

# INTERVIEW SECRETS

*Workbook*



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## **PURPOSE OF THE INTERVIEW**

Keep in mind of the purpose of the interview to keep your answers focused and objective.

**“The purpose of the interview is to identify students who will successfully complete the program.”**

Make this your mantra and use it as the theme of all of your answers.

## FINANCES

- Complete the table below with your own financial data, then create and print a version to share
- The ACTUAL amounts are what it will actually cost you to live throughout the program
- WHAT YOU SHARE is the general statement of how you will pay for the actual amounts, i.e. Savings, Family Host, Spouse/Partner Income, Student Loans, etc.
  - The one-page financial outline is included for you to complete at the end of the workbook as part of Appendix A

	ACTUAL	WHAT YOU SHARE
<b>Housing</b>		
<b>Living Expenses &amp; Bills</b>		
<b>Cost of the Program</b>		

\*Will you need to relocate to attend this school? If so, research housing costs, local taxes, utility and insurance rates to really understand what it will cost you to live there.

Housing: \_\_\_\_\_

Taxes: \_\_\_\_\_

Utilities: \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance: \_\_\_\_\_

## WHAT TO WEAR

Plan your interview wardrobe to be as comfortable as possible while presenting a sharp, professional appearance.

### ***MEN'S WORKSHEET***

#### **PLAN**

#### **BACKUP PLAN**

**Shirt & Tie**

**Slacks**

**Jacket**

**Shoes / Socks**

**Accessories**


### ***WOMEN'S WORKSHEET***

#### **PLAN**

#### **BACKUP PLAN**

**Shirt**

**Slacks/Skirt**

**Jacket**

**Shoes**

**Socks/Hose**

**Accessories**


## NERVOUS ENERGY

People handle nervous energy differently depending on many factors and scenarios.

Here you will plan for giving yourself powerful directions so you can return to a state of calm focus.

### Expressions of nervous energy:

- *Wiggling foot/knee*
- *Tapping/clicking a pen*
- *Biting lips, fingernails, or edges of fingers*
- *Picking at skin on hands, elbows, or face*
- *Touching or rearranging hair*
- *Sweating*
- *Slouching*
- *Lack of eye contact*

### Which of the above do you do?

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- *Now that you know exactly how you express nervous energy, write the direction you will give yourself to come back to a calm and focused state:*

**Our mantra is:** *My feet are on the floor, my butt is in the chair, I can feel the back of the chair on my back, and I'm back.*

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## Harmonious (introvert) and Assertive (extrovert) and Nerves

Harmonious individuals may have nervous energy around being alone in a new situation, getting every answer right, feeling rejected ahead of time, and knowing what to do in advance.

Assertive individuals may have nervous energy around wanting to control the process, trusting the interviewers, making a mistake, having a mistake discussed, or trick questions.

Everyone has a bit of both, and some have so much of both as to be true ambiverts. Use the tips below that feel most appropriate for you.

## Tips

<b>HARMONIOUS</b>	<b>ASSERTIVE</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Be prepared in order to reduce distractions in your mind</i></li><li>• <i>Remember you are there to show you can successfully complete the program; making friends and earning social status comes later</i></li><li>• <i>Be clear on what things you really want to express in the interview before you get there</i></li><li>• <i>Accept that the interviewers may not express enthusiasm for your answers; they are supposed to be neutral</i></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Be open to the experience for however it is; your focus is to be listen calmly</i></li><li>• <i>Have a plan for when (not if) you make a mistake; end the panic before it starts</i></li><li>• <i>When challenged on an answer deliberately relax before replying. Patience = winning</i></li><li>• <i>Focus on controlling your own energy vs. controlling the questions or energy in the whole room</i></li></ul>

## **MEETING NEW PEOPLE**

We recommend envisioning you already know the new person (or people) you're about to meet, and that you just haven't seen them in so long you don't remember them well. This way you are not nervous, and you are able to greet them with a genuine smile.

If this doesn't sound like it will work for you:

- *Practice the technique with a stranger to gauge both their response and how you feel during and after*
- *Come up with another defined method to handle your nervous energy when meeting new people. The method should do the following:*
  - *Allow you to focus on the other person*
  - *Enable you to relax and stay calm*
  - *Be easy to remember and repeat*

## **ANSWERING THE UNEXPECTED/UNUSUAL**

There is no way to prepare for every possible question in an interview, as each interviewer brings their own style, perspective, biases, and best practices to the table.

The questions could be unrelated to the medical field, your professional or academic background, or to anything you can think of. Or so detailed and unrelated to the previous question that you cannot quite grasp the answer from all that is going on in your mind.

Therefore, it is important for you to have a prepared methodology for answering the questions that are unexpected or unusual.

**Let's look at a few different ways to handle an unusual or unexpected question:**

- *Pause + Ask for Clarification + End or Segue on a Positive Note*
- *Pause + Acknowledge Ignorance + Vocalize Plan to Learn the Answer*
- *Pause + Offer a Guess or Relate the Parts of the Subject You Are Familiar With*

**WHY YOU WANT TO BE A CRNA**

**Keep in mind the school is looking for people who will successfully complete the program.**

- *Your "Why" will help them understand if you will finish or not*
- *Your story need a beginning, a middle, and an ending*
- *Research your own story for the best and/or most interesting parts*
- *Keep your story length to 2-4 minutes; **practice out loud***

**Think about the following before answering the questions on the next page:**

- *Who was the first CRNA you ever met?*
- *When and how did you first learn about the CRNA program, and who or what got you to that point?*
- *What do you admire most about successful CRNAs?*
- *What about being a CRNA is most appealing to you?*
- *How long have you known you want to become a CRNA?*
- *Why did you choose CRNA over other advanced nursing degrees?*
- *What will you feel most proud of after becoming a CRNA?*

***The Story of  
Why I want to become a  
Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist***

**Beginning:** This can be the point at which you discovered the CRNA career, the event that inspired you to become a nurse in the first place, or the person you admired who helped you discover your passion or have the confidence to pursue it.

**Middle:** Open to all related details and storylines, the middle is where you detail the factors that inspired you to pursue the degree. Select details that are genuinely meaningful to you.

**Ending:** Here is where you bring in details of your successful track record of accomplishing your objectives and goals to emphasize your high likelihood of successfully completing the program.

**My Notes:**

Beginning: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Middle: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Ending: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **STRENGTH AND WEAKNESSES**

The interviewers are inquiring about your strengths and weaknesses through the lens of whether or not you are likely to successfully complete the program. For this reason, your answers should be related to your professional or academic performance.

Ask current or former co-workers, current or former supervisors/mentors, or former classmates who know you well enough to comment.

Below is a quick chart to help you identify your strengths and weaknesses from your own perspective, as well as the perspectives of others.

	<b>I THINK</b>	<b>FEEDBACK FROM OTHERS</b>
<b>Strengths</b>		
<b>Weaknesses</b>		

## How to Convey Strengths and Weaknesses in the Interview

HARMONIOUS	ASSERTIVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Strength:</b> commitment to patient care   <b>Weakness:</b> sometimes too patient-focused, and other tasks slide (so I do _____ to make sure all tasks are completed timely)</li> <li>• <b>Strength:</b> thorough and meticulous   <b>Weakness:</b> sometimes so meticulous there's not enough time for everything (so I do _____ to stay on track)</li> <li>• <b>Strength:</b> works well with everyone   <b>Weakness:</b> can be too social and lose focus (so I _____ to make sure I'm balancing priorities well)</li> <li>• <b>Strength:</b> best clinical recall of anyone I know   <b>Weakness:</b> sometimes so clinical that patients and/or families feel neglected (so I _____ in order to ease their concerns/discomfort)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Strength:</b> ready and able to take charge in any situation   <b>Weakness:</b> sometimes stepping up out of turn (so now I _____ before stepping up and things run much smoother)</li> <li>• <b>Strength:</b> excels at clarifying complex situations   <b>Weakness:</b> can be anxious or defiant when situations are ambiguous (so I _____ with my team and that helps)</li> <li>• <b>Strength:</b> high standards   <b>Weakness:</b> can be critical of others' work (so I remind myself that _____ and stay open to lessons from unexpected sources)</li> <li>• <b>Strength:</b> able to track large numbers of details   <b>Weakness:</b> can sometimes lose sight of the big picture (so I _____ to maintain a broader perspective)</li> </ul>

## **WHY DO YOU PREFER THIS PROGRAM OVER OTHERS?**

To craft your answer to this question, begin by researching the school and program beyond the school's web site. Keep in mind the interviewers are looking for students who will successfully complete the program, so it's a good idea to identify support programs and success stories.

- *Do a search in Google or Bing on the name of the school/program;*
  - *Browse of the results for interesting links*
  - *Click to view "News" for that search*
  - *See if anything interesting has happened recently*
- *Search LinkedIn for the School's pages; there should be a page dedicated to the school, and possibly one for them as an employer*
  - *Browse around for interesting details that are not obvious on the school's web site*

### ***My Preference for This School Comes From***

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## WHAT YOU WILL DO IF YOU DON'T GET IN

This question begs you to be vulnerable and go to a dark place in your mind. Do not discuss other schools/programs by name, or how many you have in mind.

Finding the positive is critical!

Focus on getting this one message across: "I'm going to become a CRNA one way or another".

Write your plan so you know what it is:

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## WHY THEY SHOULD ACCEPT YOU

A clear challenge to your determination, this question provides the perfect opportunity to say (with confidence – not arrogance): "I'm someone who completes what I start."

Be prepared with detailed examples of your preparedness and past history of successfully completing long-term goals under pressure.

- *Reference your performance through nursing school*
- *Reference high school only if you overcame serious hardship*
- *Use religious and community/civic program accomplishments; for confidentiality you can use the same words (religious, civic, or community)*

Write why they should accept you:

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## WHAT TO SAY IF YOU HAVE FAILED PREVIOUSLY

If you have failed to complete a program previously, know that you are in good company with many other talented, hard-working people who weren't able to finish for a variety of reasons.

### Get clear of why you didn't finish as a first step:

- *Financial: work schedule, access to transportation, commute time*
- *Circumstantial (unexpected): pregnancy, illness or death in the family, relocation, natural disaster*
- *Morale/lack of inspiration: not the right program and found out too late; rushed in to the wrong program; program misrepresented important aspects, discovered more about CRNA after enrolled*
- *Lack of preparation/understanding: unprepared for the commitment level, the workload, or to be in a learning environment again*
- *Lack of support: financial, emotional, or pragmatic; not having a support system in place*

Whichever the reasons, it's important to frame your answer so the interviewers hear that you are now in a better situation and completion is the only outcome for you.

Formula:

1. **State the objective reason/s** why you didn't finish
2. **Talk through** what has changed since then; what you have done, learned, or now understand better
3. **Express gratitude** for what you learned in the process
4. **Provide an outline** (verbally) of how you are now prepared to complete the program, referencing your financial plan, support systems, and re-stating WHY you want to become a CRNA

## WORK EXPERIENCE

When answering questions about your work experience, stay humble and honest.

Everyone has exposure to areas they are not necessarily proficient in, and it is this distinction that is important to keep in mind.

Get comfortable with phrases that allow you to answer honestly but do not commit you to a higher level of proficiency than is true. Below are example phrases to guide you through these tough questions:

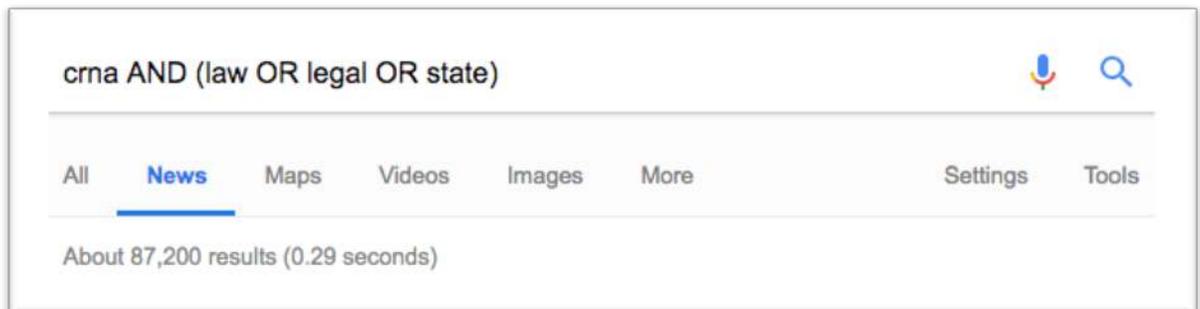
- *I haven't had the opportunity to do that yet...but want to, are looking forward to, or otherwise have an interest in*
- *I have shadowed or filled in briefly and like these interesting things about it*
- *When I am working as a CRNA I would like to work in that area, so am eager to learn everything I can*
- *A mentor/friend/boss/colleague has shared their experience with me and I think something positive*
- *I was torn between the area the question is about and the area I have worked in and I chose my area because positive reason*

## KNOWING THE CRNA POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

Understanding the laws, guidelines, and political factors that impact CRNAs at work in different states is important during your interview.

Below are resources for you to search, read, and reference:

- *American Association of Nurse Anesthetists*
- *Nurse-Anesthesia.org*
- *Allnurses.com (pre-CRNA, SRNA, and CRNA)*
- *Type the following into a Google search and after results load, click the News tab: **crna AND (law OR legal OR state)***
  - *You can substitute other words between the parentheses, just make sure to keep a space between each word and OR, i.e. crna AND (**guideline OR Michigan OR rule**)*



## QUESTIONS TO ASK THE INTERVIEWERS

Good questions during the interview can be about alumni programs, career services, or details about the cohort.

Research the school beyond their own web site; search the web for local, state, and national news about the school to find out what is important to them. Did they recently open a new facility, launch another program that is interesting, host or otherwise be involved with a non-profit you care about, or earn any civic awards?

**One you have completed your research, formulate 2-4 questions to have ready:**

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_

# PERSONAL PLAN AND ANSWER SUMMARY

## **What to bring:**

- *Resume*
- *Copy of Transcripts*
- *Financial Summary Page*
- *Notepad and Pen*
- *Snack*

**What I will eat before the interview:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Interview Wardrobe:**

- *Top:* \_\_\_\_\_
- *Bottom:* \_\_\_\_\_
- *Shoes:* \_\_\_\_\_
- *Accessories:* \_\_\_\_\_

**My nervous energy mantra:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **Why I want to be a CRNA:**

- *Beginning:* \_\_\_\_\_
- *Middle:* \_\_\_\_\_
- *End:* \_\_\_\_\_

**My strengths and weaknesses:**

- *Strength:* \_\_\_\_\_

- *Weakness:*

\_\_\_\_\_

**Why I prefer this program:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**What I will do if not accepted:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Why I should be accepted:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**(Optional):** Why I failed to complete a program previously:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Questions I will ask the interviewers:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX

### FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Use this format to present a financial snapshot on one sheet of paper.

What you are offering is a description of how you will pay for your life and school during the program. For each of the 4 categories, you will list the source of funds and support.

Some possible sources of funds can be Savings, Family Donation (rent, car, etc.), Student Loans, Partner Income, Passive/Investment Income

#### Expenses Description

**Housing:** \_\_\_\_\_

*(moving, staying, funds for rent/mortgage coming from...)*

**Living Expenses:** \_\_\_\_\_

*(eating out, miscellaneous, etc. funds coming from...)*

**Bills:** \_\_\_\_\_

*(credit cards, utilities, insurance, taxes coming from...)*

**Tuition:** \_\_\_\_\_