

## **Cizik School of Nursing MSN/Post Graduate Preceptor Handbook**

### **Introduction**

A clinical preceptorship is a supervised clinical experience that allows students to apply knowledge and skills in a practice setting. Each student enters a precepted experience with a varied amount of knowledge, clinical experience, and technical competence depending on past experience and education. Clinical learning opportunities that enhance the student's individual learning needs are determined with input from the student, the faculty, and the preceptor. The purpose of the Graduate Preceptor Guidelines is to provide Cizik School of Nursing (CSON) at UTHealth Houston graduate program preceptors with information to optimize student learning.

### **Cizik School of Nursing Mission**

Improve the health and well-being of our diverse community by preparing tomorrow's leaders to drive innovation and excellence in nursing education, practice, and scientific discovery.

### **Cizik School of Nursing Values**

- Integrity
- Innovation
- Collaboration
- Respect
- Excellence

### **Cizik School of Nursing Vision**

To lead the advancement of health and high-quality health care for all.

### **MSN/Post-Graduate Program Objectives**

Graduates of the Master of Science in Nursing Program (and/or completers of the Post-Graduate Advanced Practice Registered Nurse [APRN] Program) will be able to:

1. Demonstrate mastery of specialized knowledge and skills that will promote functioning in an advanced nursing role.
2. Integrate nursing science with knowledge from ethics, informatics, and the biophysical, psychosocial, and organizational sciences into advanced nursing practice.
3. Integrate best practices and evidence aimed at positively impacting health care to achieve optimal outcomes.
4. Foster collaborative interprofessional relationships with other health professionals to promote delivery of safe, value-driven, and high-quality health care.

5. Utilize leadership skills in promoting health for individuals, groups, and communities of interest.

## **CSON Graduate Faculty Responsibilities**

- I. Prior to the initiation of the clinical preceptorship, the graduate faculty or designee will:
  - A. Communicate with the clinical site and request clinical placements for a student(s) for the upcoming semester. CSON faculty members are responsible for approval of clinical sites and preceptors.
  - B. When indicated, send a verification letter/form to the preceptor and clinical site with name(s) of the student(s) and contact faculty member and the dates in which the student will be completing a rotation at the clinical site. Provide document(s) that comply with any requirements required by the clinical agency.
  - C. Provide a copy of the course syllabi which includes the course objectives and the appropriate evaluation form to the preceptor and clinical site.
  - D. Ensure that a current contract/letter of agreement exists between the clinical agency and the Cizik School of Nursing at UTHealth Houston.
- II. The CSON faculty member and all preceptors will jointly evaluate the graduate student's performance in the clinical setting, but the faculty is ultimately responsible for student evaluation and grade assignment.
- III. The CSON faculty will provide periodic on-site clinical evaluations and will be available for consultation as requested to the student, preceptor, and clinical site.
- IV. The CSON faculty will retain final authority for determining when the graduate student has successfully met requirements for satisfactory completion of the clinical experience and course requirements.
- V. Clinical sites and preceptors are evaluated periodically by graduate program faculty. Advanced practice status and current nursing licensure will be verified by the Cizik School of Nursing at UTHealth Houston prior to initiating a contract.
- VI. The CSON faculty member will be responsible to the student for:
  - A. Assistance in scheduling clinical experiences to meet the course and student objectives.
  - B. Periodic on-site clinical evaluations as determined by the faculty and student.
  - C. Consultation at the clinical site as requested by the student and/or preceptors.
  - D. Final grading of the clinical experience with input from the preceptor.

## **Clinical Site Selection Criteria and Responsibilities**

### **I. Clinical Site Selection Criteria**

- A. The clinical settings chosen shall provide experiences appropriate to the graduate student's educational needs.
- B. The clinical settings chosen for the preceptor shall have mechanisms in place that provide delegated authority for APRN practice, as appropriate. Such mechanisms may include, but are not limited to, a prescriptive authority agreement, protocols, policies, practice guidelines, or other orders. When these mechanisms are used to provide such authorization, they should

be jointly developed by the advanced practice nurse and appropriate physician(s) and signed by both the APRN and the physician(s). The practice agreement should be maintained in the practice setting of the advanced practice nurse.

## II. Clinical Site Responsibilities

The clinical site is responsible for:

- A. Access to space in which to practice (exam room, classroom, and/or office work space, conference room).
  - B. Orientation to utilized electronic health record system as appropriate.
  - C. Adequate resources for diagnostic services and appropriate resources for referral.
  - D. Adequate resources for educational instruction, communication, and documentation.
  - E. Provision of policies, procedures, and/or advanced practice protocols specific to the setting and role.
  - F. Mentoring the student in the performance of the required activities appropriate to their clinical specialty and role.
1. Nurse Practitioner (NP) students: The clinical settings chosen for the NP student shall provide an environment that permits some observation and allows active participation of the student in the delivery of care. NP students cannot take or enter orders for tests, treatments, medications, or referrals in the medical record.

The site shall provide activities that include, but are not limited to:

- a. Opportunities to practice primary, secondary, and/or tertiary care.
  - b. Reasonable time for student learning.
  - c. A variety of learning experiences in relation to age (as appropriate), clinical complexity, and diagnoses.
  - d. Opportunity to formulate differential diagnoses and management plans.
  - e. Opportunity to implement and evaluate management plans.
2. Nursing Education students should be allowed to perform all the required student/staff development activities for their specific role. These activities include, but are not limited to:
    - a. Critical analysis of the nursing curriculum in the clinical site.
    - b. Implementation of instructions specific to the needs of the clinical site.
    - c. Education directed at learner population (e.g., students, staff, patients/families, etc.)
  3. Nursing Leadership and Administration students will perform management activities based on their objectives for their specific role.

These activities include, but are not limited to:

- a. Participation in the administration of selected aspects of a health care agency/system.
- b. Analysis of the responsibility and accountability of administrators of selected departments functioning in a health care agency/system.

- c. Evaluation of the role of nurses and other health care providers in the administration of a health care agency/system.
- d. Analysis of current issues in health care systems with emphasis on the role of nurse administrators in developing creative solutions.

## **Preceptor Selection Criteria and Responsibilities**

### **I. General Selection Criteria**

Individuals enrolled in the same degree (i.e., MSN) or a related program/role (i.e., post-graduate or DNP) at the Cizik School of Nursing at UTHealth Houston may not precept students enrolled in the same or related program at the CSON since preceptors provide evaluation and input into student grading.

### **II. Criteria for preceptors for NP students include:**

- A. Current unencumbered license to practice as a Registered Nurse (RN) and Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (as appropriate) in The State of Texas.
- B. APRN with a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) degree or Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree, licensed physician, physician assistant, licensed nursing home administrator, health care administrator, licensed professional counselor or psychologist.
- C. Appropriately credentialed (i.e., national certification as appropriate).
- D. Minimum of one-year practice experience in clinical specialty and role.
- E. Functioning within the scope of the Texas Nurse Practice Act (for RN/APRN preceptors)
- F. Willingness to participate actively in the education and evaluation process of the graduate student.

### **III. Criteria for preceptors for MSN Nursing Leadership and Administration students include:**

- A. Current unencumbered RN licensure in the State of Texas
- B. Holds a MSN or DNP degree or a master's degree in another discipline plus five years of nursing leadership experience employed at a higher level on the organizational chart than the student

### **IV. Criteria for preceptors for Nursing Education students include:**

- A. Current unencumbered RN licensure in the State of Texas
- B. Holds a minimum of a MSN or DNP degree with a minimum of two years of experience in a nurse educator role (i.e., academic, staff development, patient education)

### **V. Preceptor Responsibilities**

Preceptor responsibilities shall include the orientation, supervision, teaching, and evaluation of the student's performance in the clinical setting. The graduate preceptor is responsible for:

#### **A. Orientation**

1. The graduate student should arrange to meet with the identified preceptor for orientation at the initiation of the actual clinical experience.
2. During orientation to the clinical setting, the graduate preceptor should:
  - a. Communicate general guidelines to be used for preceptor/student interactions and for review and feedback of student performance.

- b. Review policies, procedures, and advanced practice management protocols specific to the setting and role as appropriate.
- c. Review expectations for documentation as available.
- d. Discuss overall plan for student progression.
- e. Review student's previous learning experiences and clinical objectives to be accomplished.
- f. Complete Clinical Learning Contract with student.
- g. Encourage student to identify strengths and areas for continued professional growth
- h. Perform initial assessment of student's current level of proficiency through observation of student performance and through directed, guided questioning
- i. Involve student in assessment/validation decisions about learning strategies employed by the preceptor.
- j. Review clinical site educational and licensure documentation, parking, dress code, etc.
- k. Negotiate a clinical schedule with the graduate student. In order to ensure an optimal clinical experience; all graduate students are required to arrange their clinical schedules to the role. If the student will be absent on a scheduled clinical day, the student is responsible for notifying the graduate preceptor and the faculty prior to the clinical day or in the case of illness before the start of the clinical day.

## B. Clinical Supervision and Teaching

The graduate preceptor should:

1. Provide timely and necessary input to student regarding student's ability to meet course objectives throughout the clinical practicum.
2. Assess the competence of the graduate student in providing role responsibilities to clients and populations.
3. Ensure that the graduate student's performance is consistent with standards set forth in clinical site policies, procedures, and advanced practice protocols for patient care, education, and administration duties.
4. Direct the progression of student assignments based on both the preceptor's and graduate student's evaluation of readiness, knowledge, and skill competencies.
5. Directly mentor the graduate student in the performance of role responsibilities. The graduate preceptor should remember, however, that she/he is ultimately responsible for the client, and thus should remain available to the student for consultation and ongoing evaluation throughout the entire preceptorship.
6. Provide feedback on the accuracy and completeness of the student's documentation of clinical findings. Review the graduate student's documentation and make constructive suggestions for improvement. Graduate students will sign all paper notations with their first name, last name, title, and school. All documentation must be co-signed by the preceptor in accordance with clinical site policies. The preceptor is responsible for signing any electronic entries in compliance with clinical site policies.
7. Schedule regular meetings with the graduate student to discuss specific learning objectives and experiences. These meetings should review:
  - a. The student's role responsibilities and ability to accurately document clinical findings.
  - b. Ability to complete advanced practice skills/activities.
  - c. The student's ability to develop client-focused intervention strategies, including rationales for clinical decisions.

- d. The student's ability to communicate and collaborate effectively with preceptors, clients, families, nursing staff, and other health care professionals.
- e. Professional issues related to advanced practice role implementation.

### C. Evaluation of Graduate Student Performance

1. Assess graduate student progress through a formal, written evaluation at the completion of the clinical experience. The preceptor evaluation is a component of the graduate student's grade (as specified on the student's clinical evaluation form).
2. Inform the supervising faculty of any concerns related to:
  - a. Unsafe clinical practice by the student.
  - b. Student difficulties in meeting the requirements of the clinical experience.

## Graduate Student Responsibilities

The student is responsible for being self-directed in identifying initial and ongoing learning needs, for seeking learning opportunities to meet identified needs, and for being accountable for self-performance in the selected role. The student will:

- A. Discuss specific clinical objectives and negotiate a mutually agreeable schedule with the preceptor prior to the actual preceptorship.
- B. Mutually negotiate Clinical/Practicum Learning Contract with the preceptor and faculty.
- C. Provide the clinical site with the necessary licensure, educational, and/or immunization information as requested.
- D. Complete orientation and forms as required by the clinical agency.
- E. Demonstrate professional behaviors at all times.
- F. Demonstrate accountability for thoroughness and timeliness in completing assigned responsibilities.
- G. Maintain a log of clinical skills, activities, clients, teaching-learning modules and educational experiences attended throughout the duration of the clinical experience (e.g., Typhon or EXXACT for NP students).
- H. Demonstrate progressive independence and competency in the chosen role and specialty area.
- I. Actively seek input into evaluation process and participate in self-evaluation of strengths and identified areas for professional growth with faculty member(s) and preceptor(s).
- J. Complete and submit clinical preceptor and site evaluations and provide feedback to preceptor.
- K. Maintain personal records of all evaluation forms.

## References

Texas Board of Nursing. (2022). *Rules and Regulations Relating to Professional Nurse Education, Licensure, and Practice*.

[https://www.bon.texas.gov/pdfs/law\\_rules\\_pdfs/rules\\_regulations\\_pdfs/April%202022%20Rules%20and%20Regulations.pdf](https://www.bon.texas.gov/pdfs/law_rules_pdfs/rules_regulations_pdfs/April%202022%20Rules%20and%20Regulations.pdf)