. Employers are encouraged to advertise to applicants in advance, the areas they intend to recruit for each intake.
- The match algorithm process does not take into account applicant practice setting preferences
- When interviewing with an employer it is a good idea to discuss their available specialties and support for their new Graduate Nurses as this will allow applicants to make a more informed decision regarding which employer(s) they would most like to apply to.

Post Offer & National Talent Pool

In this section we will outline the post-offer process and the National Talent Pool. On the Wednesday morning after state finals, at 9am, all candidates will be notified by ACE of the outcome of their application.

For all candidates who have been successfully matched, you will receive two emails. An email after 9am will come from ACE to simply advise you that you have been matched to an employer. Then, after 1pm, you will receive a letter or email offer directly from the employer they were matched to. Successful candidates must either accept or decline their offer no later than one week after the date that offers were made. Failure to do so will mean that your offer will be declined and you will be removed from the entire intake.

For all candidates who were not matched, their applications will automatically go into the national talent pool which is accessible to all employers nationwide. It is anticipated that during each intake a number of positions may become available and these positions will be filled using applicants from this talent pool. Employers will continue to employ new graduates from the talent pool right up to the next recruitment round.

If you are prepared to accept jobs with other employers that you had not initially ranked in your application you might like to write to the NETP coordinators of those organisations and let them know that you are in the talent pool and are prepared to work for them if positions become vacant. Employers are able review your application at their discretion should they wish to consider it when a vacancy arises.

Take care when making contact with NETP coordinators as they are often flooded with enquiries and are also busy with other aspects of their roles. Be as courteous as possible when contacting them and be very clear about your message and the reason why you are calling or emailing them.

If you are subsequently offered a job from the talent pool you must inform ACE immediately as your details will need to be updated and removed from the talent pool.

The Talent Pool for the intake you applied to is available right up until the national talent pool for the subsequent intake is made available. For the Mid-Year intake the talent Pool is usually open from late July to late November. The End of Year Talent Pool is usually open from late November to late July the following year.

ACE recommends that you also visit the Kiwi Health Jobs website, the careers pages of employers and seek or TradeMe to research the nursing job market.

All applicants who still meet the eligibility criteria can re-apply to the ACE nursing website with their existing user name and password. Your previous referee details will be retained in your new application. If you would like to change referees, please navigate to the referee section of your application and edit the referee details accordingly. A new reference request with unique ID will be sent to the referee outlining the next steps and the reference due date. Your referee must complete your reference report form by the time applications close. Your previous certified academic transcript will be uploaded to your new application. If there are additions to your results since you last application, you can upload this new transcript. Note only academic transcripts that meet the requirements outlined in the application requirements section of the site will be able to be attached to your application.

For more information about the Talent Pool, please visit the ACE Nursing Website Talent Pool section.