

A BLUEPRINT FOR ACTION

Solving The Nursing Crunch 2.0

July 29, 2024

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THE NURSING TALENT LANDSCAPE

01

The lack of practicing nurses is a critical issue affecting the local health system – putting pressure on current and future nurses

Despite the high number of licensed nurses, only around 34% practice the profession, and our nurse-to-patient ratio far exceeds the **1:12 standard** set by the Department of Health.

Number of License Holders

526,331

47 Registered Nurses per
10,000 population



Number of License Holders
Practicing in Healthcare
Facilities

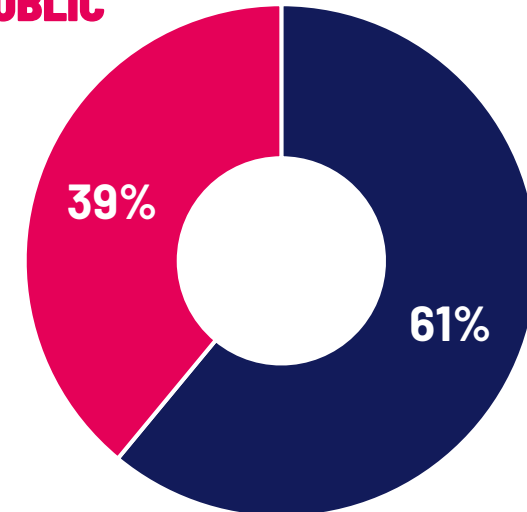
178,629

16 Registered Nurses per
10,000 population



Number of Nursing
Practitioners %

PUBLIC



PRIVATE

Applying the WHO labor market framework to address nurse attrition

The WHO labor market framework views nurse retention as a complex and multifaceted policy issue that cannot be resolved by simply training more nurses. Instead, **the country's health labor market dynamics must be restructured to accommodate newly trained nurses and provide decent job opportunities**. Policy interventions should be part of a coordinated effort and based on a solid understanding of the nursing workforce profile.

The WHO identifies the following key areas of potential policy interventions:

**Production – training
and adapting the
nursing workforce**

**Better managing
mobility and flows of
nurses**

**Improving recruitment
and retention of
nurses**

**Addressing
inefficiencies and
maldistribution of
nurses**

This study examined four key paths of the nursing journey to identify attrition points and drive discourse on potential interventions.

01

UNSUCCESSFUL ASPIRING NURSE

A journey halted by challenges, leading to an early exit from nursing education and a pivot to other academic pathways.

02

UNLICENSED NURSING GRADUATE

A nursing graduate that prepared for but failed the licensure exam, opting to pursue or potentially retrain for transition to other sectors.

03

NON-PRACTICING LICENSED NURSE

A licensed nurse opting not to practice clinically, instead exploring professional roles outside traditional care settings and integrating into other sectors.

04

LOCAL TO GLOBAL NURSING CAREER

A practicing nurse, either in clinical or corporate healthcare roles, planning for potential migration to realize international healthcare opportunities in his/her pursuit for professional growth.

THE JOURNEY OF THE UNSUCCESSFUL ASPIRING NURSE

02

**The nursing program
faces a significant
dropout rate.**

79%

Student Attrition Rate

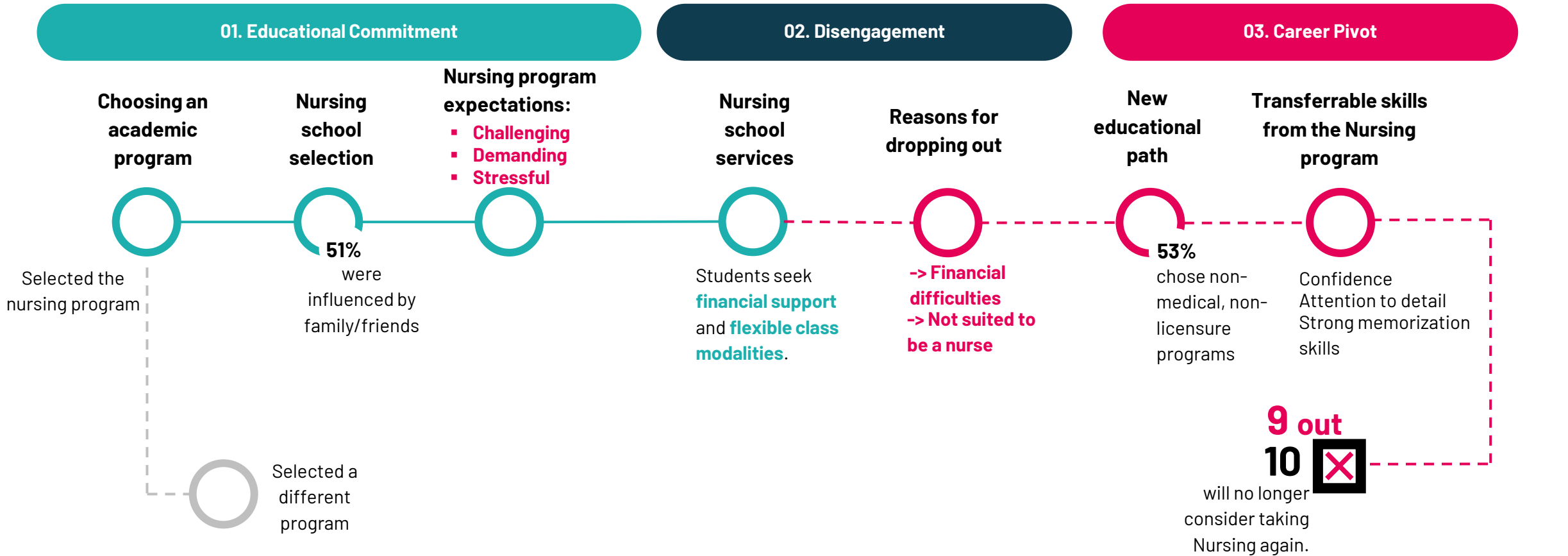
**Based on the average BS Nursing enrollees in 2014-2017
versus average number of graduates in 2018-2021**

Source: Health Human Resource Development Bureau, Department of Health



The Unsuccessful Aspiring Nurse's Journey Map

A journey halted by challenges, leading to an early exit from nursing education and a pivot to other academic pathways.



Base: Unsuccessful Aspiring Nurses (n61)

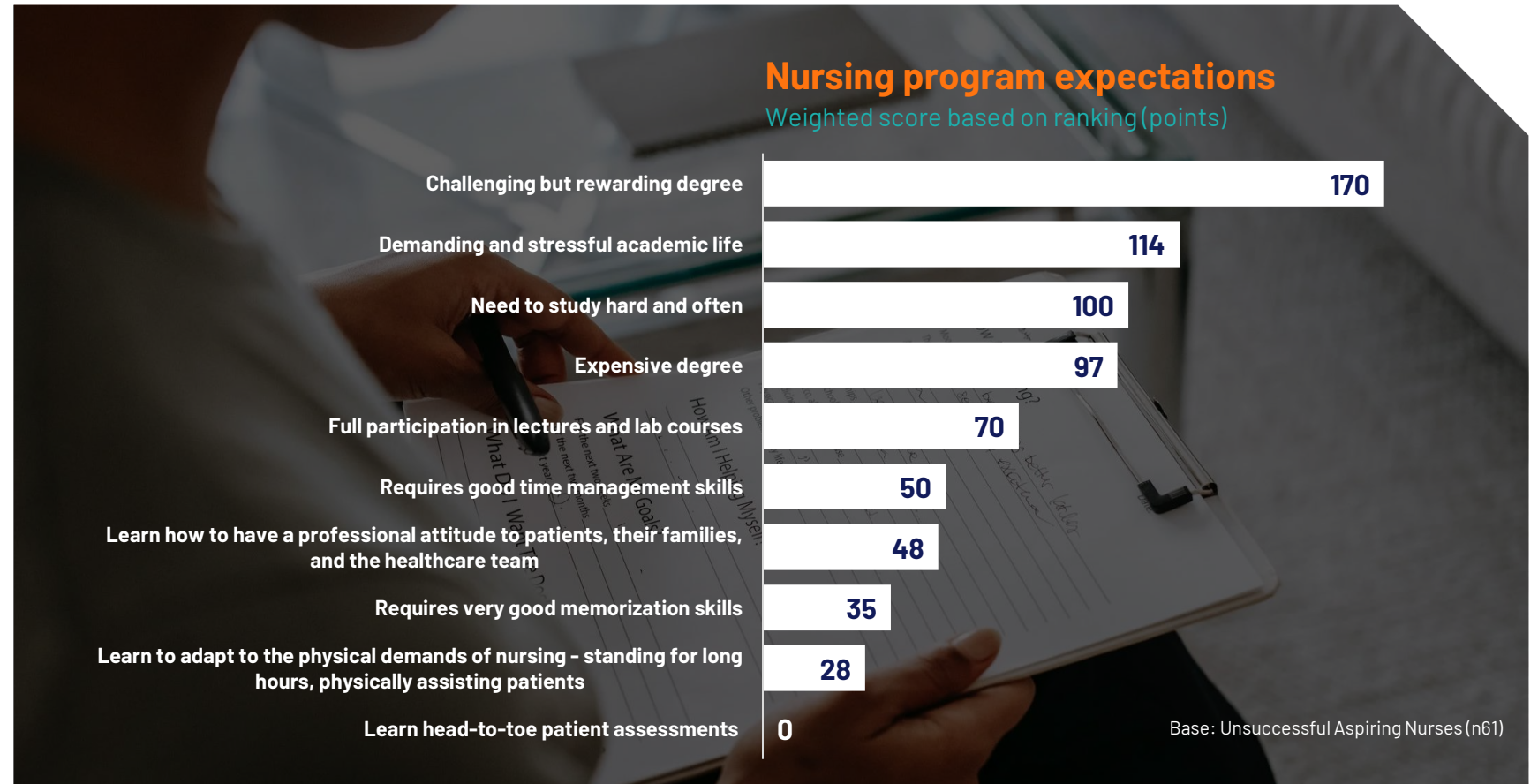
85%

of aspiring nurses state that **their expectations of the nursing program were met.**

Aspiring nurses perceive a career in nursing to require a high level of competence and preparedness.

Students enter nursing programs prepared for intense coursework, clinical rotations, and high-pressure situations, recognizing that these challenges are essential for their professional development and future success in the healthcare field.

Students enter the nursing program expecting it to be academically challenging.



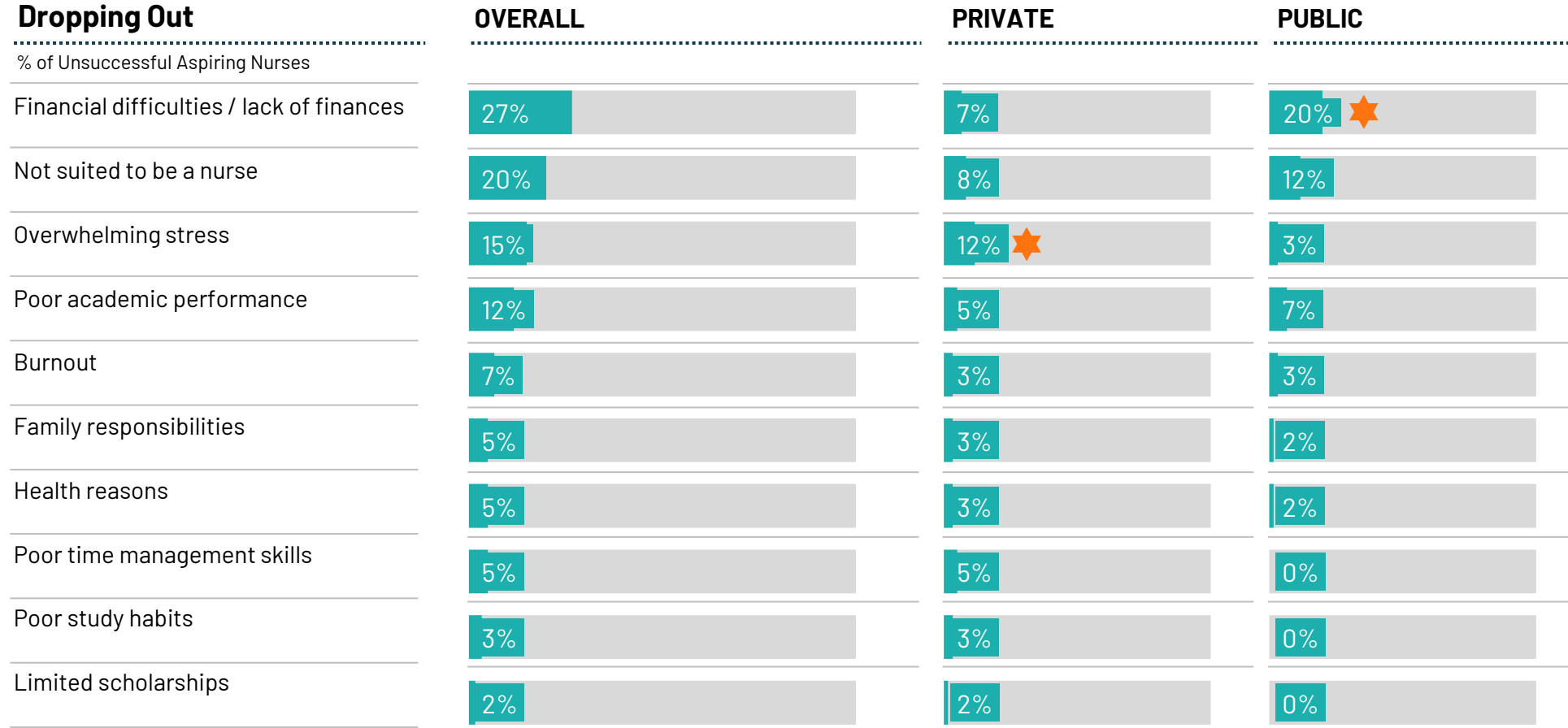
Q3. Were your expectations met? [Single Answer]

Q2. What were your top 5 expectations of the nursing program? [Multiple Answers, up to 5 options only]

Financial difficulties and program incompatibility drive nursing school dropouts. The main reasons for dropping out are **stress** for private school students, and **financial difficulties** for public students.

Primary Reasons for Dropping Out

% of Unsuccessful Aspiring Nurses



★ Significant Difference

Q5. Why did you opt to drop out or shift from nursing? [Single Answer]

Base: Unsuccessful Aspiring Nurses (Total n61, Private n31, Public n30)



I simply couldn't afford the high costs of laboratory equipment and supplies required for the program.

Unsuccessful Aspiring Nurse, Completed 1 semester

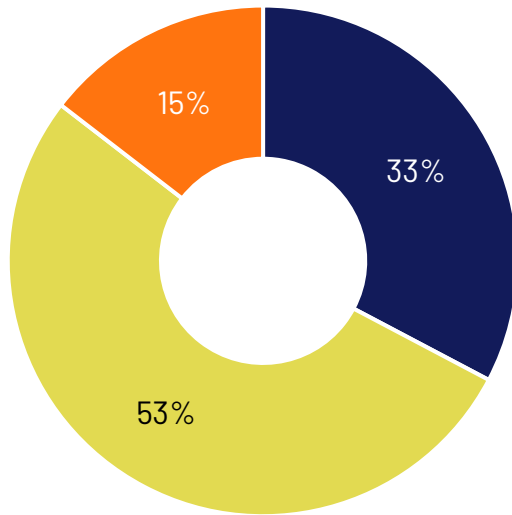
No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't seem to grasp the complex subjects and activities, leaving me feeling overwhelmed and defeated.

Unsuccessful Aspiring Nurse, Completed 2 semesters

Nursing program dropouts are shifting to non-licensure fields...

New Educational Path

% of Unsuccessful Aspiring Nurses' response

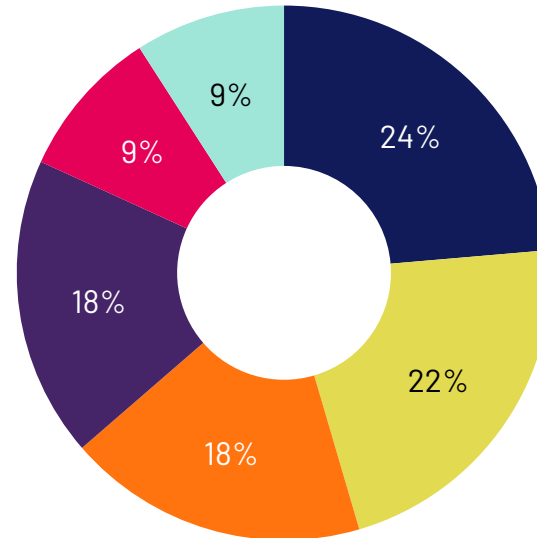


- Medical-related (e.g., Biology, Psychology, Physical Education)
- Non-medical, non-licensure course
- Non-medical, licensure course (e.g., Architecture, Engineering, Accounting)

Q11. Which courses did you consider? [Single Answer]

Reasons for Choosing Their New Program

% of Unsuccessful Aspiring Nurses' response



- Influenced by my parents/ friends
- Less stressful / easier course
- Best option to use credits earned in nursing subjects
- New academic interest or passion
- Offers an in-demand career path
- I excel academically in this course

Q12. Why did you choose to take your present course?[Single Answer]



Being a nurse is no longer the profession I want to pursue within the medical field. It feels like nursing is a step down because being a doctor's assistant seems degrading.

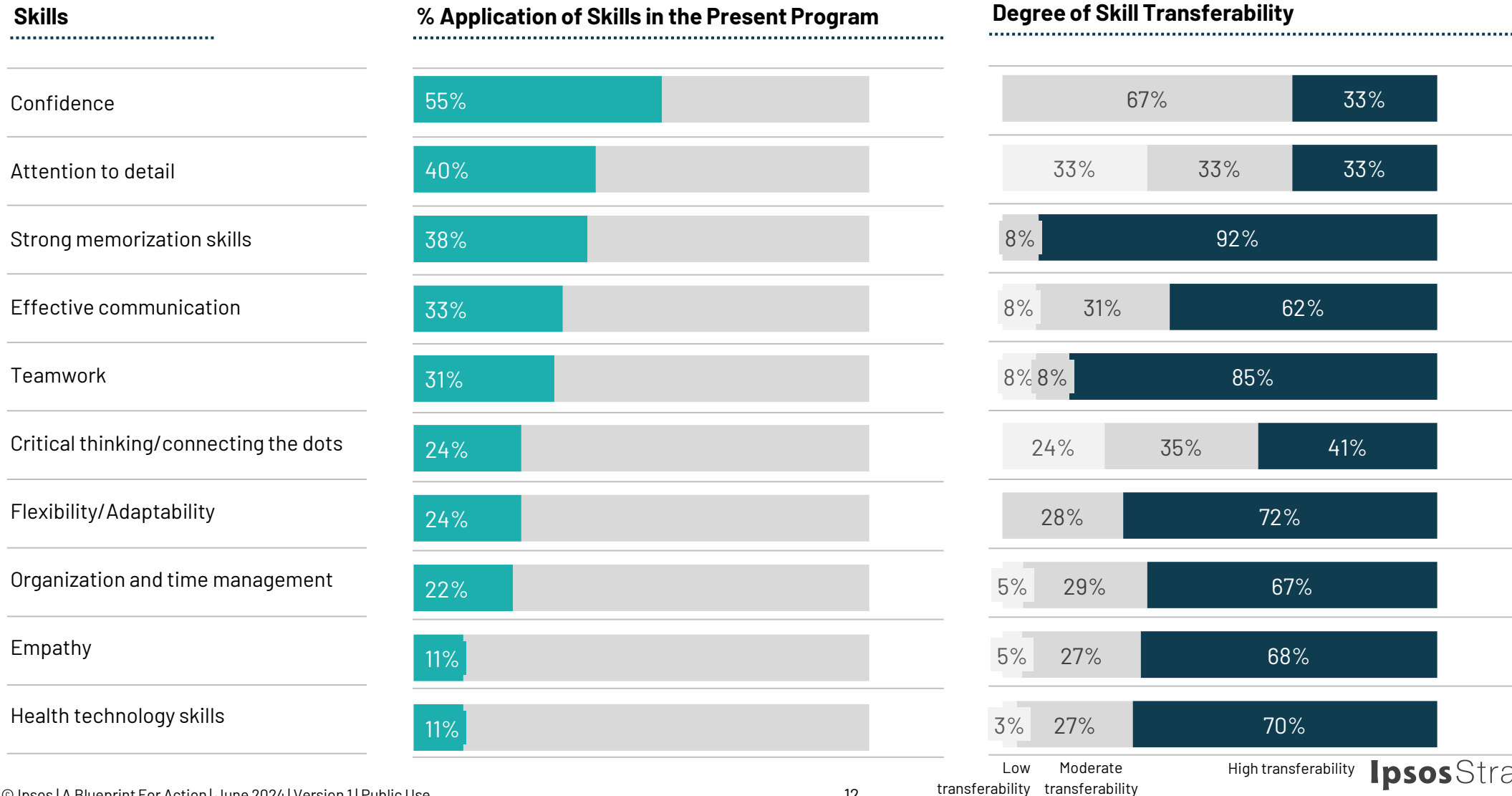
Unsuccessful Aspiring Nurse, Completed 2 semesters

I just wanted a course where I could thrive.

Unsuccessful Aspiring Nurse, Completed 1 semester

Base: Unsuccessful Aspiring Nurses (n61)

... leveraging skills honed under the nursing program to excel in their new fields.





Without significant improvements in how nurses are valued and supported, I'm hesitant to re-enter a profession where I felt undervalued and overworked.

Unsuccessful Aspiring Nurse, 2019-2020 Completed 2 semesters

A full scholarship would make all the difference in my decision to re-enter nursing.

Unsuccessful Aspiring Nurse, 2019-2020, Completed 1 semester

Without better compensation, it's hard to justify the demanding nature of the profession.

Unsuccessful Aspiring Nurse, 2020, Completed 2 semesters

03. Career Pivot

9 out of 10 

will no longer consider taking Nursing again.

Q17. What will make you consider taking nursing again? (OE)
Base: Unsuccessful Aspiring Nurses (n61)

THE JOURNEY OF THE UNLICENSED NURSING GRADUATE

03



Out of

10,000+

average number of Nursing graduates (2018-2021)

only

52%

passed the Nursing Licensure Exam.

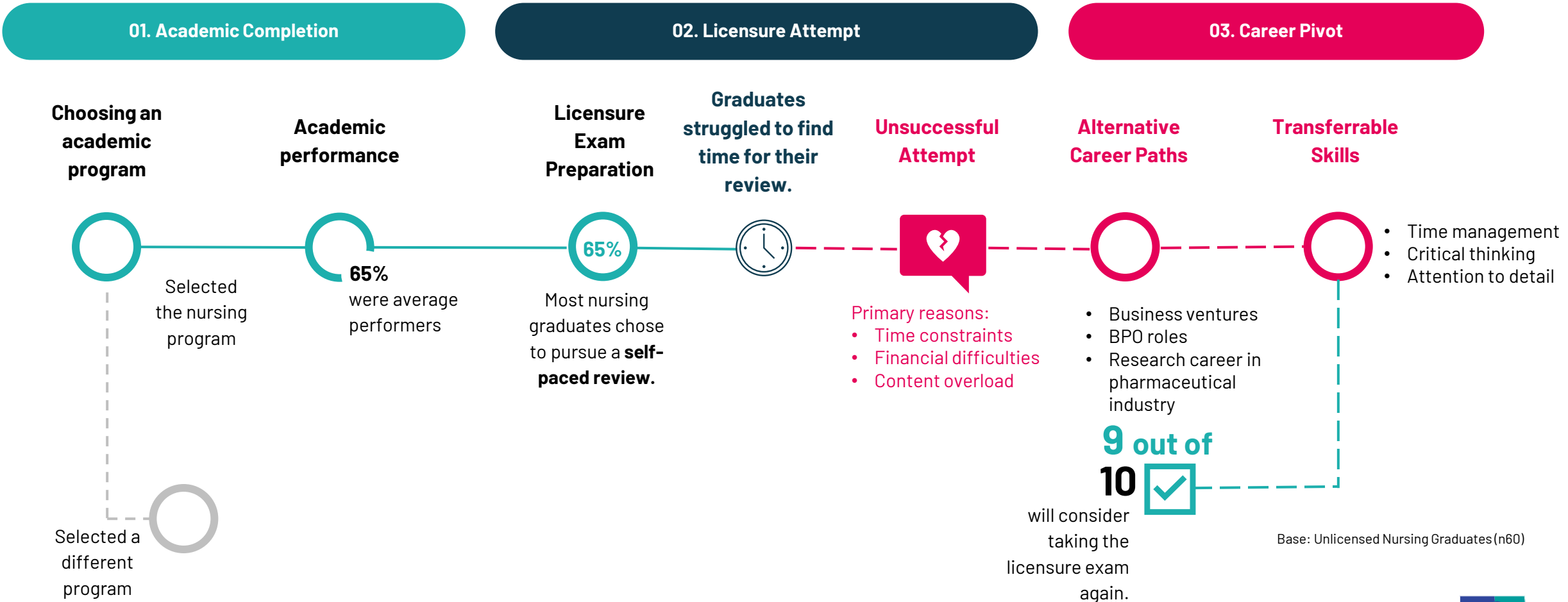
Source: Health Human Resource Development Bureau, Department of Health

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The Unlicensed Nursing Graduate's Journey Map

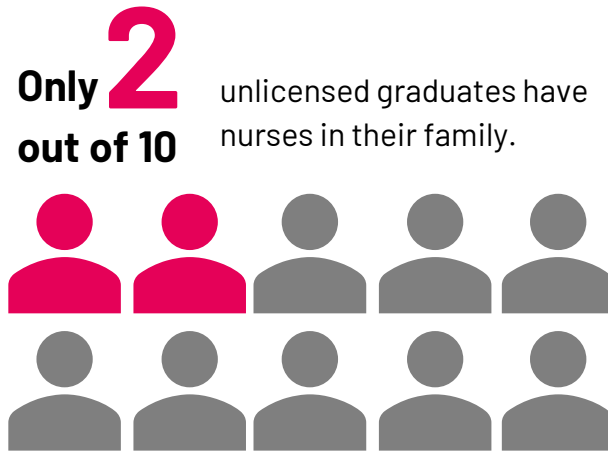
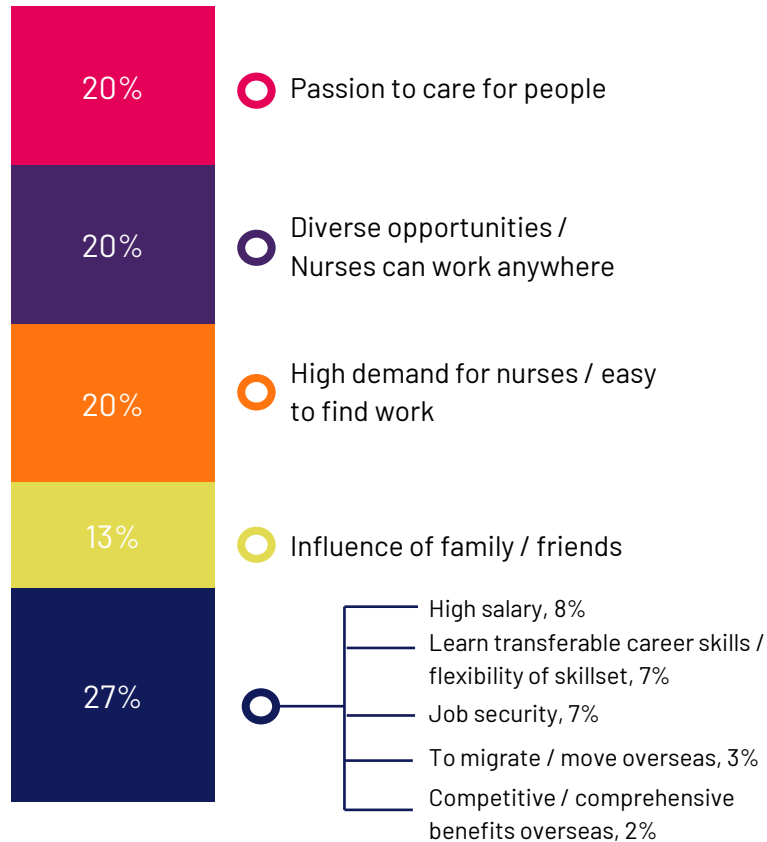
A nursing graduate that prepared for but failed the licensure exam, opting to pursue or potentially retrain for transition to other sectors.



Unlicensed nurses pursued the nursing program for a variety of reasons

Reasons for taking the Nursing Program

% of Unlicensed Graduates



Nursing is a profession that is highly sought after not just in the Philippines but also in various other countries. My goal is to excel as a nursing professional by demonstrating a genuine desire to help others and by continuously striving for personal development and professional advancement.

Unlicensed Nursing Graduate, 2023 Examinee

I wanted a profession that allowed me to serve others. Social work doesn't pay well, and it's not a priority for me. I chose nursing independently, without being influenced by others.

Unlicensed Nursing Graduate, 2022 Examinee

S19. What is your main reason for taking nursing?

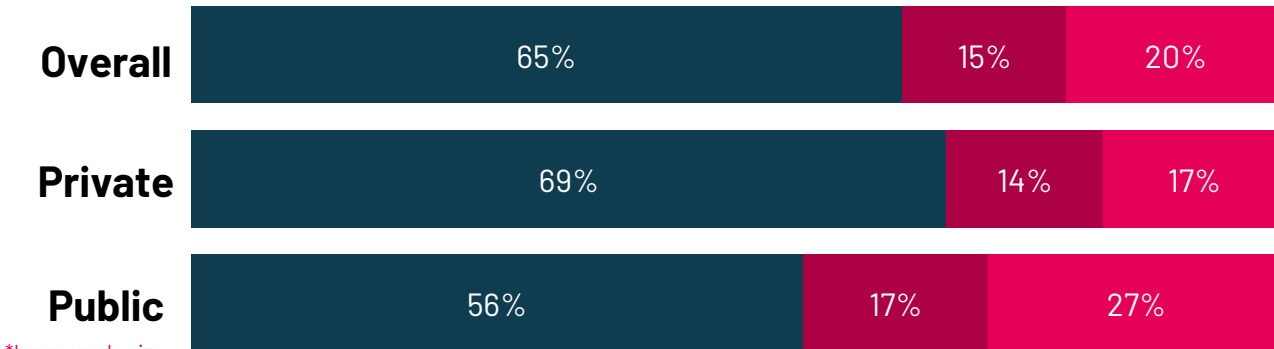
Base: Unlicensed Nursing Graduates (n=60)

Most graduates were average performers during their time as students.

Academic performance

% of Unsuccessful Aspiring Nurses

■ Excellent Performer ■ Average Performer ■ Struggling Academically ■ Failing



*Low sample size

Q3. How was your academic performance? [Single Answer]



My lowest grades were around 80-82 or 2.75, and my highest was 93-94, which is equivalent to 1.5. **Research was the hardest part, especially understanding the different materials and the effects of medication.**

Pathophysiology, my favorite subject, helped me understand how diseases work and how they affect the body, making it easier to grasp the lessons.

Unlicensed Nursing Graduate, 2023 Examinee

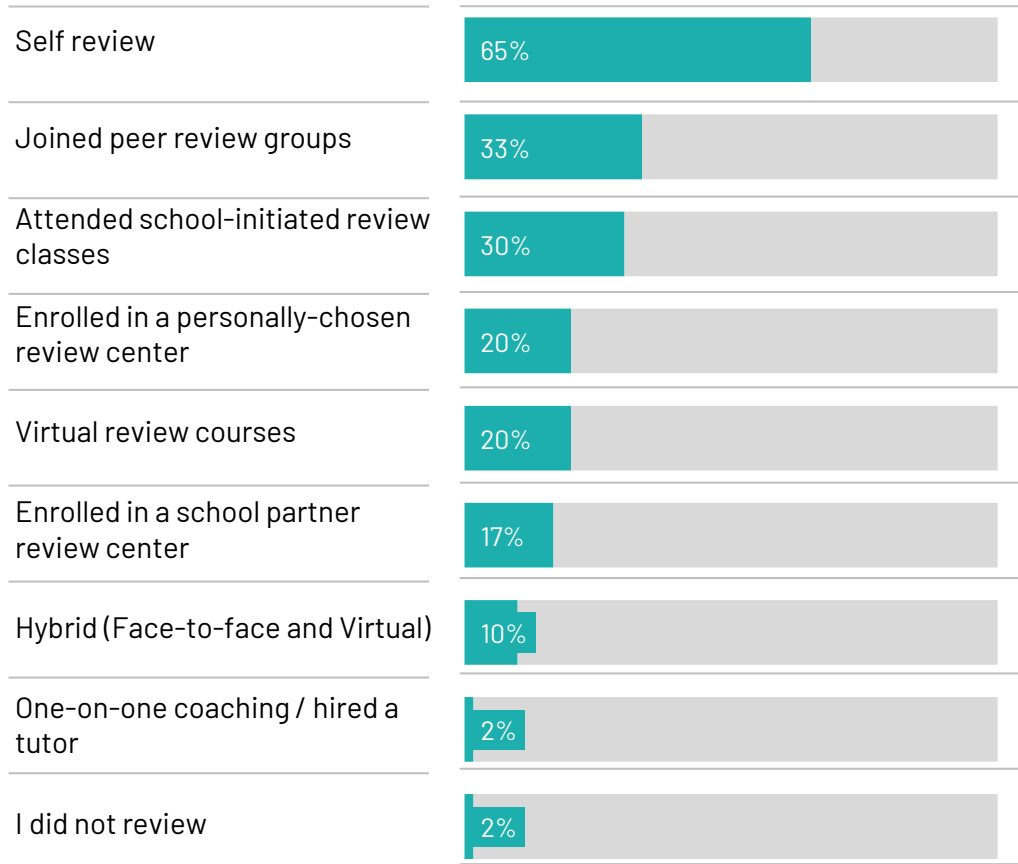
I wasn't failing, but my grades were borderline passing, around 3.0, during my first year, especially in Anatomy, Physiology, and Biochemistry. My highest grade, 1.75, was in Health Education. My favorite subject was Pharmacology; I was particularly interested in the composition of medications.

Unlicensed Nursing Graduate, 2023 Examinee

Base: Unlicensed Nursing Graduates (Total n=60, Private n=42, Public n=18)

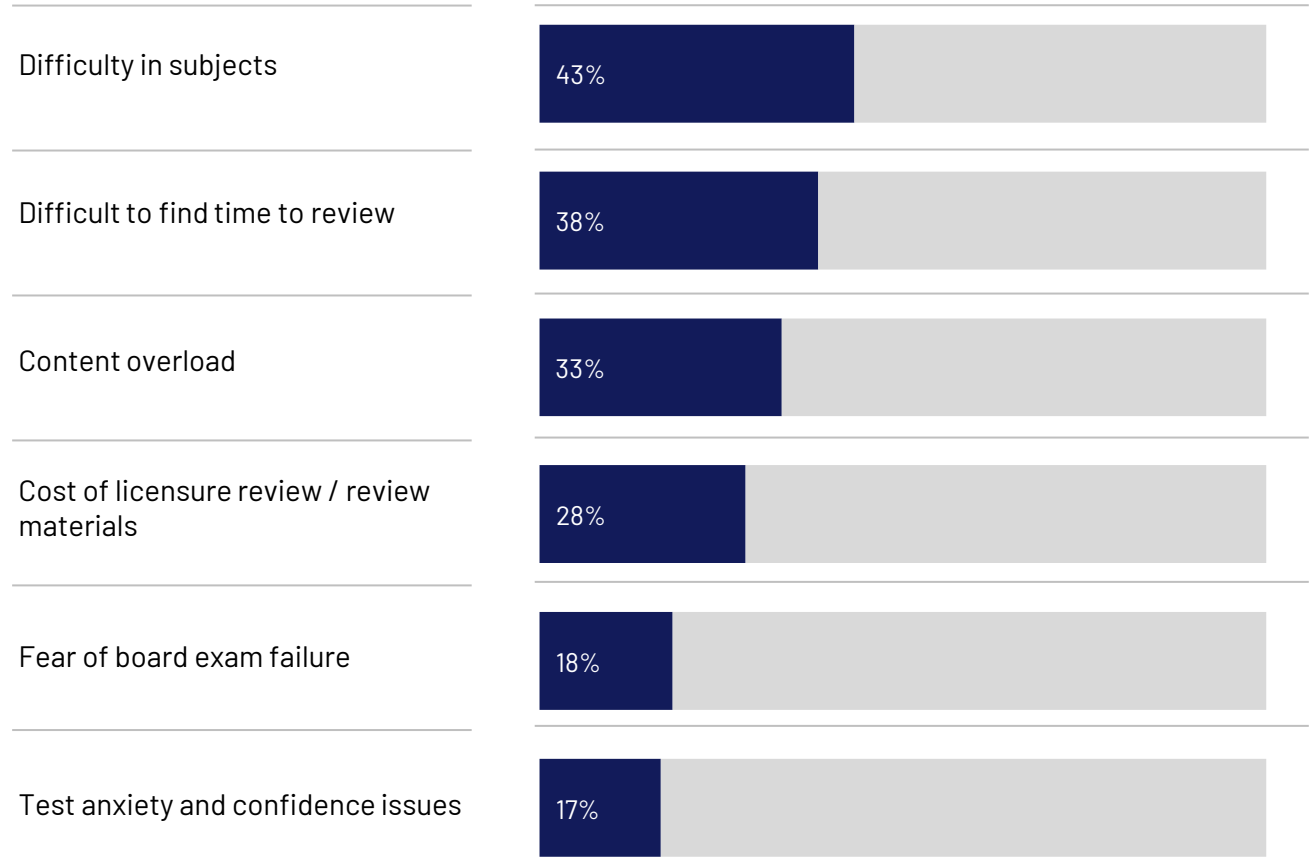
Most nursing graduates chose to pursue a self-paced review then **struggled to find time to review.**

Test Preparation



Base: Unlicensed Nursing Graduates (n60)

Test Preparation Challenges

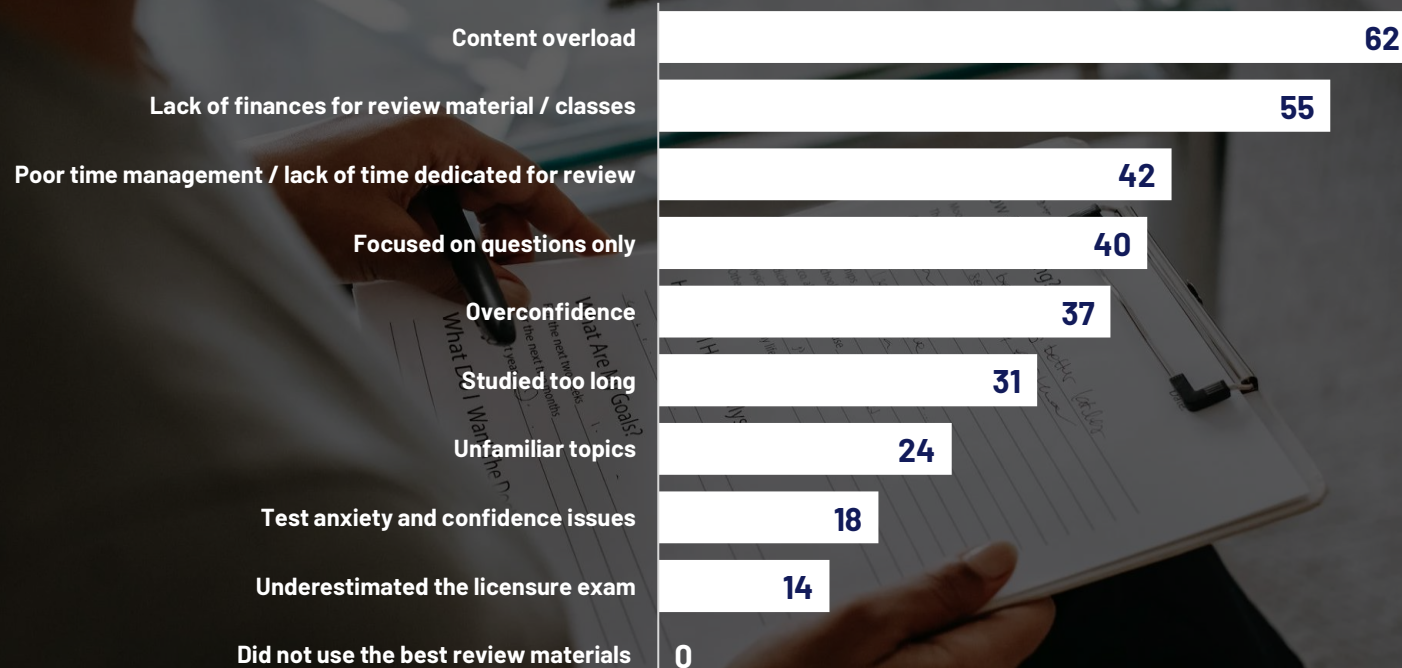


Q12. Are there any specific areas during review you struggled with? [Multiple Answers]

Content overload is the primary barrier in passing the licensure exam.

Major Reasons of Unsuccessful Attempt

Weighted score based on ranking (points)



In my daily life, I have to work to support myself, which prevents me from fully focusing on the exam. It wasn't surprising that I didn't pass, **as I lacked resources and couldn't afford a review center.**

**Unlicensed Nursing Graduate, 2023
Examinee**

I didn't expect certain questions to come out in the exam. They were confusing and had similarities to what I reviewed, but they were shuffled. I struggle with time management during exams, often spending too much time on individual questions.

**Unlicensed Nursing Graduate, 2022
Examinee**

Base: Unlicensed Nursing Graduates (n60)

Q14. What caused your unsuccessful attempt? Choose your top 3 causes and rank them by importance. 1 - Most important; and 3 - Least important



02. Licensure Attempt

9 out of 10 

will consider taking the licensure exam again.

Base: Unlicensed Nursing Graduates (n60)



Yes, that's my goal. I plan to retake the licensure exam, but not to practice nursing in a direct patient care setting.

Unlicensed Nursing Graduate, 2022 Examinee

Yes, I'm taking it this 2024 and practice as a nurse overseas.

Unlicensed Nursing Graduate, 2023 Examinee

Yes, I will review again and retake to fulfill my goal to work abroad.

Unlicensed Nursing Graduate, 2023 Examinee

Q16. Will you retake the licensure exam?

From entrepreneurship to research, nursing graduates explore various paths that align with their skills and interests beyond the confines of traditional healthcare settings.



01

Entrepreneurship and Business Ventures

Several graduates express an interest in entrepreneurship and starting their own businesses. This includes ventures in real estate, laundry, water station, and medical supplies.

They see **nursing as a foundation for business ownership**, leveraging their skills and knowledge to enter various industries beyond healthcare.



02

Career Transitions and Management Roles

Other graduates consider transitioning to management roles or pursuing careers outside the traditional scope of nursing. This includes positions such as becoming a manager or working in customer service within the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry.

They see their **nursing background as a valuable asset for leadership and managerial positions**.



03

Medical Research and Pharmaceutical Sector

Some graduates express an interest in medical research, particularly within pharmaceutical companies.

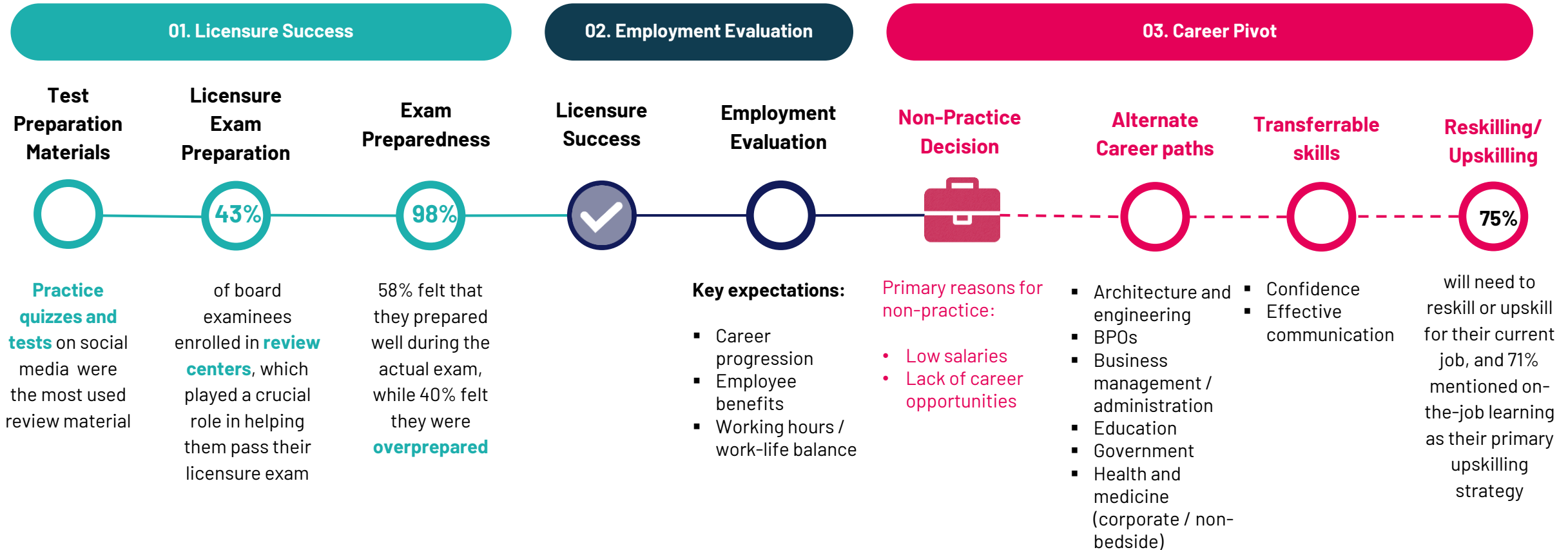
They view their **nursing education as a stepping stone to careers in research and development**, where they can contribute to advancements in healthcare and pharmaceutical innovation.

THE JOURNEY OF THE NON-PRACTICING LICENSED NURSE

04

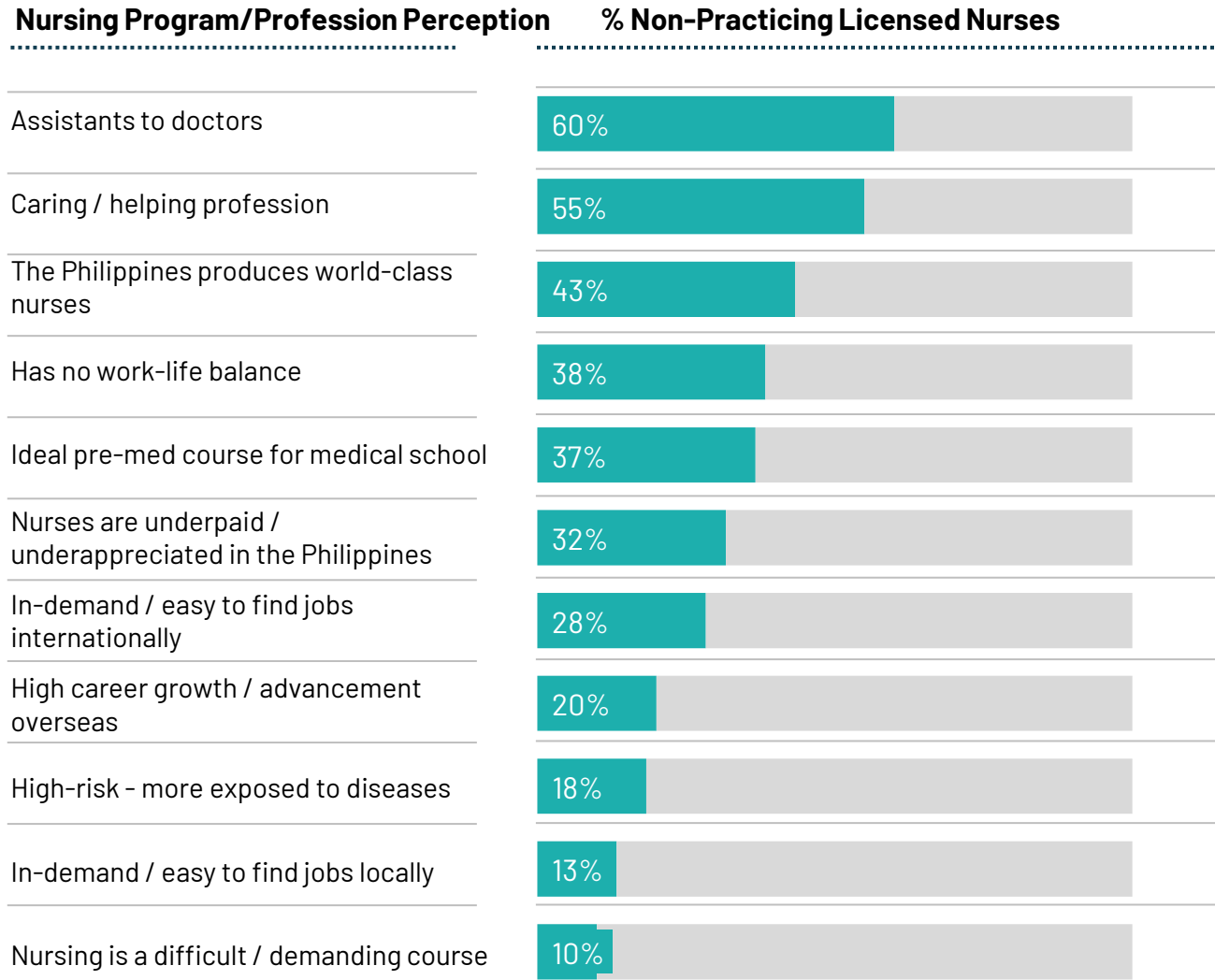
The Non-Practicing Licensed Nurse's Journey Map

A licensed nurse opting not to practice clinically, instead exploring professional roles outside traditional care settings and integrating into other sectors.



Base: Non-Practicing Licensed Nurses (n60)

Most non-practicing licensees view nurses as assistants to doctors.



I see nurses as support staff for doctors, aiding them in patient care and treatment execution.

Non-Practicing Licensed Nurse, 2023 Board Passer

There's this misconception that nurses are just there to assist doctors, like they're just the doctor's hands. But they do so much more, and it's disheartening to see their work undervalued.

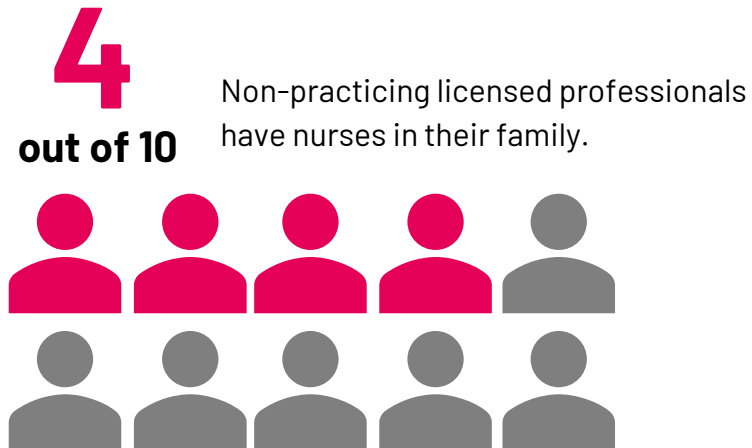
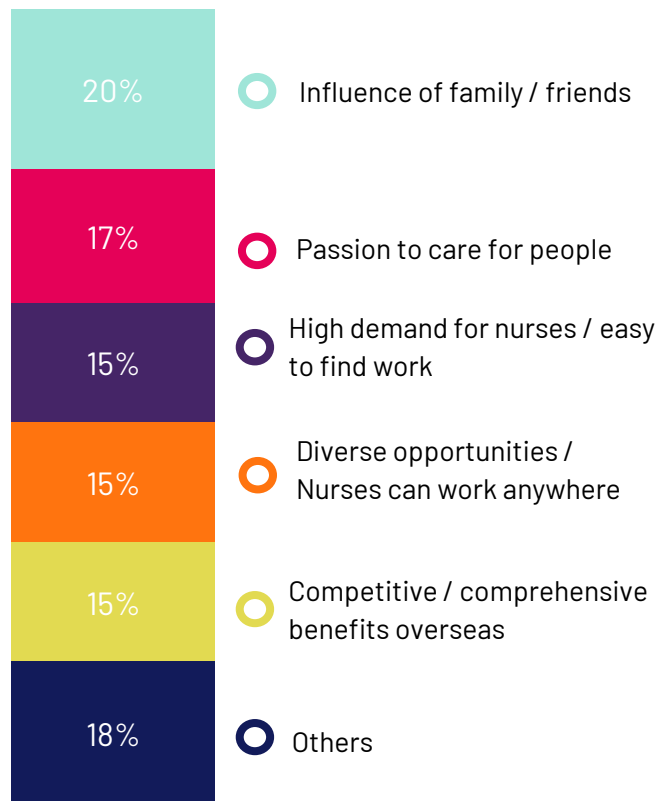
Non-Practicing Licensed Nurse, 2023 Board Passer

Base: Non-Practicing Licensed Nurses (n60)

Family and friends were the primary drivers for pursuing the nursing program.

Reasons for taking the Nursing Program

% of Non-Practicing License Nurse



My aunt, who is a nurse, played a significant role in guiding me towards the nursing field. She shared her experiences and encouraged me to consider it as a career option.

Non-Practicing Licensed Nurse, 2023 Board Passer

My parents always wanted me to have a stable career, and they believed nursing was the right path for me.

Non-Practicing Licensed Nurse, 2022 Board Passer

Base: Non-Practicing Licensed Nurses (n60)

The vast amount of information to review was a major challenge during test preparation.

Test Preparation Challenges

% of responses from Non-Practicing Licensed Nurses

Content overload

57%

Test anxiety and confidence issues

43%

Difficult to find time to review

38%

Difficulty in subjects

20%

Cost of licensure review / review materials

13%

Fear of board exam failure

5%

Content overload poses a significant challenge for licensure exam preparation, inundating exam takers with an extensive amount of information to cover within a limited time frame.

This can lead to feelings of overwhelm, making it difficult for exam takers to focus their study efforts efficiently and identify the most crucial areas to review. Developing strategies to manage content overload is essential in supporting nursing graduates in their licensure exam preparation journey.

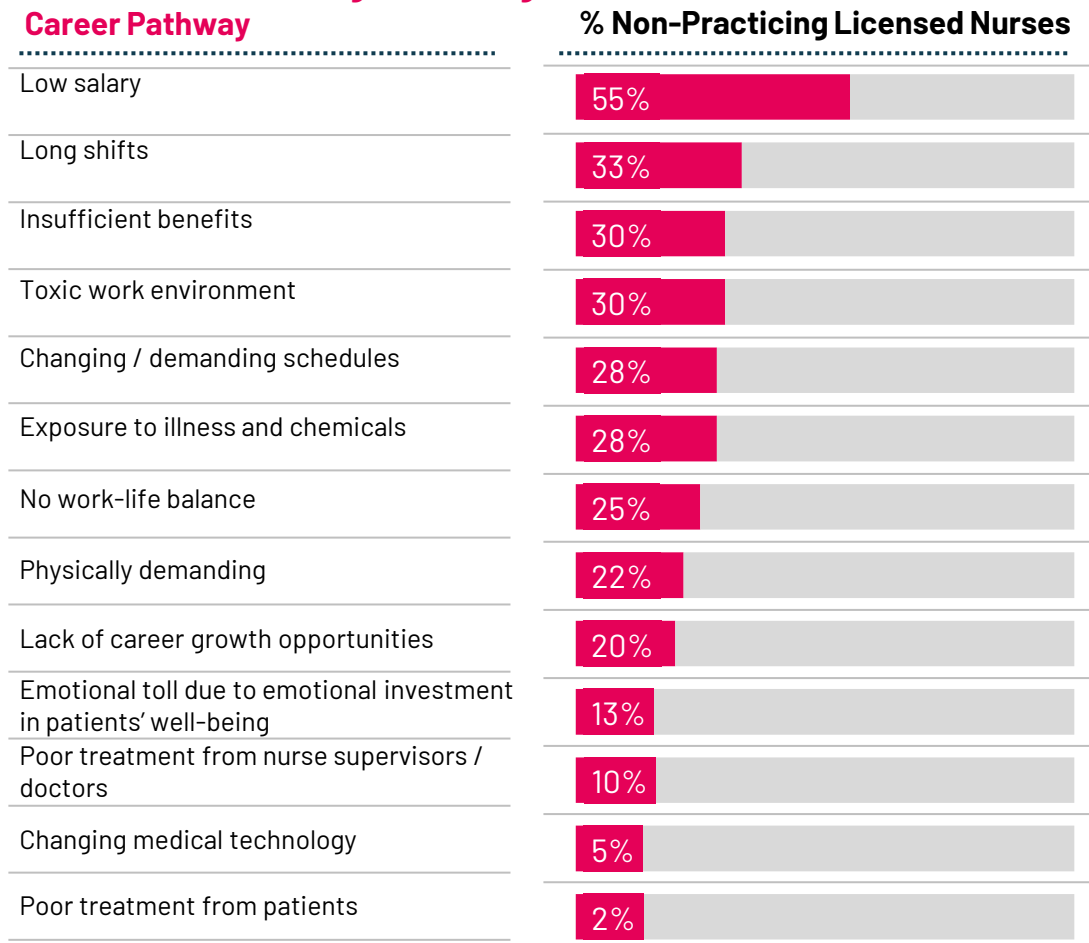
Base: Non-Practicing Licensed Nurses (n60)

Q4. Are there any specific areas during review you struggled with? Choose all that apply. (MA)

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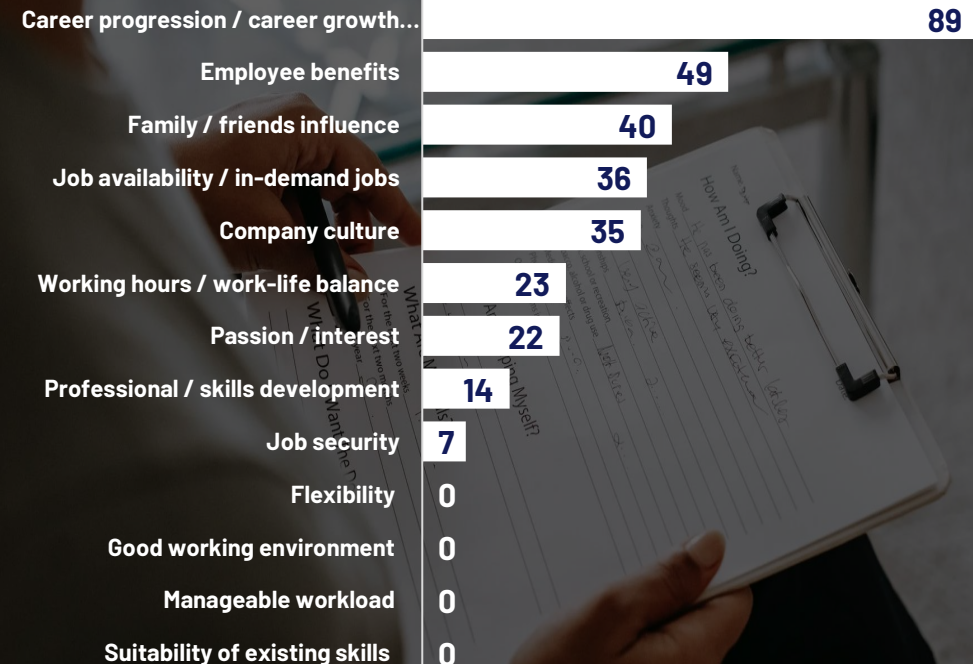
Being overworked and underpaid are the major barriers to pursuing a nursing career, while alternative careers align with their job preferences

Barriers for Considering the Nursing Career Pathway



Key Reasons for Pursuing Non-Nursing Careers

Weighted score based on ranking (points)



Base: Non-Practicing Licensed Nurses (n60)

Q9. What are your main reasons for working outside clinical/bedside practice? Choose the top 3 reasons and rank them by importance. 1 - Most important; and 3 - Least important (MA, ranking)

Q10. What are the barriers for considering the nursing career pathway?

It is also easy to shift careers, as the necessary upskilling for other careers can be achieved via on-the-job learning.

Necessity for Reskilling or Upskilling in Chosen Career

75%



needed to upskill/reskill for their chosen job.

Q15. Was there a need to reskill or upskill for your chosen job / career path? (SA)

Popular Alternate Career Paths

- Architecture and engineering
- BPOs
- Business management / administration
- Education
- Government
- Health and medicine (corporate / non-bedside)

Base: Non-Practicing Licensed Nurses (n60)

Professional Development Efforts

% of responses from Non-practicing Licensed Nurses

On the job learning

71%

Company-initiated trainings

42%

Self-study

36%

Formal training / took courses (personal expense)

20%

Previous similar experience

7%

Enrolled in graduate studies

4%

Q16. How did you develop yourself for your job? Choose all that apply. (MA)

THE JOURNEY OF THE LOCAL TO GLOBAL NURSING CAREER

05

The Local to Global Nurse's Journey Map

A practicing nurse, either in clinical or corporate healthcare roles, planning for potential migration to realize international healthcare opportunities in his/her pursuit for professional growth.

01. Professional Practice

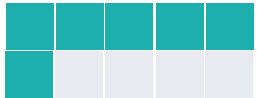
02. Career Advancement

03. Migration Aspiration

Reasons for taking a nursing career

23%

Passion to care for people



6 out of 10
Have nurses in the family

Consideration factors

Key expectations in choosing a job:

- Career progression
- Employee benefits

Current practice

Majority considered practicing in both private and government hospitals

Skill specialization

60%

Developed specialized skills (i.e., ICU, emergency room experience) on the job

Upskilling

48%

Enrolled in trainings out of their own personal expense.

Migration Intention

Primary reason:
• Better quality of life

Where do they want to work?

40%

United States

Certifications needed

- IELTS
- NCLEX

Intention to stay permanently

7 out of 10
Plan to work overseas permanently

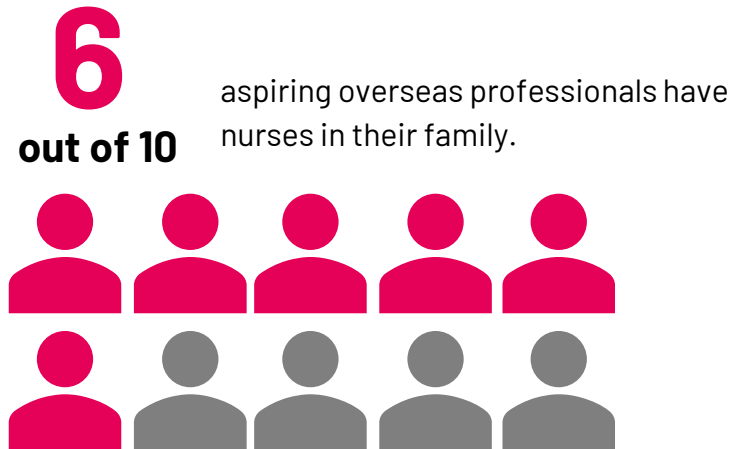
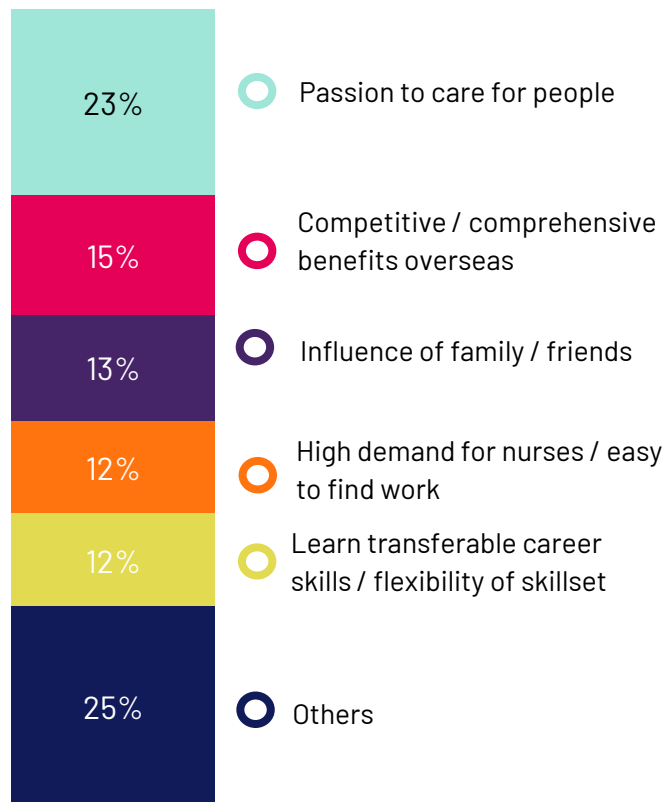
Why?
• Better healthcare system

Base: Local to Global Nurses (n60, 30 public, 30 private)

Their passion for patient care fueled their pursuit of a nursing career.

Reasons for taking the Nursing Program

% of Aspiring Overseas Nurses



I chose nursing because I have a deep passion for caring for people and making a positive impact on their lives.

Local to Global Nurse, Planning to work in Japan

I've always been driven by a strong sense of compassion, and nursing gives me the perfect opportunity to turn that passion into action.

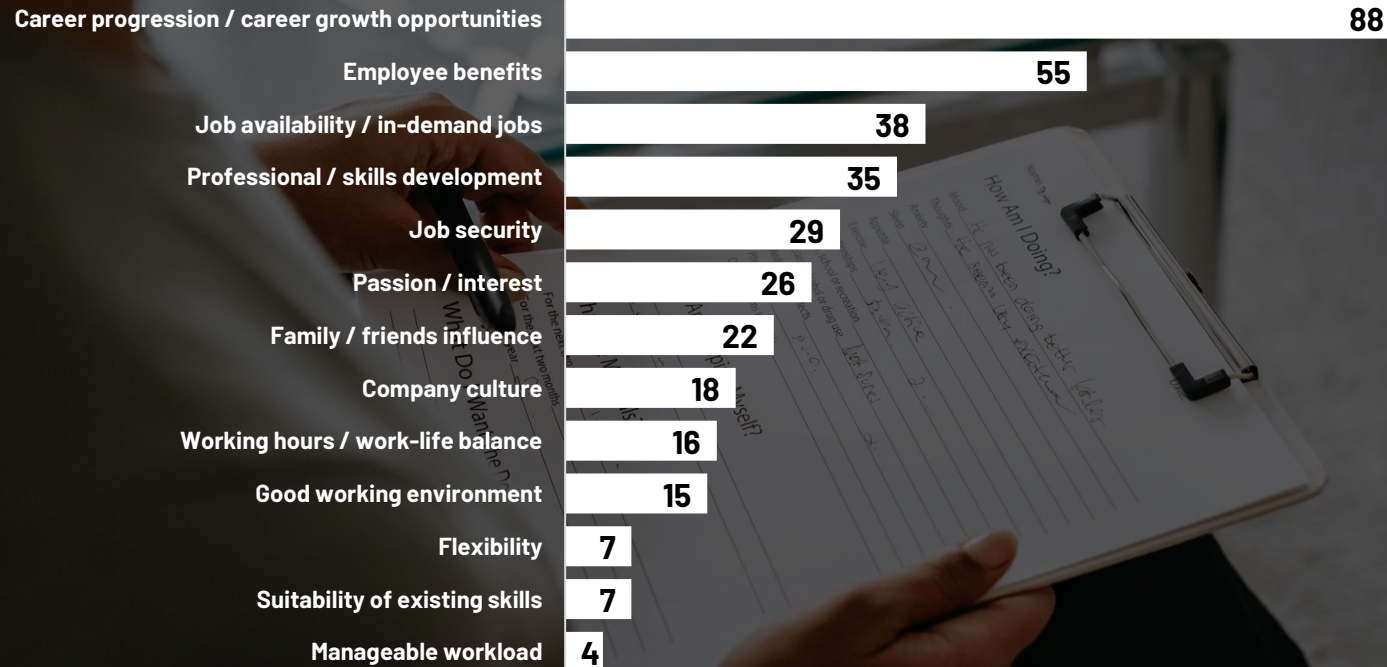
Local to Global Nurse, Planning to work in the USA

Base: Aspiring Overseas Nurses (n60)

Career progression and employee benefits shape their job choices.

Key Consideration Factors for Job Selection

Weighted score based on ranking (points)



For me, career progression and employee benefits are essential considerations when evaluating job opportunities abroad. I strive to secure positions that not only align with my career goals but also offer tangible rewards such as bonuses, incentives, and opportunities for further education.

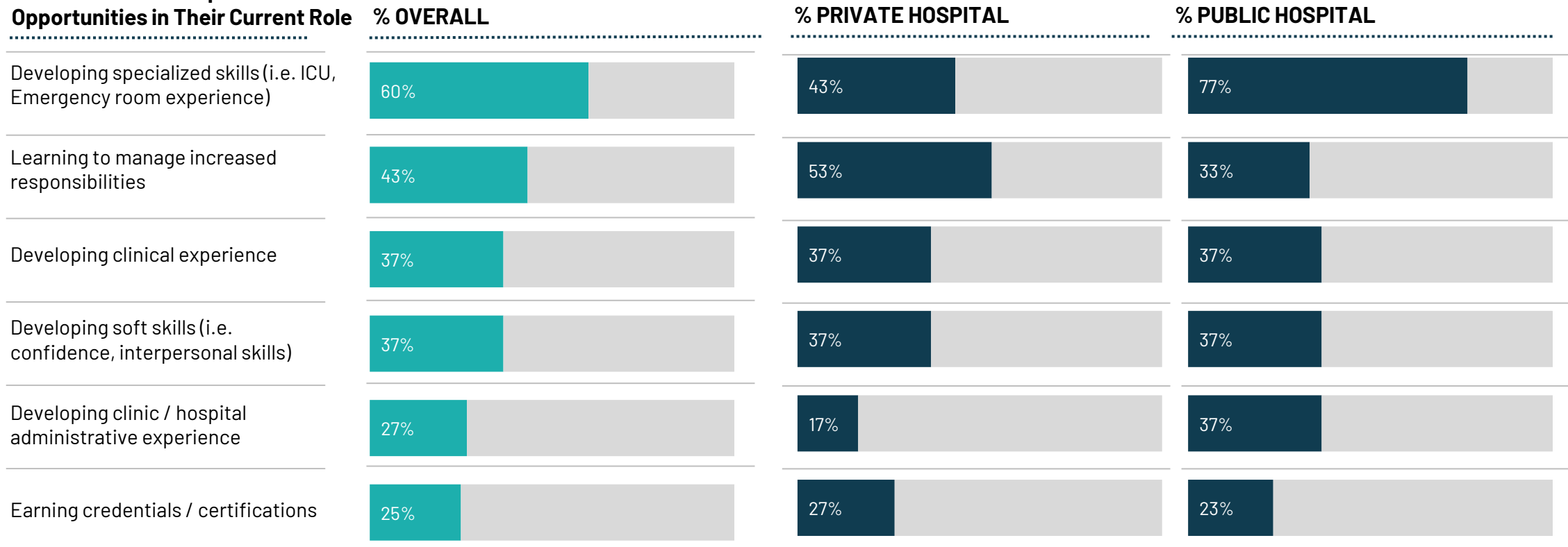
Local to Global Nurse, Planning to work in New Zealand

Base: Aspiring Overseas Nurses (n60)

Q3. What are your main considerations / reasons for choosing a job? Choose all that apply. (MA)

Nurses' current roles in both public and private hospitals enable them to cultivate specialized skills.

Professional Development Opportunities in Their Current Role



Q5. How is your current role helping in your professional development, i.e., advancing your clinical skills or management capabilities? Choose all that apply. (MA)

Base: Aspiring Overseas Nurses (n60)

Nurses aspire to work abroad for a better life.

Key Factors Driving Migration Intentions

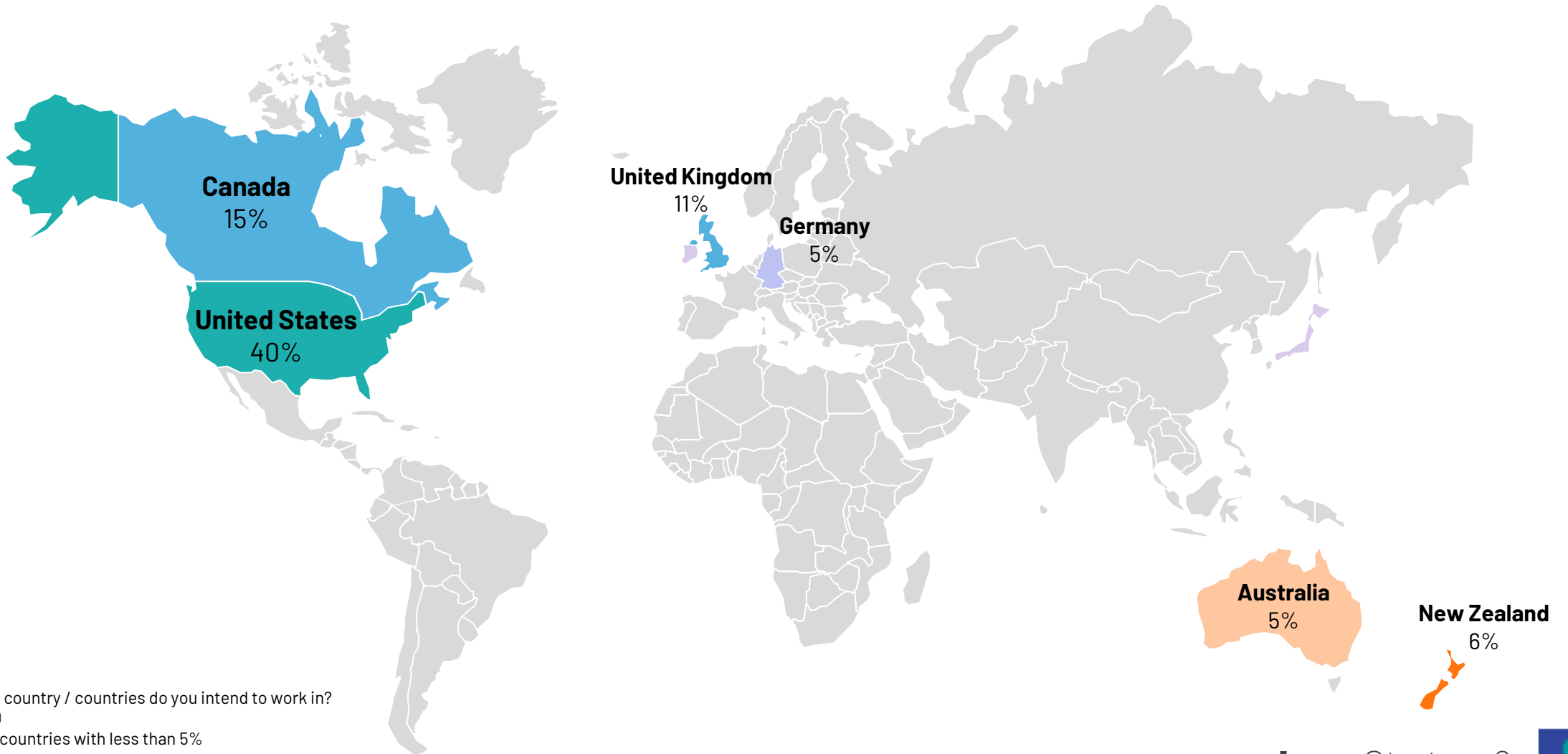
Weighted score based on ranking (points)

	OVERALL	PRIVATE HOSPITAL	PUBLIC HOSPITAL
Better quality of life	70	36	34
Better healthcare system	55	28	27
Career progression / career growth opportunities	47	29	18
Comprehensive employee benefits	31	20	11
Working hours / work-life balance	31	15	16
Family permanent residency / citizenship sponsorships	28	11	17
Retirement benefits	20	11	9
Passion / interest	16	6	10
Job security	14	5	9
Professional / skills development	13	7	6
Job availability / in-demand jobs	10	3	7
Travel opportunities	10	3	7
Good working environment	9	6	3
Flexibility	3		3
Suitability of existing skills	2		2
Manageable workload	1		1

Base: Aspiring Overseas Nurses (n60)

Q8. Why do you aspire to migrate? Choose the top 3 reasons and rank them by importance. 1 – Most important; and 3 – Least important (MA, ranking)

Where do they want to practice?



S17. Which country / countries do you intend to work in?
Base n= 60
*Excludes countries with less than 5%



I have made the decision to work as a nurse overseas permanently because I see it as a steppingstone towards achieving my career goals and securing a brighter future for myself and my family.

**Local to Global Nurse,
Planning to work in UK**

Working abroad as a nurse permanently is my ultimate aspiration. I believe it will provide me with the chance to experience different healthcare systems, cultures, and practices.

**Local to Global Nurse,
Planning to work in Canada**

7 out of
10 


are planning to work overseas permanently.

Base: Aspiring Overseas Nurses (n60)

THANK YOU