



Department of Nursing & Allied Health
RN to BSN Program

Preceptor Orientation Program

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The faculty and staff of SUNY Delhi's RN to BSN program would like to extend our sincerest appreciation for your willingness to precept a nursing student and share your knowledge and expertise with new professionals to the field. As you know, the value of a precepted practicum experience is immeasurable. Students look to preceptors for mentorship, direction, and guidance. You are not only supporting students in becoming confident and knowledgeable clinicians, but future leaders in the discipline as well.

Thank You.

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Introduction

About this Guide

The purpose of this orientation guide is to provide new preceptors with a brief overview of Delhi's RN-to-BSN Program; to define and clarify the roles and responsibilities of preceptors, students, and faculty; and to give preceptors general guidelines in working with students before, during, and after the practicum.

Tracking

Our accrediting body, The National League for Nursing Accreditation Commission (NLNAC), requires us to track and assess our preceptor education efforts and so this orientation guide concludes with a brief evaluation intended to ensure that our preceptors understand their roles and what is (and is not) expected of them and the students. Generally, the evaluation at the end of this orientation should take no longer than 10-15 minutes to complete.

Directions

Please read through the guide. At the end, follow the link to complete the evaluation. You will be asked to enter your name, phone number, and email address. The scoring is automated, and a copy of the results will be sent to you via the email address you provided and to the RN-to-BSN staff. Be assured that the results *will not* be shared with your employer, students, or anyone outside of SUNY Delhi's RN-to-BSN staff. Should any results appear problematic you will be contacted directly by one of our staff. .

Mission of the College

The mission of SUNY Delhi is to provide its students with academic opportunities that yield clear thinkers and productive citizens who are prepared for service, leadership, and successful careers.

Mission of the Program

The mission of the RN-to-BSN Program is to develop professional nursing leaders who will integrate healthcare expertise with civic responsibility and to enable graduates to contribute significantly toward the employment demands in the healthcare community and in nursing education.

Program/Student Learning Outcomes

Graduates of the SUNY Delhi RN-to-BSN program will:

1. Synthesize knowledge from the biological, social, and behavioral sciences, as well as humanities and nursing to provide culturally competent care to individuals, families, and communities.
2. Critically analyze and selectively apply research findings to nursing practice related to disease prevention, health promotion, illness, and restoration of health.
3. Collaborate with community-based partners to promote health in diverse client populations.
4. Effectively communicate with clients, diverse patient groups, and healthcare disciplines and adapt communication methods to meet the healthcare, educational, and counseling needs of diverse client groups across a multiplicity of settings.
5. Access, critically appraise, and utilize clinical evidence, data, and information from a wide range of resources to comprehensively and accurately provide nursing care to clients, families, and the public in a variety of settings.
6. Assume diverse leadership roles across the continuum of care to responsibly manage human, fiscal, and material resources.
7. Integrate professional role, values, ethical, moral, and legal aspects of nursing into practice in a variety of structured and unstructured settings.

8. Be guided by nursing theory, incorporating knowledge of environmental, social, cultural, economic, political, technological, and global factors to develop plans to affect beneficial client outcomes.

Program Design & Online Learning Implications

The RN-to-BSN program was designed with the working RN in mind. It is a 100% on-line curriculum, with required precepted practica completed in the students' hometown communities. Courses are 7 weeks long, with selections offered every 7 weeks throughout the year. Four of the courses require precepted practica:

- NURS 301: Health Assessment
- NURS 400: Leadership & Management in Nursing
- NURS 401: Community Health Nursing
- NURS 403: Senior Practicum

Successful online students are organized and self-disciplined and able to prioritize and manage their own learning, because online courses do not rely on physical attendance (Blackboard, 2000). Instead, student learning is assessed in how thoroughly and consistently the student responds to discussions, critically thinks about and organizes the learned information, and applies that learning toward the assignments. To this end, our faculty employs a constructivist methodology in the online environment.

Constructivism is based on the premise that learners create, organize, and interpret knowledge in their own ways (Legg, Adelman, Mueller, & Levitt, 2009). Constructivist methods include (a) providing real-world scenarios for students to investigate, (b) providing opportunities for reflection and application of knowledge acquired, (c) challenging students to make connections between research and practice, and (d) building on previously learned concepts with the intention of helping students develop, focus, and support their ideas through evidence and critical thinking.

Clinical Course Descriptions & Objectives

You have agreed to precept an RN taking one of the courses listed on the previous page. For your reference, we have included the course descriptions and objectives in the Appendix on page 17 of this document.

The Preceptor

Definition & Qualifications

SUNY Delhi's Department of Nursing & Allied Health defines preceptors as qualified individuals who work one-on-one with RN-to-BSN students in the clinical area to promote attainment of student learning objectives. Preceptors are willing to share their professional values, skills, and beliefs. They are effective verbal and written communicators, have good problem solving skills, and are organized and dependable. Preceptors are licensed registered nurses with a minimum of a BSN degree, who have at least 2 years of experience, one of which must be in the area of practicum specialty for which the preceptor is used.

Benefits of Precepting

For the Preceptor:

- Recognition as an experienced role model and educator, contributing to professional development
- Having a role in advancing nursing practice
- Satisfaction in facilitating learning and development of new skills for entering professionals
- Opportunity to sharpen knowledge and skills
- Opportunity to influence change in the workplace
- Opportunity to influence change in nursing education
- Opportunity to network and share ideas with other preceptors and nursing leaders

For the Student:

- Individualized support and encouragement from a practicing, experienced professional
- Increased knowledge and skills in the specialty area

- Opportunity to apply curriculum content into practice (i.e., application of theory-to-practice)
- Increased confidence in skills and problem solving
- Opportunity to exchange and discuss ideas

Roles and Responsibilities of SUNY Delhi Faculty/Staff, Preceptors, and Students

Preceptor responsibilities include:

1. Complete Preceptor Data Form.
2. Complete Preceptor and Student Agreement Form and the appropriate course Learning Contract.
3. Orient student to the practicum setting including identification of facility policies and procedures.
4. Serve as a role model, practitioner, educator, and mentor.
5. Supervise student in the practicum setting, where applicable.
6. Critique student's ability to provide organized and safe nursing care.
7. Provide suggestions that will assist and improve student performance to achieve course and practicum outcomes.
8. Contact course faculty member concerning any issues that may arise.
9. Be available to student at all times or provide a back-up preceptor in case of absence from the practicum setting where applicable.
10. Assist course faculty with formal evaluation, as per course guidelines, by providing documentation of the student's progress in meeting designated course outcomes.
11. Complete Preceptor Programmatic Evaluation Form.

Faculty and staff responsibilities for utilization of preceptors in all courses include:

1. Discuss with agency personnel coordination of the practicum and identification of qualified preceptors.
2. Obtain a clinical contract between SUNY Delhi and the healthcare facility.
3. Assist student in identifying a preceptor who will work with the student in achieving the course objectives.
4. For NURS 403 only, assist student in developing learning contract *prior* to the precepted practicum, including objectives and learning strategies.
5. Discuss with the student and preceptor the student's progress, ensure communication between the College and practicum site, and exchange ideas and/or suggestions to better achieve course outcomes. These meetings can occur by telephone and/or e-mail exchanges.
6. Obtain feedback from the preceptor of student progress in demonstrating designated course outcomes for the purpose of student, course, and program evaluation.
7. Incorporate data from discussions with the student and preceptor, along with preceptor's written documentation, to provide the final student evaluation and assignment of performance rating and/or grade.

Student responsibilities include:

1. During the term prior to the practicum experience (or earlier), identify appropriate agencies and confirm status of agency affiliation in coordination with the practicum coordinator at SUNY Delhi.
2. During the term prior to the practicum experience, identify a preceptor within the affiliated agency, and provide the preceptor with the Preceptor Data Form.
3. Complete Preceptor and Student Agreement Form and appropriate course Learning Contract.
4. For NURS 403 only, collaborate with course faculty and preceptor to develop a learning contract the term *prior* to the precepted practicum, including objectives and learning strategies, for this practicum experience.
5. Provide preceptor with a copy of the course syllabus containing designated course outcomes of the course in which student is enrolled.
6. Adhere to all hospital or practicum facility policies and procedures.
7. Comply with health and other professional requirements of the practicum facility prior to start of practicum, including such protocols as background checks, ID, or other orientations.
8. Successfully complete the terms established within the learning contract.
9. Dress in a professional manner consistent with practicum facility guideline and be clearly identified as a student.
10. Be prepared to work in practicum setting in a safe manner that demonstrates professional standards.
11. Arrive at the agreed time.
12. Attend all established practicum days or notify preceptor of absence and establish make-up experience.
13. Complete Student Evaluation of Preceptor Form.
14. Adhere to all College policies and procedures identified in the College Catalog, Student Handbook, and/or course syllabus.

Practicum Coordinator responsibilities include:

1. During the term prior to the practicum experience, communicate information regarding process for securing agency affiliations and appropriate preceptors, including deadlines and necessary forms, with students registered for upcoming practicum courses.
2. Confirm students' plans and initiate contract negotiations with new agencies (agency contact information provided by students).
3. Follow up on agreement negotiations through execution of agreement.
4. Inform student when agreement is finalized.
5. Maintain affiliation listings and information on agency-specific protocols.
6. Communicate with students on progress in securing a preceptor.
7. In collaboration with faculty, review all preceptors for appropriate qualifications and inform students of approvals.
8. Collect, review, and file all preceptor paperwork (Data Form, Agreement Form, and Learning Contract) and maintain preceptor database.
9. Provide faculty with each student's preceptor contact information.
10. Collect results of Preceptor Orientation Program Evaluation.

Establishing & Developing the Relationship

Orientation

During the beginning of the precepting relationship, the focus should be on establishing trust and a level of comfort which is the foundation of a good learning experience. Students may be anxious, particularly in a new environment. Orienting the student to the facility and policies as necessary, introducing the student to other staff, including the student in appropriate level activities, and assuring your availability will help to promote trust and comfort and help the student feel welcome. Finally, sharing one's background and experiences, as well as discussing the student's background, experiences, and career goals, can be an important component to the developing relationship.

Clarification of Expectations

Going over the Roles and Responsibilities (pp. 12-13) for clarification and understanding of the course learning objectives (pp. 7-10) is an important part of the orientation phase as well. Preceptors and students are highly encouraged to contact the faculty if there are any questions about learning objectives or assignments before the precepted experiences begin.

Determining Meeting Times

The student and preceptor should negotiate meeting times that work with the preceptor's schedule and the student's needs, while still addressing course objectives and learning activities. Regular evaluation and feedback after meetings help the student to reflect on his or her experiences and provides an opportunity to address and troubleshoot problems.

Implementation

Implementation of learning objectives is really the focus of the student-preceptor relationship and is when the preceptor actively becomes the practitioner, role model, resource, educator, and mentor and demonstrates his or her skills as a clinician. Assisting the student's development by guiding decision making and problem solving, while allowing the student to develop his or her own understanding and sense of autonomy, and nurturing a sense of professional accountability are key goals of the relationship. Over time, the preceptor may give less direction while the student acts more independently.

Educator, Role Model, and Resource

Effective preceptors understand that learning styles vary from person to person and try to utilize strategies that seem to best enhance the student's understanding. Being open and communicative about what you observe is crucial, along with having a willingness to be flexible about how and what you teach. Allowing a student to observe various situations and your decision making processes and interactions with staff, patients, and families will enrich the student's understanding of your role.

Adult learners often bring a good deal of background and experience to student preceptorships and want to know that their strengths will be capitalized upon and their weaknesses will be addressed with appropriate assignments and constructive feedback. Students look to preceptors for clear, professional guidance and view preceptors as experts in their areas who will help build on their previous learning.

Supervision, Evaluation, and Feedback

Preceptors are expected to be available to students *at all times* in the practicum. In the event this is not possible, preceptors are expected to arrange for a temporary back-up preceptor. While

formal and written evaluation procedures will be provided to the preceptor by the faculty during the course, informal evaluation and feedback is a part of the learning process. Learning is facilitated when:

- The learner has an opportunity to test ideas, analyze mistakes, take risks, and be creative
- The learner has feedback of his or her progress toward established goals
- Learning takes place in situations where satisfaction is derived: Good work deserves praise, just as problem performance requires correction
- Similarities between past and current experiences are recognized

Open communication and feedback is one of the foundations of a productive student-preceptor experience. Principles of effective communication for both preceptor and student include:

- Active listening: showing interest and acceptance
- Eye contact
- Being open minded and avoiding pre-judgment of the speaker or the message
- Tuning into the words and feelings conveyed
- Noting the person's (and one's own) body language
- Avoiding interruptions: Listen first and then respond
- Responding to *what* is being communicated rather than the way it is being sent
- Similarly, responding to the message, not the person
- Asking questions to verify understanding: "What I hear you saying is . . ."
- Communications that involve both sending AND receiving messages
- Using "I" statements ("I feel", "I prefer") rather than "you" statements, as these minimize resistance and defensiveness
- Talking with the listener being more effective than talking *at* the listener

Additional Strategies and Tips

Sometimes problems or conflicts arise in a student/preceptor relationship. These should be addressed and solved right away, rather than waiting until the end or never addressing them at all. Fisher (2000) described three main methods to conflict resolution: win-lose, lose-lose, and win-win.

In *win-lose* strategies, the person with authority and power expects to dominate and others to withdraw. While this is a common strategy, it has the potential to make the conflict a destructive force, rather than an opportunity for learning.

In *lose-lose* approaches, the conflict is suppressed or smoothed over by reaching for the easiest and most obvious compromise. Each party gets a little of what he or she wants, however, both are settling for less satisfaction and perhaps not aware that a more satisfying solution may be available.

In *win-win* strategies, a systematic and conscious attempt is made to satisfy the interests and needs of both parties through collaboration. The conflict is seen as a problem to be solved rather than a war to be won. It is both people versus the problem, rather than one person versus the other, there is more focus on the relationship over short term accommodations. With open and honest communication, win-win strategies work toward increasing trust and acceptance. The win-win approach requires patience and skill in human relations and problem solving.

Appendix

Clinical Course Descriptions & Objectives

NURS 301: Health Assessment

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course includes principles of health history, assessment, and physical examination of clients across the lifespan using a systems and evidence-based approach. This course uses a practicum setting of 45 hours to develop holistic approaches and techniques of health assessment utilizing critical thinking skills. The student is responsible for finding a qualified preceptor in a practicum area who will supervise the student and work collaboratively with the faculty to enable the student to accomplish the objectives. Therapeutic communication skills for effective interviewing and history taking will be a focus. Students are expected to accurately perform a series of assessments culminating in a systematic, comprehensive health assessment, analyze the assessment data, develop a plan of care and document the findings. Students will also conduct a cultural/spiritual assessment and a mental status examination of an elderly patient on clients of their choice. These two assessments will not need to be supervised by a preceptor.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Upon completion of this course, the learner will be able to:

1. Demonstrate the collection of a comprehensive database, including age-appropriate health history, lab data, and physical examination.
2. Differentiate among normal, normal variants, and abnormal findings.
3. Modify history taking, physical examination, psychosocial assessment, and screening procedures according to the client's concerns, gender, age and developmental status, psychosocial and cultural/spiritual characteristics, and health status.
4. Synthesize health assessment data to determine health status of the individuals.
5. Use critical thinking in the synthesis of data to identify physical, social, cultural/spiritual, economic, and environmental factors that influence the health status of clients.
6. Develop a plan of care based on the data collected during the assessment process and evidence-based practice.

NURS 400: Leadership & Management in Nursing

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course is designed to provide knowledge and skills needed for implementation of leadership and management roles within healthcare. Units of content focus on changes in the health care delivery system, leadership and management theories, effective interpersonal skills for leadership, organizational structures and climates, planned change, information management, financial management, outcomes measurement, and performance evaluation. The practicum of 45 hours provides opportunities for the student to develop and expand leadership skills needed in the practice of professional nursing.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. Examine the philosophies of health care organizations in terms of their impact on the care of clients.
2. Explain the basic requirements needed to maintain effective organizational structure.
3. Describe human organizational behavior in relationship to the health care system (i.e., instituting and responding to change, power, autonomy, leadership, and collaboration).
4. Examine human resource management skills (i.e., staffing, fiscal management, training and education, performance appraisal, understanding and managing absenteeism, collective bargaining, and labor relations).
5. Critically examine the impact of broad environmental factors (political/social/economic/cultural/physical) on human organizational behavior.
6. Critically review literature related to theories of leadership.
7. Examine self to determine leadership competencies and limitations.
8. Plan strategies to improve leadership competencies.
9. Explain the basic elements of change theories.

NURS 401: Community Health Nursing

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course will provide the student with a broad introduction to local, national, and international community health practices and the role of nursing within this context. Using an evidence based framework, students will explore epidemiology; health promotion and disease prevention within groups; individual and family case management, community assessment, and intervention; health informatics; and factors influencing the delivery of and access to community health services. The health care needs of at-risk populations will be examined. This course includes a practicum learning experience of 45 hours in an individualized placement that addresses the student's area of interest.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. Discuss current issues and trends in community health nursing.
2. Complete a basic assessment of a client in the community with consideration of multiple determinants of health.
3. Apply the principles and methods of epidemiology to select nursing care situations.
4. Critically appraise relevant health promotion and/or illness and injury prevention strategies for select aggregates/groups, based on a windshield assessment of a specified community.
5. Evaluate the effect of nursing interventions upon individuals, families, groups, and communities.
6. Analyze the roles of community health nurses and other members of the community health team (i.e., health care providers, community groups, etc.).
7. Apply principles of health informatics in diverse community health settings.
8. Utilize scientific and theoretical knowledge as the basis for providing nursing care to clients in the community.

NURS 403: Senior Practicum

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course enables the student to further develop leadership abilities, communication, critical thinking, and decision-making skills. Students are assigned individually planned experiences under the direction of a preceptor. Each student identifies specific learning activities for the practicum which relate directly to the selected healthcare agency. Students will prepare a contract defining the role of the student and how he or she will meet the course objectives while working with the designated preceptor. A written log is submitted documenting the student's learning activities for the practicum. Emphasis is placed on fostering independence and self-direction for all students. Each student completes 45 hours in the individualized practicum. This experience is self-arranged to meet the career goals of the student, in a convenient location, and at convenient times. Guidance is provided in defining the experience and obtaining a preceptor as necessary.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Upon completion of this course, the learner will be able to:

1. Evaluate the process of caring for multiple clients and their families in selected healthcare environments.
2. Integrate legal and ethical standards of multidisciplinary healthcare practices into individualized practica.
3. Demonstrate the use of critical thinking as a basis for decision-making in clinical practice.
4. Apply appropriate leadership and management strategies in the delivery and evaluation of care provided by nurses and multidisciplinary healthcare providers.
5. Collaborate with clients, families, aggregates, and other healthcare providers, as appropriate to the individual practicum, for the planning and delivery of care.
6. Integrate nursing knowledge, theoretical concepts, and research from all nursing and allied health courses into the practicum experience.

Evaluation

Please follow the link below to our online evaluation. You will be asked to enter your name and contact information for verification purposes. We will not share your contact information with anyone outside of the RN to BSN Program staff at SUNY Delhi.

http://delhitools.net/forms/online/preceptor_evaluation.php

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