

Oncology Nursing

How to develop and excel in a career within oncology nursing

More Canadians than ever are living with cancer. As new and innovative screening, treatment, and prevention methods are becoming available, there are new hopes as well as challenges in cancer care. We need more nurses in the oncology specialty area who have the latest knowledge and skills to deliver high quality care.

Read on about how to prepare for lifelong career excellence in oncology nursing as we focus on the following areas for development:



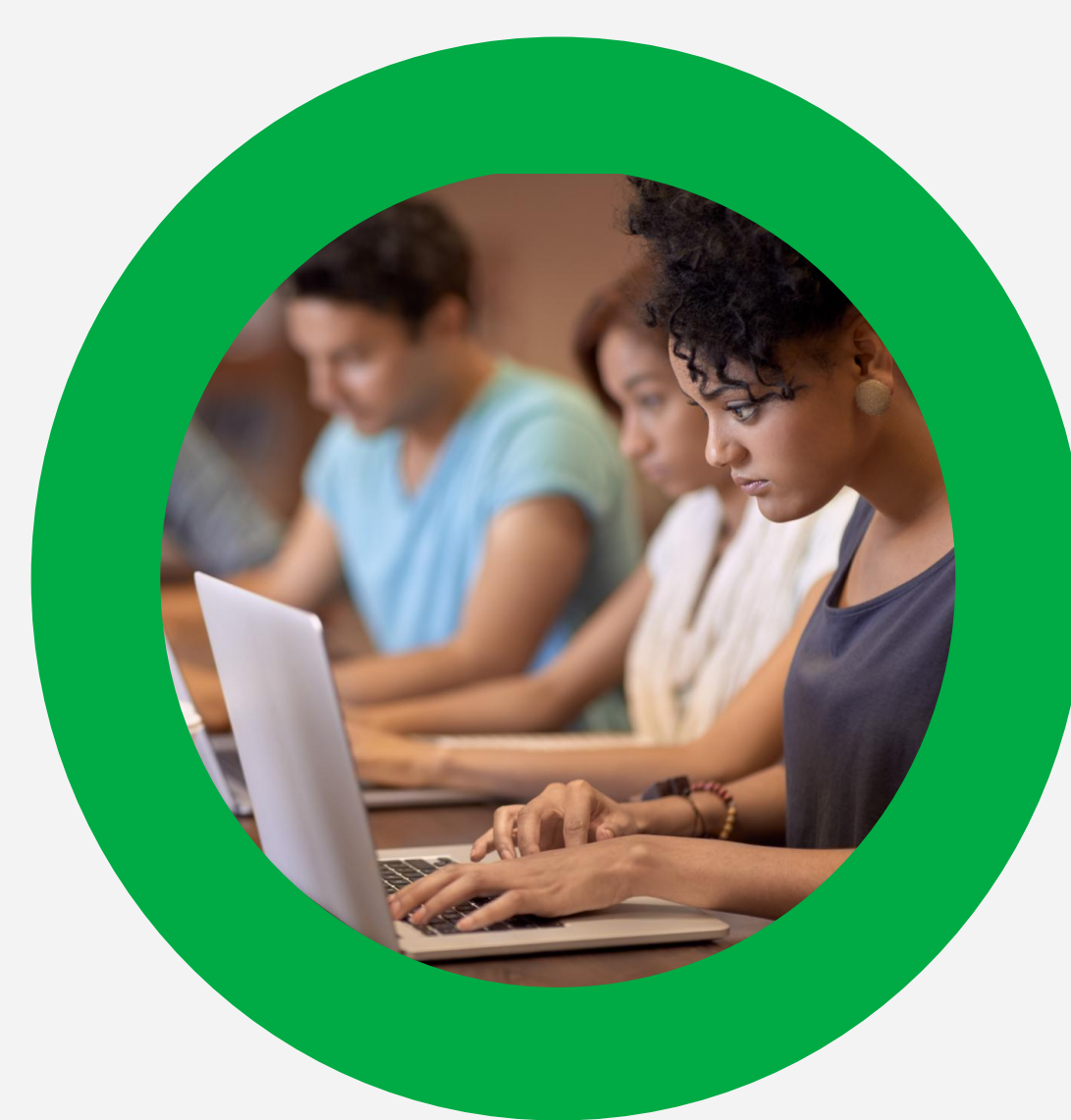
Initial Application

Crafting a quality resume and cover letter unique to your capabilities.



Interview Preparation

Tips for one of the most important aspects of the job application process.



Continuing Education

Obtaining the confidence to provide quality care, and how de Souza can help.

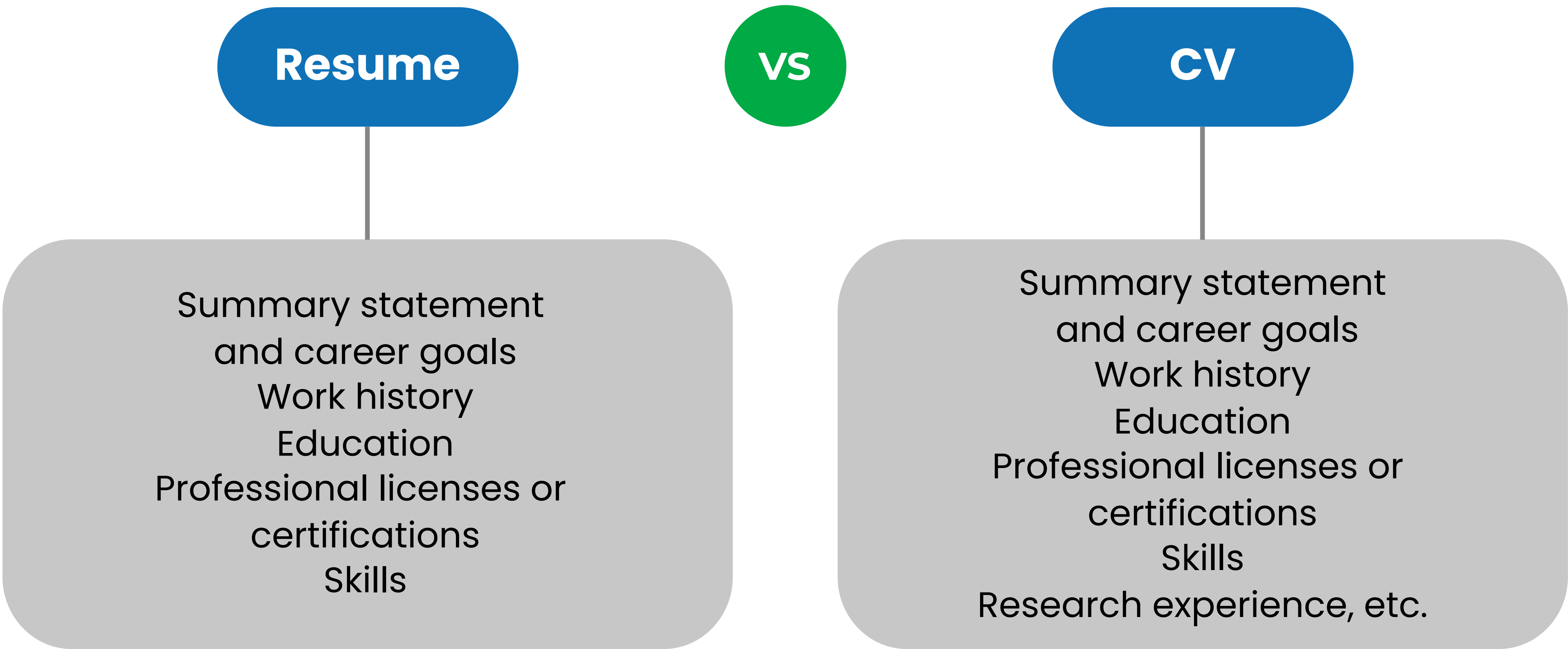
A career in oncology is extremely rewarding. Cancer is a life threatening disease affecting our quality of life. Oncology nurses are privileged to provide care to patients and families and will walk with them on their cancer journeys every step of the way. Together, we can conquer cancer.

Initial Application

Creating an effective first impression in your job application

Applying to any nursing position means crafting a quality job application, which usually contains a resume/CV, cover letter, and sometimes letters of reference. To help you get your foot in the door, let's go over some key differences and tips for crafting a quality resume/CV and cover letter.

Resume vs. Curriculum Vitae (CV)



A resume is usually used for applying for jobs in nursing or administration

Cover Letters

Cover letters are similar to resumes but in full sentence and paragraph form. It should not be all repetition, but should follow the same style (i.e. contact information heading, font, etc.) and not be crowded with words.

RESUME:	COVER LETTER:
<div><div><div><div>NAME SURNAME</div><div>GRAPHIC DESIGNER</div></div><div><div>CONTACT</div><div>+123 456 7894</div><div>Your Mail Goes Here</div><div>Your Site Goes Here</div></div></div><div><div><div>PROFILE</div><div> Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat. Ut wis enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exerci tation ullamcorper suscipit</div></div><div><div>EDUCATION</div><div><div>Your University Name</div><div>Department Your Degree Name</div><div>2011-2014</div></div><div><div>Your University Name</div><div>Department Your Degree Name</div><div>2011-2014</div></div></div><div><div><div>EXPERTISE</div><div><div>o Requirements Analysis</div><div>o Budgeting and Scheduling</div><div>o Procurement Management</div><div>o Team Management</div><div>o Stakeholder Management</div></div></div><div><div><div>CERTIFICATIONS</div><div><div>Professional Certification</div><div>Certifying Organization 2016</div></div><div><div>Professional Certification</div><div>Certifying Organization 2017</div></div></div></div><div><div><div>WORK EXPERIENCE</div><div><div>Your Job Title</div><div>Company Your Site Name</div></div><div> Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut</div><div><div>o ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do</div><div>o rorum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do</div><div>o spalum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do</div></div></div><div><div><div>Your Job Title</div><div>Company Your Site Name</div></div><div> Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut</div><div><div>o ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing e'it, sed do</div><div>o rorum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do</div><div>o spalum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do</div></div></div><div><div><div>Your Job Title</div><div>Company Your Site Name</div></div><div> Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut</div><div><div>o ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do</div><div>o rorum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do</div><div>o spalum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do</div></div></div><div><div><div>SKILLS</div><div><div>o Communication</div><div>o Decision Making</div><div>o Dependable</div><div>o Conflict Resolution</div><div>o Market Research</div><div>o HTML</div><div>o Web Design</div><div>o Java & Kotlin</div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div>	<div><div><div><div>NAME SURNAME</div><div>GRAPHIC DESIGNER</div></div><div><div>CONTACT</div><div>+123 456 7894</div><div>Your Mail Goes Here</div><div>Your Site Goes Here</div></div></div><div><div><div>To</div><div>Name Surname</div><div>Graphic Designer</div><div>Phone: +123 456 7894</div><div>Mail: your mail goes here</div></div><div><div>Date : 18 April 2020</div></div></div><div><div><div>Dear, Name</div><div> Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Quis ipsum suspendisse ultrices gravida. Risus commodo viverra maecenas accumsan lacus vel facilisis. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et doloreenvelit magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi</div><div> Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Quis ipsum suspendisse ultrices gravida. Risus commodo viverra maecenas accumsan lacus vel facilisis. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et</div><div> Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Quis ipsum suspendisse ultrices gravida. Risus commodo viverra maecenas accumsan lacus vel facilisis. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore</div></div><div><div><div>Sincerely</div><div>Your name</div></div></div></div></div>

Resumes are usually **TWO PAGES**

Cover letters should not be longer than **ONE PAGE**

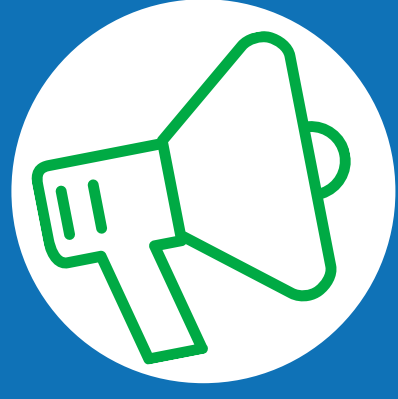
Resume and Cover Letter Tips



Use keywords found in the job posting to be recognized by electronic screenings.



Highlight your certifications and what you bring to the organization to stand out!



Be specific! Use quantifiable values in your experiences to show the impact you had.



Only include relevant things, no need for obvious skills the employer expects.



Proofread and print it out physically to catch formatting mistakes, get a second reviewer too!

Interview Preparation

Standing out after getting your foot in the door

After a successful job application, landing an interview is a great positive step! Interviews are arguably the most important part of the process, so it is crucial to ensure you are adequately prepared to demonstrate your skills and experiences.

Interview Checklist:



Arrive at least 10 minutes early.



Dress professionally.



Have good posture to appear confident, avoid fidgeting!



Smile, maintain eye contact, and listen actively.



Match the interviewer's style and address them formally.

The best way to prepare is to think of common questions and practicing your answers!

It is okay to be nervous! Personalize your answers with your unique experiences and be confident about what you bring to the table. Start practicing with the following common questions:

Tell me a bit about yourself.

Tell me about a time you worked in a group and there were conflicts.

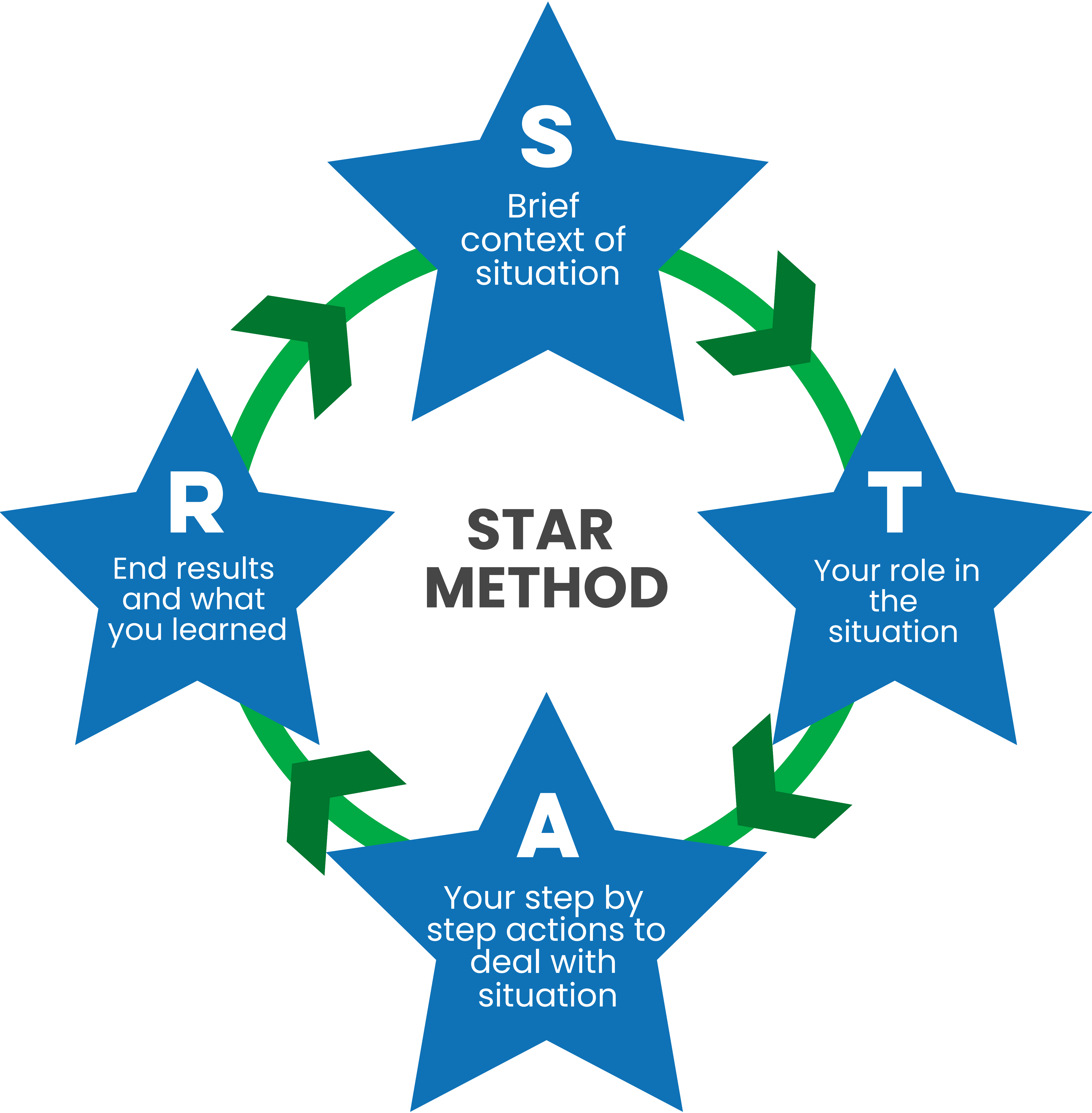
Why do you feel you will be successful in this work?

What are your long and short-term goals?

What are your strengths and weaknesses?

Describe a situation where you persevered through a tough time.

Use the STAR or PAWS methods to structure your answers.



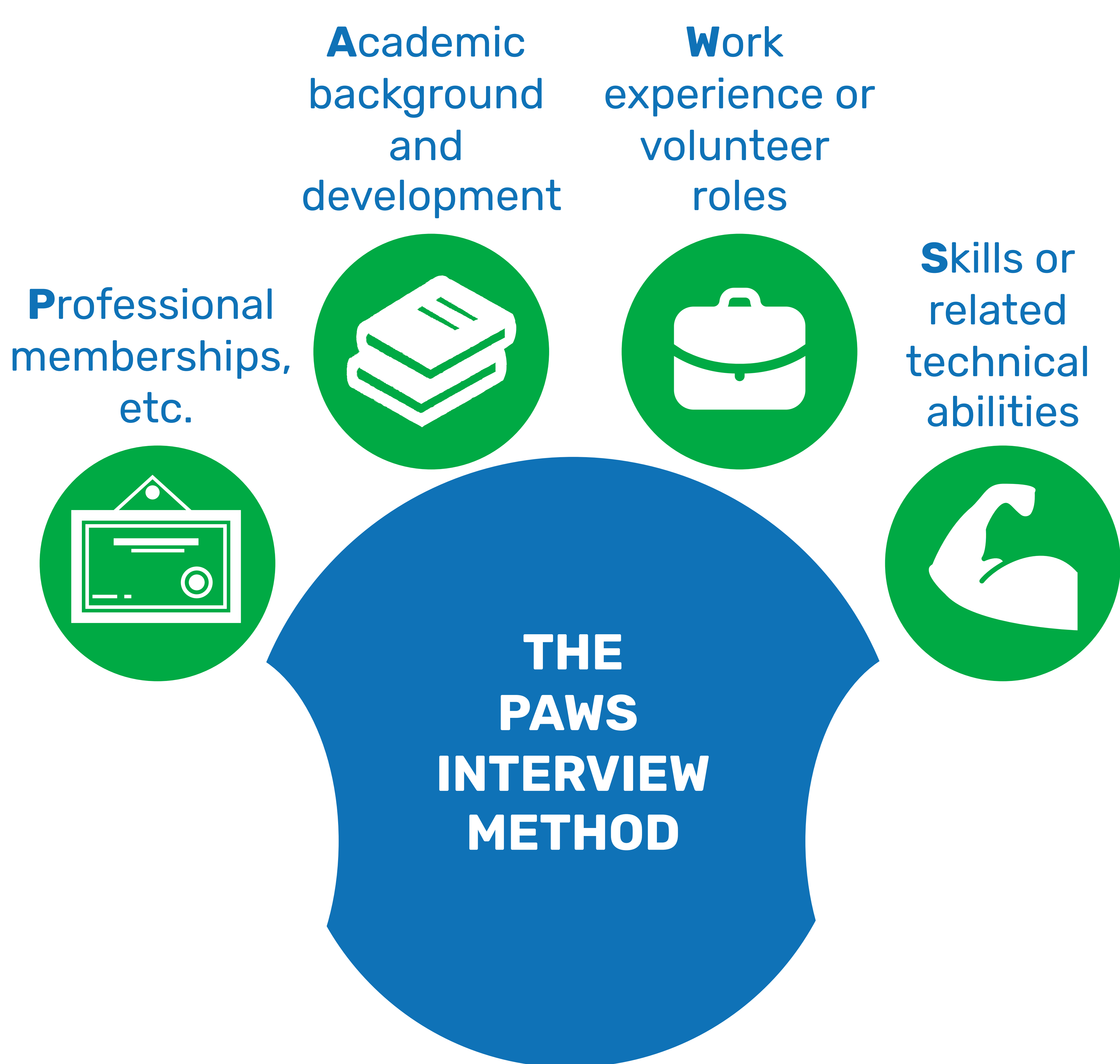
Example:

“I was caring for a patient Mr. M, who spoke very minimal English and had a difficult time communicating his needs to the staff. He was often short tempered and frustrated.

I was his primary nurse for a week during my clinical rotation at school. I don’t speak his language, so I requested help from an interpreter. I used simple words and spoke clearly, and most importantly took the time to try to communicate with him.

I was able to build a therapeutic relationship with Mr. M within a few days. I found out through these communication methods that he had uncontrolled pain for the past two weeks. I quickly provided him with pain medication and alerted the doctor about his pain symptoms.

After successfully managing his pain, he no longer showed verbal aggression or frustration. I also communicated my experience to the health care team. It was a very rewarding experience and I learned a lot about the importance of communication.”



Example:

“I’m a Registered Nurse and I graduated from the University of Toronto with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 2024.

I have experience in a variety of care settings from clinical rotations at school but I am most interested in oncology care, in which we had an 8 week full time practicum. I have also worked for 2 years on an internal medicine floor, where I cared for many cancer patients.

I have a strong passion for improving the quality of life of my patients. I am a fast learner and I can adapt in many different environments. I am able to manage and prioritize tasks between several patients at a time.

I enjoy working in a team with other health professionals and learning from them to improve the care of my patients. My goal is to become a more specialized oncology nurse and further develop my career in this field.”

Make sure to end off thankful and enthusiastic. Always prepare a few questions to ask the interviewer to show interest and follow up regardless of the job application result.

Continuing Education

Lifelong career development and confidence

de Souza Institute at UHN was founded in 2008 to be a knowledge translation center for oncology nurses, offering high quality advanced education courses to improve career confidence in an ever-changing field. We support nurses' development through our recommended [Learning Pathway](#), which oncology nurses can follow to excel in their career:

NEW TO CANCER CARE

Start of practice

Foundations in Oncology Nursing Practice course (FOND)
(45 learning hours)

Workplace orientation/preceptorship/mentorship

Cancer disease site courses
(12.5 learning hours each)

Up to 6 months of practice

Education in Palliative Care course (EPCA)
(18 learning hours)

LEVEL 1 ACHIEVED

If minimum of 60 learning hours reached.

CONTINUING IN CANCER CARE

6–9 months of practice

Cancer disease site courses
(12.5 learning hours each)

9–12 months of practice

Provincial Standardized Chemotherapy and Biotherapy course (PSCB)
(35 learning hours)

- Nurses need vascular access device competence as a prerequisite
- Requires maintenance every 2 years for competency

LEVEL 2 ACHIEVED

If minimum of 110 total learning hours reached.

SPECIALITY IN CANCER CARE

1 year and beyond

de Souza continuously offers numerous courses ([check our course calendar](#)) to expand your knowledge and skillset. Some examples are:

Complex Malignant Hematology course (CMHE – 40 learning hours) for nurses in hematology

Advanced Pain Assessment and Management (APAM)
(24 learning hours)

LEVEL 3 ACHIEVED

If minimum of 200 total learning hours and courses in all 4 domains taken.

Guided by the standards of the **Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology** (CANO/ACIO), de Souza courses fall under each of the four domains below. Click each heading to view what courses fall under that competency:

de Souza Domains of Competency

<u>Treatment and Delivery of Evidence Based Care</u>	<u>Therapeutic and Supportive Relationships</u>	<u>Developing Professional Practice and Leadership</u>	<u>Patient Teaching and Coaching</u>
Developing skills and knowledge about cancer treatments and palliative care.	Learning to engage in meaningful relationships with patients and their families.	Developing critical thinking and integrating best practice for effective changes.	Preparing patients and families manage living with cancer.
			

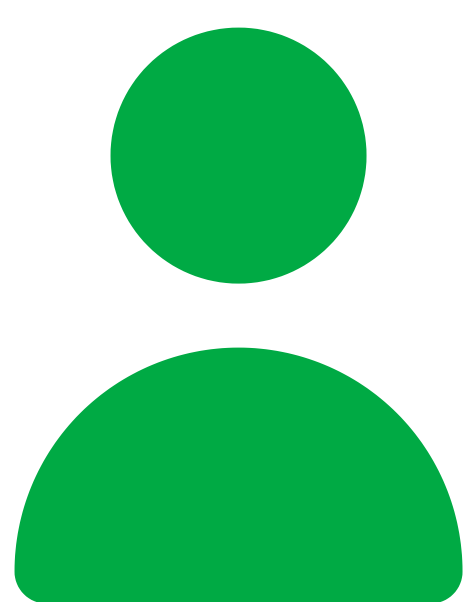
de Souza Institute is recognized as a leader and a centre of excellence in oncology continuing education. [de Souza Designations](#) are awarded to oncology nurses who complete the requirements for any of the five pathways below at any stage of their careers, demonstrating nursing excellence.

de Souza Designations



de Souza Intern

Nursing student



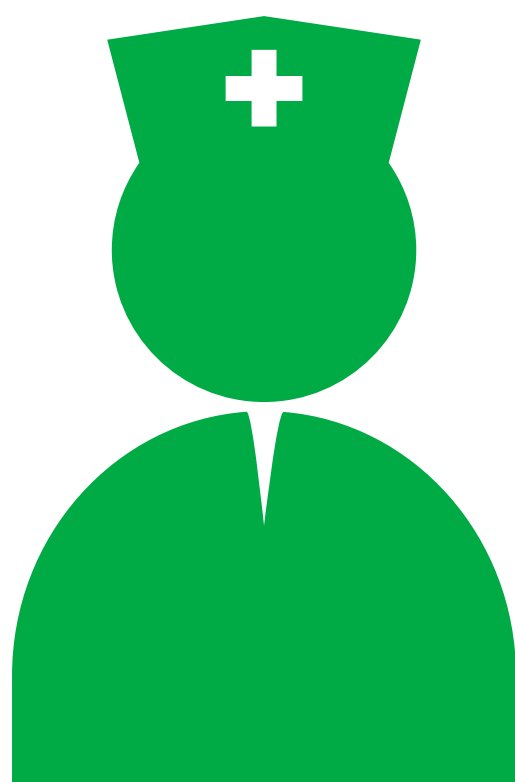
de Souza Nurse Associate

RN, RPN, LPN



de Souza Nurse

RN



de Souza APN

APN



de Souza Scholar

PhD or Post-Doctorate



The de Souza Institute has been supporting over **24,000** Health Care Professionals since 2008.

For questions, career advice, and
more, please visit
desouzainstitute.com or email our
Educators at
info@desouzainstitute.com

Thank you for reading and for your
dedication to oncology.

Connect with us!

