



PennState
College of Nursing

RN to B.S.N. Option Preceptor/Mentor Resource Guide

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MESSAGE FROM THE ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

On behalf of the entire faculty, thank you for your willingness to serve as a Preceptor/Mentor for the Penn State RN to B.S.N. Nursing program option. We are pleased that you have chosen to work collaboratively with our students and faculty to help our nursing students achieve their academic goals. The RN to B.S.N. program option will build and expand on the RN competencies needed for our students to lead change and positively affect healthcare, as well as, help prepare them for graduate school.

Our RN to B.S.N. students are required to complete clinical experiences to complement their course work. The main goal of these clinical experiences is for our students to grow professionally and to be able to take the next step in their careers. The RN to B.S.N. clinical experiences with talented Preceptor/Mentors, provide students with an exciting opportunity to analyze and evaluate aspects of healthcare. Even for experienced nurses working in the field, the clinical requirements can provide valuable opportunities to train in new departments or move up to higher-level responsibilities. Your investment with our students helps them build a lifetime of rewards as they grow as professional nurses.

The Preceptor/Mentor serves as a role model for the student allowing the student to see and experience what you, the expert, do daily while encouraging the student to ask questions. The Preceptor/Mentor challenges, guides and directs. Fundamental to this process is the Preceptor/Mentor's willingness to share - professional values, beliefs, and skills while incorporating legal, ethical and professional practice standards. The student is a professional nurse who may be unfamiliar with your practice area. This is your opportunity to teach them and share your knowledge.

As a role model, facilitator, and educator, the Preceptor/Mentor assists the student to acquire professional skills in a time-limited relationship. Since nursing is a practice-based profession, the student can increase competence and confidence in clinical skills, decision-making, and application of knowledge in a specific clinical setting.

Thank you again for your participation in providing meaningful educational opportunities to our students.



Raymonde Brown, PhD, RN, CNE
Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education
Penn State College of Nursing

COLLEGE OF NURSING CONTACT INFORMATION

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Commonwealth Campuses include: Abington, Fayette, Mont Alto, New Kensington, Schuylkill, Shenango, and World Campus

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COLLEGE OF NURSING

MISSION

WE ARE creating nurse leaders to transform lives and health around the world.

Revised: April 2020

VISION

WE WILL redesign the landscape of health and nursing science through education, research, innovation, practice, and service.

Revised: April 2020

VALUES

The College of Nursing values align with [the Penn State Values](#) and are our shared ideals about how people should act toward one another, the standards to which we hold ourselves, and those beliefs we find important. While aspirational in nature, the Penn State Values articulate nursing's ethical principles and should guide our actions and decisions as members of the Penn State community.

Integrity: We act with integrity and honesty in accordance with the highest academic, professional, and ethical standards.

Respect: We respect and honor the dignity of each person, embrace civil discourse, and foster a diverse and inclusive community.

Responsibility: We act responsibly, and we are accountable for our decisions, actions, and their consequences.

Discovery: We seek and create new knowledge and understanding, and foster creativity and innovation, for the benefit of our communities, society, and the environment.

Excellence: We strive for excellence in all our endeavors as individuals, an institution, and a leader in higher education.

Community: We work together for the betterment of our University, the communities we serve, and the world.

Aligned with Penn State Values April 2020
Approved 8/19/20

PRECEPTOR/MENTORSHIP OVERVIEW

RN to B.S.N. Policy for Required Clinical Experience

The RN to B.S.N. (NURN) program option of study includes several clinical experiences that are designed by the Registered Nurse (RN) student to meet their individual professional goals. The RN, under the guidance of the course coordinator, selects either a health-related project or to be in an agency or clinical site. The student is responsible for finding a clinical site, contacting the clinical agency, and identifying a Preceptor/Mentor. The student is also responsible for providing necessary information and facilitating communication between the agency, Preceptor/Mentor, course faculty, and campus coordinator (when applicable). The full RN to B.S.N. policy for required clinical experiences can be found in the RN to B.S.N. Student Handbook located online at <https://www.nursing.psu.edu/student-handbooks/>

Penn State College of Nursing Preceptor/Mentor Policy for RN to B.S.N. Students

The Penn State College of Nursing defines a Preceptor/Mentor as a qualified individual who works one-to-one with a student in a clinical / community area to promote attainment of the students' learning goals / objectives. You have been chosen to become a Preceptor/Mentor due to your experience and professionalism, and the Penn State College of Nursing faculty greatly appreciates your time and efforts! The criteria that must be met to serve as a RN to B.S.N. Preceptor/Mentor can be found in the student handbook located online at <https://www.nursing.psu.edu/student-handbooks/>

Criteria of a RN to B.S.N. Preceptor/Mentor

1. Currently licensed as a Registered Nurse in the United States; RNs outside the U.S. will be evaluated individually.
2. Preferably a minimum of a baccalaureate degree in nursing.
3. Tangible evidence of commitment to further education and/or competency (workshops, conferences, certification, or enrollment in courses as documented on the curriculum vitae).
4. Experience as a Registered Nurse for at least one year in the clinical area of the present Preceptor/Mentorship.
5. Employment time in the setting should be sufficient for the clinical mentor to be thoroughly familiar with the institution (The actual time can be determined jointly by the clinical Preceptor/Mentor, agency, and course/clinical instructor).
6. Voluntary acceptance of Preceptor/Mentor role.
7. The clinical Preceptor/Mentor may not be a family member or close friend.

Clinical Preceptor/Mentor Responsibilities

The Clinical Preceptor/Mentor Is Responsible for The Following:

- Collaborate with the student to establish personal and professional goals for this clinical experience.
- Orient student to the clinical practice setting including identification of facility policies and procedures.
- Introduce the socialization process to the student by promoting involvement in formal and informal activities of the agency.
- Be available as a resource for the student in the clinical practice setting.
- Serve as a role model, practitioner, teacher, and mentor.
- Supervise / support the student in the clinical practice setting.
- Critique the student's ability to provide organized and safe nursing care.
- Provide suggestions that will assist and improve student performance to achieve course and clinical outcomes.
- Contact course faculty member concerning any issues that may arise.
- Provide an ongoing evaluation of student progress toward personal and course outcomes.
- Complete a formal evaluation of the student's progress at the end of the clinical experience.
- Assist course faculty with the formal evaluation of the student's progress at the end of the clinical experience.

Special Note: As a Preceptor/Mentor, you will be asked to facilitate the students learning experience, review the student goals and objectives, and evaluate the student performance and achievement at the end of the experience. If you are concerned about a student academically or otherwise, please contact the faculty as soon as possible.

Facilitating the Preceptor/Mentor/Student Experience:

Knowledge, attitudes and skills are foundational to developing competence in any professional individual. As a Preceptor/Mentor, you have a unique opportunity to share your knowledge, attitudes and skills with a fellow nurse who may have limited experience in your clinical area. As the Preceptor/Mentor, you are the expert and can facilitate someone learning about your professional practice setting.

What are the tools that a Preceptor/Mentor needs? Of primary importance is a willingness to share your knowledge and skills – to let someone see and experience nursing through your eyes, hands, and mind. You will practice nursing with a student who is watching, participating, and learning. **A Penn State Nursing course instructor is responsible for approving the clinical experience, Preceptor/Mentor, site, student goals, and the final course grades. It is important for clinical Preceptor/Mentors to contact the faculty member if any questions or concerns arise. The student will provide the Preceptor/Mentor will the name and contact information of the course instructor.**

Preceptor/Mentors apply various forms of methods to share practice knowledge and skills. These include:

Experiential Learning. Since nursing is a practice discipline, experience is the most common method of learning. It provides for direct experience in a practice setting, including patient care, but also interaction with other disciplines. While the student learner may never professionally work in your clinical practice setting, thinking processes are universally developed as the individual confronts unfamiliar situations. When considering the clinical assignments for the learner, the Preceptor/Mentor considers the student's learning goals and clinical preparation as well as your ability to provide adequate supervision. Preceptor/Mentors look for windows of opportunity or teaching moments to meet the student's priority learning needs as well as infrequent events that broaden the student's experience. Activities to supplement experiential learning include having the student read journals specific to the clinical setting, develop worksheets (i.e. rhythm strips), or return demonstration of a procedure. It is also acceptable to involve other staff members in these instructional activities.

Problem solving. Problem solving is a teaching method that allows the learner to analyze a clinical situation in depth. Often problem solving is initiated by having the student clearly explain the specific problem, consider multiple interventions while applying clinical knowledge, and then making a decision. It is often helpful to have the student distinguish between facts, assumptions and inferences as well as consider individual beliefs and values. In addition, it is helpful to discuss with the student any gaps in the needed information.

Conference. A conference is a discussion often involving multiple persons. Once again, problem solving is encouraged as well as the development of communication and group process skills. Problem solving, time management, and knowledge application are all possible areas for conference topics. A conference can be less formal such as a discussion that occurs in a relaxed atmosphere.

Observation. Observation allows a student to experience an area on a short-term basis. The experience can be a participatory observation where the student contributes by performing some limited activities. Observation allows the student to view a new professional role or see a procedure performed. It is important to have the student express thoughts before the experience, with reflection after the experience to identify any changes in perception.

Tools to help make these suggested teaching methods more effective include:

- asking and/or answering questions
- facilitating discussion and/or explanation of a topic
- demonstrating new or unfamiliar procedures
- providing feedback

RN to B.S.N. Course Faculty and Student Responsibilities

Faculty teaching in the RN to B.S.N. clinical courses are responsible for assisting the student to find an appropriate clinical Preceptor/Mentor. Preceptor/Mentors are utilized only in clinical RN to B.S.N. courses and serve as role models, mentors, facilitators, and/or direct support of students in the clinical area. Preceptor/Mentors do not replace faculty but work closely with faculty in facilitating student success. Preceptor/Mentors are vital in contributing information for evaluating student performance; however, faculty maintain the responsibility for the final student evaluation.

Students in consultation with the course faculty are responsible for developing learning objectives specific to this course for Preceptor/Mentor use. Each Preceptor/Mentor will be provided with a copy of the course syllabus by the student, which includes a course description and course objectives.

To be consistent with Preceptor/Mentor policy and provide clarification of roles, the following responsibilities are identified:

Course Faculty Responsibilities:

The course faculty member is responsible for the following:

- Approval of the students' clinical objectives / goals.
- Receive from the student the following signed form: Preceptor/Mentor Approval form.
- Obtain signed "Student Notification of Program Requirements" form from student.
- If the student is going to an agency in which Penn State does not have an affiliation agreement with, receive from the student the following signed form: Agency Letter of Agreement.
- Approval of the clinical site and Preceptor/Mentor or any project.
- If applicable, faculty are responsible for obtaining a clinical contract between Penn State College of Nursing and the healthcare facility.
- Consult with clinical Preceptor/Mentor and student if needed during the course.
- Communicate with the student and Preceptor/Mentor to discuss student's progress and exchange ideas and/or suggestions to better achieve objectives. These meetings will occur by telephone and/or e-mail exchange.
- Maintain responsibility for the clinical evaluation.
- Discuss with the Preceptor/Mentor any information from student concerning ways to improve the clinical experience for future students.
- Course faculty, incorporating data from discussions with the student and Preceptor/Mentor and Preceptor/Mentor written documentation, will provide the final student evaluation and assignment of performance rating or grade.
- Provide the student with the opportunity to evaluate the clinical experience.

Student Responsibilities:

The student is responsible for the following:

- Establish initial contact with Preceptor/Mentor.
- Develop clinical or project goals / objectives.
- Decide upon a clinical experience or a project as the Health-Related Activity for the clinical experience that fulfills the goals.
- Ensure the agency has an affiliation agreement with Penn State, if completing a clinical experience.
- If using an agency – contact their staff development, find a Preceptor/Mentor, have the [Preceptor/Mentor Form](#) and the [Agency Letter of Agreement](#) (if Penn State does not have an affiliation agreement with the agency) paperwork signed, then submit these forms to the course faculty for approval prior to starting the clinical experience.

- If using an agency, obtain any agency compliances.
- Obtain instructor approval for clinical experience or project.
- Provide the Preceptor/Mentor with a copy of the course syllabus.
- Adhere to all hospital or clinical facility policies and procedures.
- Adhere to all College of Nursing policies and procedures identified in the Student Handbook. Failure to exhibit integrity, ethical conduct, or professional standards may warrant dismissal from the College of Nursing.
- Collaborate with course faculty and clinical Preceptor/Mentor concerning objectives / goals for this clinical experience.
- Comply with health and other professional requirements of the clinical facility prior to the start of the clinical experience.
- Dress in a professional manner consistent with clinical facility guidelines as described in the RN to B.S.N. student handbook.
- Comply with the restriction of not taking verbal orders from physicians or giving medications without Preceptor/Mentor supervision.
- Be prepared to work in the clinical setting in a safe manner that demonstrates professional standards and arrive at the agreed time.
- Attend all established clinical days or notify clinical Preceptor/Mentor of absence and establish clinical make-up experience.
- Demonstrate any specialty skills or assessment requiring the presence of the Preceptor/Mentor (i.e. ECG interpretation, fetal heart monitoring, hemodynamic monitoring, etc.)

Students in the RN to B.S.N. program option are responsible for the submission of forms that can be found on the College of Nursing website at <https://www.nursing.psu.edu/student-forms/>

ACCREDITATION

The baccalaureate degree program in nursing, master's degree program in nursing, Doctor of Nursing Practice program and post graduate APRN certificate program at The Pennsylvania State University are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education 655 K Street NW, Suite 750, Washington, DC 20001, 202-887-6791. <http://www.ccnaccreditation.org>

STATE AUTHORIZATION

State Authorization and Reciprocity Agreement (SARA):

The State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) is an agreement among member states, districts, and territories in the United States, which establishes comparable national standards for interstate offering of postsecondary distance education courses and programs. It is intended to simplify the process of taking online courses for credit offered by post-secondary institutions based in another state. SARA is overseen by a national council (NC-SARA) and administered by four regional education compacts. Penn State has been approved by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to participate in NC-SARA and was accepted as a SARA institution on January 25, 2017.

For more information on SARA, please visit <http://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/state-authorization>

State Authorization Complaint Resolution:

During your education, you may encounter situations that require the assistance of others to resolve. As a Penn State World Campus student, you have access to experienced representatives who can help. The action you take will depend on the nature of the issue you are experiencing. Please view the following link to determine which method of reporting is right for you.

<http://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/complaint-resolution>

State Authorization Disclosures:

The following information is provided to distance learning (on-line) students regarding State Authorization Disclosures. Students are responsible for ensuring awareness and understanding of any specific additional requirements for within the State that the student holds a professional nursing license and intends to complete clinical/practicum hours.

<http://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/state-authorization/disclosures>

Penn State University RN to B.S.N Student Handbook may be found at the following link: The student is accountable for all policies and information contained within the Student Handbook. The student handbook can be found online at the following website:

<https://www.nursing.psu.edu/student-handbooks/>

UNDERGRADUATE NURSING PROGRAM

ACADEMIC POLICIES

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

The University is a community that promotes learning; any behaviors that are inconsistent with that goal are unacceptable. Irresponsible behaviors, including alcohol or drug abuse and the use of violence against people or property, undermine the educational climate by threatening the physical and mental health of members of the community. Individual misconduct reflects upon the practices, values, integrity and reputation of the nursing profession.

A nursing student is expected to maintain a high standard of behavior by adhering to Penn State's [Code of Conduct](#) and respecting the rights of others.

Violation of the Student Code of Conduct may result in suspension or immediate dismissal from the academic program.

CLINICAL POLICIES

Penn State students are responsible to follow expectations and policies of the facility where they are completing the clinical experience. Additionally, the Penn State College of Nursing has identified policies that must be followed by all B.S.N. students. These policies can be found in the RN to B.S.N. Student Handbook located on the [CON website](#).

Some specific policies that can be found in the student handbook include:

1. Clinical Safety Policy
2. Impaired Student Nurse Policy
3. Drug and Alcohol Possession and Use
4. Infections Disease Policy
5. Student Dress Code Policy
6. Social Media Policy
7. Use of Electronic Devices in Clinical

RN TO B.S.N. CLINICAL COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

All students must contact the clinical site at least one month prior to beginning the required clinical course. Please note that if a clinical site requires a formal contract, the process can take up to six months. Please contact the RN to B.S.N. campus coordinator as soon as possible.

NOTE: A current U.S. RN license is required in the state where the clinical site is to be scheduled. Knowledge of the institution's (clinical site) requirements is the responsibility of the student. The student is responsible for obtaining necessary compliances and providing necessary proof of compliances to the institution/clinical site.

Possible compliances that may be requested by the clinical site include (but are not limited to):

1. Health Examination
2. Health Insurance
3. Malpractice Insurance
4. CPR
5. Child Abuse History
6. Criminal Record Check
7. Fingerprinting
8. Influenza Vaccination Verification

STUDENT DRESS CODE POLICY

Students enrolled in the RN to B.S.N. option at Penn State represent the University and the College of Nursing and are expected to dress in a professional manner at all times while in the clinical setting.

The following dress code guidelines for students in the clinical setting have been adopted by the College of Nursing:

1. A name pin and photo ID (if required by the facility) should be worn and visible at all times while in any clinical setting. The student's given first name and last name with the student's credentials should appear on the first line and "Penn State University" should appear on the second line. If a facility requires students to wear identification supplied by the facility, it is the student's responsibility to comply with the policy and pay any subsequent costs. Name pins may be purchased from any vendor as long as they follow the guidelines noted above.
2. Attire must comply with the dress policy of the facility and the following guidelines of the College of Nursing.
 - Various combinations of shirts, pants and skirts may be worn. Shirts should be of a length long enough to be tucked into pants or, if untucked, must completely cover the midriff with no skin showing at any time. No skin should be exposed along midriff area.

- Lab coats must be clean and pressed with the name pin visible at all times.
 - Shoes should be clean and in good condition. Students are advised not to wear clogs/crocs, as some institutions prohibit them. However, a white leather athletic shoe may be worn. High top athletic shoes may **NOT** be worn. The shoe of choice may not have any openings, including open-toed shoes.
 - Hosiery without patterns may be worn by females when wearing skirts. White socks without patterns or decorations may be worn with slacks. Sweaters may be worn and must be cardigans.
 - Students involved in some clinical courses, such as family, community, mental health, etc. may wear appropriate street attire in accordance with the policy of the facility. Blue jeans, faded clothing, sweatshirts, sweatpants, tank tops, t-shirts, halter-tops, shorts, and tight or revealing clothing may **NOT** be worn.
3. In the clinical area, the following is **NOT** acceptable:
- strong perfume or aftershave colognes
 - acrylic nails, tips, glue-on nail decorations, or dark colored nail polish
 - dangling earrings, bracelets, necklaces, and rings (other than wedding bands)
 - visible tattoos - **ALL** tattooing on the body needs to be concealed
 - obvious body piercings except ears (limited to **one** pair of earrings)
 - heavy makeup
 - long and/or dirty fingernails - **ALL** nails must be clean and short (not beyond the end of the finger)
 - long and/or unkempt hair. Hair must be neatly worn off the collar. Large ornamental hair attachments are not considered to be proper in the clinical setting
 - Chewing gum
4. Male students should be clean-shaven or have neatly trimmed beards or mustaches.
Note: Additional requirements related to attire or behavior in the hospital, or other clinical areas, may be made by any faculty member responsible for class or clinical instruction (e.g. some religions do not allow women to wear pants). Violations of the dress code may result in the student being asked to leave the clinical area. Also, dress code violations will be reflected in the student's clinical evaluation.

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