

Cizik School of Nursing DNP Preceptor Handbook

Introduction

A 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. Practice 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 Preceptor Handbook 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
- Inclusivity
- Collaboration
- Respect
- Excellence

Cizik School of Nursing Vision

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

DNP/Post-Graduate Program Outcomes

Upon completion of the Doctor of Nursing (DNP) program graduates will be prepared to:

1. Demonstrate person-centered care at the highest level of nursing practice.
2. Translate evidence-based knowledge into practice to improve health and health care.
3. Incorporate leadership principles, change management strategies, and interprofessional collaboration into practice-based quality improvement activities.
4. Utilize technology and data analysis to drive practice-based decision-making.
5. Integrate resource stewardship, policy, and advocacy to promote equitable care for diverse populations.

CSON Graduate Faculty Responsibilities

- A. 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 the approval of clinical sites and preceptors.
 - b. When indicated, send a verification letter/form to the preceptor and clinical site with the name(s) of the student(s) and contact faculty member and the dates on which the student will be completing a rotation at the clinical site. Provide the 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.
- B. 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.
- C. The CSON faculty will provide periodic on-site clinical evaluations of entry to practice nurse practitioner students and will be available for consultation as requested by the student, preceptor, and/or clinical site.
- D. 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.
- E. Clinical sites and preceptors are evaluated periodically by graduate program faculty. Advanced practice status and current nursing licensure will be verified as applicable by the Cizik School of Nursing at UTHealth Houston prior to initiating a contract.
- F. The CSON faculty member will be responsible to the student for the following:
- a. Assistance in scheduling clinical experiences to meet the course and student objectives.
 - b. Periodic on-site clinical evaluations as determined by the faculty for the entry to practice nurse practitioner students.
 - 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

A. Clinical Site Selection Criteria

- a. The clinical settings chosen shall provide experiences appropriate to the graduate student's educational needs.
- b. For preceptors who are APRNs 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.

B. Clinical Site Responsibilities

- a. The clinical site for nurse practitioner or clinical nurse specialist students is responsible for the following:
 - i. Access to space in which to practice (exam room, classroom, and/or office work space, conference room).
 - ii. Orientation to utilized the electronic health record system as appropriate.
 - iii. Adequate resources for needed diagnostic services and appropriate resources for referral.
 - iv. Adequate resources for educational instruction, communication, and documentation.
 - v. Provision of policies, procedures, and/or advanced practice protocols specific to the setting and role.
 - vi. Mentoring the student in the performance of the required activities appropriate to their clinical specialty and role. The clinical settings chosen for the NP student shall provide an environment that permits both student observation and active participation in the delivery of care. NP students cannot enter orders for tests, treatments, medications, or referrals in the medical record, nor can they give verbal/telephone orders of the aforementioned.

- b. The clinical site for Informatics Nurses is responsible for:
 - i. Access to the organization's network, clinical information systems, and data analysis software.
 - ii. Orientation to the network and clinical information system.
 - iii. Sites accepting Nurse Informaticist students shall provide activities that include, but are not limited to:
 1. Learn/or expand nursing informatics competencies as identified by the AACN and professional informatics organizations.
 2. Attend departmental meetings.
 3. Complete meaningful informatics project(s).
 4. Time to network with other Nurse Informaticists.
 5. Hands-on experience with emerging technologies.
 6. Interact with informatics thought leaders

- c. Sites accepting NP students shall provide activities that include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Opportunities to practice primary, secondary, and/or tertiary care.
 - ii. Time for student learning.
 - iii. A variety of learning experiences in relation to age (as appropriate), clinical complexity, and diagnoses.
 - iv. Opportunity to formulate differential diagnoses and management plans.
 - v. Opportunity to implement and evaluate management plans.

- d. Sites accepting Nurse Executive students shall provide activities that include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Expand leadership competencies in financial, human resource, and/or performance improvement management, foundational thinking, and understanding of technology, strategy, and clinical practice as appropriate.

- ii. Observe and develop relationship management, influencing behaviors, and personal and professional accountability.
- iii. Focus on communication, knowledge of the healthcare environment, leadership, professionalism, and business skills development as per the American Organization for Nursing Leadership (AONL, 2015) and the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE, 2022).
- iv. Complete meaningful leadership project(s).
- v. Interact with departmental and interdepartmental leaders and staff.

Preceptor Selection Criteria and Responsibilities

I. General Selection Criteria

Individuals enrolled in the same degree (i.e., DNP) or a related program/role (i.e., post-graduate, MSN, or PhD) 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. APRNs serving as a preceptor must have a current unencumbered license to practice as a Registered Nurse (RN) and Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (as appropriate) in The State of Texas.
- B. Preceptors for the NP student shall be an 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 licensed and 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 Nurse Informaticist students include:

- A. PhD or DNP in nursing/health/biomedical informatics, statistics, computer science, quality improvement, or another data-driven domain. Five years of experience and a master's in place of a PhD or DNP is acceptable.
- B. A minimum of one year of experience in nursing/health/biomedical informatics or another data-driven domain.
- C. A minimum of one year of employment at the current employer
- D. Willingness to participate in the education and evaluation process of the nurse informaticist student.

IV. Criteria for preceptors for Nurse Executive students include:

- A. Doctoral or Master's degree in nursing/business/healthcare administration/public administration or another leadership, operations management, business or finance domain.
- B. A minimum of two years of practice experience in a nursing leadership/operations management/business or other leadership or administrative position at the executive, director or departmental level depending on the experience of the student.
- C. Willingness to participate in the education and evaluation of the nurse executive student.
- D. Willingness to allow and support access to departmental, interdepartmental, and

interprofessional meetings and activities that provide learning opportunities and support professional development.

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 on the 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 the overall plan for student progression.
 - e. Review the student's previous learning experiences and clinical objectives to be accomplished.
 - f. Complete Clinical Learning Contract with the student.
 - g. Encourage the 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 the 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 the student regarding the 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 the following:
 - 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 objectives and strategies 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 confidentiality of both site processes and patient information.
- H. Maintain a log of clinical time including skills, activities, clients, teaching-learning modules and educational experiences attended throughout the duration of the clinical experience as described within the course syllabus (e.g., Typhon or EXXAT for NP students).
- I. Demonstrate progressive independence and competency in the chosen role and specialty area.

- J. Actively seek input into the evaluation process and participate in self-evaluation of strengths and identify areas for professional growth with faculty member(s) and preceptor(s).
- K. Complete and submit clinical preceptor and site evaluations and provide feedback to the preceptor.
- L. Maintain personal records of all evaluation forms.

References

- American College of Healthcare Executives (2022). ACHE Healthcare Executive 2022 competencies assessment tool. <https://www.ache.org/career-resource-center>
- American Organization for Nursing Leadership (2015). *Nurse Executive Competencies*. <https://www.aonl.org/system/files/media/file/2019/06/nec.pdf>
- 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

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