

Governors State University
Department of Nursing
Clinical Practicum/Residency Handbook



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WELCOME

Congratulations! You have completed your core courses and are now about to embark on your clinical course/residency journey. Like all journeys, there are roadmaps (we call them policies and procedures) to follow. The purpose of this clinical manual is to provide information that will help the student achieve successful clinical/residency experiences.

Goals of the Clinical/Residency Experience

1. Use the clinical experience to apply theory to practice.
2. Collaborate with an experienced clinician to acquire the requisite clinical and critical thinking skills.
3. Develop knowledge of the educational, financial, and administrative aspects of primary health care practice and selected health care institutions.
4. Provide opportunities for collaboration with other disciplines in the provision of health care services.

Securing a Clinical/Residency Site

The clinical site population should reflect the population under study in the corresponding didactic courses. In selecting a clinical site, first meet with the Clinical Site Coordinator by mid-semester in the semester before taking the course. Consult the list of approved clinical sites available from the Clinical Site Coordinator or give the name of the potential clinical site to the coordinator. The Clinical Site Coordinator can consult the affiliation agreement (contract) data base to determine if the site has an agreement (contract) with the site. Review your goals, strengths, and weaknesses. Discuss your ideas for clinical or residency sites and potential preceptors with the course faculty and Clinical Site Coordinator. If needed, meet with your clinical faculty/clinical site/residency supervisor again for assistance.

The procedure for securing a clinical site entails several actions:

1. Contact the preceptor you would like to work with. This may be someone you already know or may be from a preceptor list from your course instructor/clinical site coordinator. For FNP's a list should be located in Typhon. Purchase of Typhon is mandatory for FNP students and will be bought online. The Clinical Site Coordinator will send an invitation with directions/tutorial for Typhon.
2. Make sure that the preceptor's specialty is the same as the subject of the clinical course. For example, the Young Family in Health and Illness course (NURS 8120) student should be precepted by a Nurse Mid-wife, a Women's Health Nurse Practitioner, a Family Nurse Practitioner, an Obstetrician or a Pediatrician. For CNS and Nurse executive students, the preceptor's specialty should match the specific course focus.

3. Once the preceptor agrees to work with you, notify the Clinical Site Coordinator. The Clinical Site Coordinator will communicate with the chosen preceptor to determine what paper work the site requires and inform the site what paper work is required by GSU.
4. An affiliation agreement (education contract) must be signed by the authorized person at the chosen clinical site. The student does not communicate further with the preceptor until the affiliation agreement process is completed. The student, course instructor, and the Clinical Site Coordinator will work as a team to problem-solve issues which occur during this process.
5. The Dean's Office personnel will obtain the necessary signatures and forward the affiliation agreement to the university's attorney's office where it will be filed. A copy will be sent to the designated person at the clinical site.

Preparation for Clinical

Before the student can begin clinical hours, several items have to be in place:

1. All health/immunization forms must be complete and uploaded into Typhon, or given to the CNS and Nurse executive course instructors and clinical site coordinator one (1) semester before clinical begins. Instructions for Typhon use will be given at that time.
2. The mandatory drug test must be completed.
3. Orientation to the clinical course must be completed.
4. Other required paper work must be submitted, collected or uploaded (CPR card, Standard Precautions, HIPPA review form).

If the forms are not in-place, the student will not be permitted to attend clinical.

Preceptor Qualifications

Preceptor qualifications depend upon the focus or specialty concentration of the student –

- ◆ **Family Nurse Practitioner** students, preceptors may be: Nurse practitioners or Nurse Midwives who are actively engaged in clinical practice. They are required to hold a minimum of a clinical master's degree with at least one year of clinical experience. The preceptors also need to be recognized as an APRN in their practice state with prescriptive authority OR recognized as an APRN meeting federal guidelines (such as in VA clinics, the military, and US Public Health Service Corps).

Family Nurse Practitioner students may also utilize licensed MDs / DOs in active clinical practice.

- ◆ **Clinical Nurse Specialist** students work with Clinical Nurse Specialists, Nurse Educators and Nurse Executives, depending on their coursework. The Clinical Nurse Specialist preceptor must have a minimum of a clinical master's degree and be licensed as an advanced practice nurse. There may be some states that do not require Clinical Nurse

Specialists to be licensed. That is acceptable, if the student is doing clinical practice in that state.

Preceptor Qualifications (contd.)

- ◆ **The Nurse Educator and Nurse Executive CNS Preceptor** should have a minimum of the master's degree in their specialty and the requisite experience. Certification is preferred.
- ◆ **The Nurse Executive** program student will need to work with a preceptor who has experience as a nurse administrator in a health care institution. Some examples include: Clinical Department Director/Supervisor, Chief Nursing Officer, Quality Assurance Director, and Vice-President of a specialty area. The preceptor must have a minimum of a master's degree in nursing. Certification is preferred.
- ◆ **Doctorate of Nursing Practice** residency supervisors should have a doctorate or (at a minimum) a master's in nursing degree. They should have experience in the specialty role the student has chosen. Their position should be at a higher level than the student currently has experience with. For example, a dean, director or vice-president for nursing may be chosen.

Preceptor Interview

When the clinical placement is approved by all parties, and the affiliation agreement is in place, the student will want to meet with the preceptor to do an interview. The course syllabus and the clinical and course objectives of the student are discussed in the meeting. The purpose of the interview and discussion is to determine if the preceptor/student arrangement is workable for both sides.

Responsibilities of the Preceptor

- ◆ Work with the course instructor to support student success in the practicum.
- ◆ Orient the student to the facility.
- ◆ Design experience situations.
- ◆ Provide constructive feed-back to the student and course instructor.
- ◆ Verify student hours with a signature.
- ◆ Communicate with the course instructor any problems that need to be attended to.
- ◆ Evaluate the student at midterm and final.
- ◆ Provide an opportunity/(opportunities) to improve performance if necessary.
- ◆ The course instructor will be available via telephone or e-mail to discuss any issues and to provide support/consultation to the preceptor.

Responsibilities of the Student

- ◆ Arrive at the clinical site on time.
- ◆ Adhere to the schedule agreed upon with the preceptor and/or site administrator.

- ◆ Dress appropriately professional: No jeans, flip-flops, high heels, no long or fake nails. Wear a lab coat and GSU patch with identification as a GSU student.
- ◆ Maintain good hygiene.

Responsibilities of the Student (contd.)

- ◆ Complete all assignments in a timely manner and to the satisfaction of the preceptor/clinical course instructor.
- ◆ Meet with the preceptor and the GSU site faculty.
- ◆ Communicate appropriately with patients and site personnel.
- ◆ Complete and submit required documents to the appropriate person(s)/computer systems.

Preceptor Evaluation (by Student)

The student and the preceptor evaluate each other. Therefore, evaluations are completed by the end of the clinical practicum and shared with the preceptors. Evaluations are then turned-in to the Clinical Site Coordinator or course instructor, and uploaded onto Typhon.

Preceptors may also request paperwork/forms to verify to their certification agency that they have precepted a student. The forms are online on the Department of Nursing Preceptor / Residency Supervisor Information web page (under **Required Preceptor Forms** at bottom of page) (http://www.govst.edu/Academics/Colleges_and_Programs/College_of_Health_and_Human_Services/Department_of_Nursing/Department_of_Nursing_Preceptor_/Residency_Supervisor_Information/) or the clinical site coordinator will have them.

Preceptor Evaluation of the Student

Preceptors will be given a form to evaluate the student. The clinical instructor and the preceptor should discuss the student's performance. This is done in conjunction with the instructor observing the student at the site at least once during a semester. A midterm and final evaluation is required. The official grade is submitted by the course instructor. Both the clinical and didactic classes must be passed in order to progress to the next classes.

Evaluation of the Clinical Site

In addition to the student's evaluation of the preceptor, the student should do an evaluation of the clinical site. This information will help the faculty and Clinical Site Coordinator in determining which clinical sites are appropriate for student clinical experience.

Scheduling of Clinical Hours

There are prescribed clinical hours for all the concentrations within the master's and doctoral programs. Refer to the course syllabus and check the certification organization for your specialty for specific requirements. Clinical hour requirements vary: for the MSN FNP and CNS tracks, the **minimum** is 500 hours for certification. Clinical hours for each class in these specialties vary, consult the course syllabus for more information. The clinical hours for the Nurse Administrator/Nurse Executive specialty is 135.0. The clinical hours for the DNP are 1000 hours

however, if the student has a clinical MSN the requirement is 500 clinical hours. The clinical hour's requirement is subject to change depending on changes in the appropriate nursing organizations.

Clinical practicum hours are to be scheduled at the convenience and the availability of the preceptor. Students are not to ask preceptors to conform to a schedule that meets the student's personal and employment needs.

The student's personal and work schedules are expected to accommodate the required number of clinical hours prescribed by the clinical course.

Prior to beginning the practicum experience, students and preceptors need to agree on the days and times that the student will be in the clinical agency. Any changes need to be discussed ahead of time and confirmed by the preceptor. The instructor and Clinical Site Coordinator must be informed.

Once the scheduling is agreed upon, the student obtains the preceptor's vita or resume and forwards it to the course instructor or specialty program coordinator. The student also is responsible for delivering the preceptor packet to the preceptor.

Documentation of Clinical Hours/Activities

A clinical log is kept by the student to document clinical hours and activities. Each hour/activity is signed by the preceptor, and reviewed by the clinical instructor. It is the student's responsibility to maintain documentation of clinical hours and to obtain the preceptor's signature at the appropriate time.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

When can I register for the first clinical/residency course?

You can register for your first clinical course when all of your core courses are completed satisfactorily. Consult your study plan and your advisor if you have questions or concerns.

When should I begin my activities to plan for and secure a clinical/residency site?

You should work with the Clinical Site Coordinator to plan and secure a site about one (1) semester before you start clinical.

How long will this process take?

Usually 4-6 weeks. However, if there is no affiliation agreement (contract) with the agency, it could take much longer.

What happens if my clinical/residency placement falls through?

Notify the clinical/residency course instructor and the Clinical Site Coordinator immediately and work with them to find a new site. These are the appropriate people to notify and discuss any problems occurring at the clinical site. If the issue is compatibility with the site personnel, the

clinical site coordinator and the course instructor will work with you to find a replacement. However, replacement is not guaranteed for the same semester.

What happens if an agreement cannot be reached with my first selection?

The Clinical Site Coordinator and course instructor will work with to find an alternative site. This may result in making up clinical hours.

What happens if there is a delay in arranging my site placement?

You may have to start clinical later than planned and do more clinical hours in a shorter time than planned.

Who fills out and sends the various verification forms to certification agencies, state boards of nursing, and doctorate of nursing practice programs?

You can find verification forms for certification agencies at their respective websites. After you fill out your information on the form, the verification information will be filled out by the program coordinator or the Department of Nursing Chairperson. Consult the department secretary for further instructions if necessary.