Lackawanna College
RN Nursing Program
NUR401 – Capstone Experience
Preceptor Orientation and Practicum Guidelines
Preceptor’s Orientation and Practicum Guidelines

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Preceptor’s Orientation

Thank you for agreeing to volunteer to be a preceptor for our RN nursing student at Lackawanna College. This document intends to provide guidance and essential information that you may need in understanding your role and responsibilities as a preceptor, the accountabilities of the RN nursing student during their practicum, and the duties and obligations of the nursing faculty member. The document will provide you with some teaching strategies that you might want to use in the clinical setting, information on the ethical and legal aspects of your role, and some helpful resource that may be of interest to you.

You may have already gone through a mentoring orientation with your facility when you prepared new graduates, RN nursing students, or new hires to your unit. That experience will be beneficial for you since you will utilize several of your already teaching strategies in the preceptor role.

We hope to prepare you so that you can enjoy the challenges of being a preceptor for your designated RN nursing student.

Course Description

This final course in the RN-to-BSN program represents an experiential learning experience which invites the learner to demonstrate integration of clinical knowledge with concepts/theories into professional nursing practice. Course participants design and implement a project reflecting program competencies designed to address a real-world problem in their current places of practice or to improve client/community outcomes in collaboration with a faculty member.
At the completion of the course, the RN nursing student will be able to:

1. Integrate concepts and content into a comprehensive project aimed at addressing an actual or theoretical workplace problem.
2. Develop a plan for continued professional development which builds on the professional development plan devised in NUR-301

**Explaining the Preceptorship and Preceptor**

According Girotto et al. (2019) the participants described preceptorship as an educational duty in a clinical milieu in which dynamic learning processes are utilized for the instructing of health care professionals. Preceptorship was considered a connection between the healthcare systems and the educational practice. They envisioned their educator role as a model, tutor, leader, supervisor, and mentor. Panzavecchia and Pearce (2014) indicate that preceptors offer their skills and talents to help students grow in their profession by creating an environment that facilitates a constructive learning experience. It is essential that qualified preceptors are clinically trained so that students gain confidence, feedback, and guidance.

In simple terminology, the preceptor is a tutor, a teacher, an advocate, a coach, and an evaluator. According to the Pennsylvania State Board of Nursing, Chapter 21, §21.71, c(5, i-iii), “an individual who enhances faculty-related clinical learning experiences by guiding selected clinical activities shall be designated as a clinical preceptor. A clinical preceptor shall hold a current license to practice professional nursing in the state of the clinical experience. Faculty shall have input into the selection of preceptors. Faculty shall retain responsibility for planning and evaluating student learning experiences when students are engaged in clinical activities with a preceptor. If a faculty member is not physically present in the area in which students are
practicing, a faculty member shall be immediately available by telephone or other means of telecommunication when students are engaged in clinical activities with a preceptor” (p. 39).

Lackawanna College’s RN Nursing program recommends that preceptors should hold a Bachelor of Nursing degree and have at least three years of recent nursing experience.

**Benefits as a Preceptor**

As a preceptor, the benefits can be professionally as well as personally. You have a unique opportunity to be a role model for an RN nursing student because you have multiple examples of excellence in nursing practice. As the RN nursing student comes to you with their numerous questions and concerns, you are the person who provides the clarification and demonstrates the advanced role of the professional nurse. You soon discover that you are affirming your knowledge and skills, and this reenergizes you in your professional practice.

You may begin to revisit your professional career goals and identify the strengths that you have as an educator and potentially pursue a change in your nursing career and seek opportunities in nursing education. Here are some other professional and personal benefits that you might experience:

- Serving as a preceptor provides you valuable practice experience that can be added to your resume, which can strengthen promotion as well as career opportunities.
- As a preceptor, you might be involved in research efforts relating to experiences as a preceptor and have the opportunity to be invited or present at workshops, conferences, or organizational meetings.
- Your healthcare organization may have a career ladder program which provides your points or credits when you are a preceptor.
As a professional nurse, the willingness and ability to share one’s nursing knowledge and skills are imperative to continue the future progression and development of the nursing field.

**Obligations of the Student, Faculty, and Preceptor**

If nursing courses provide the opportunity of a preceptorship, collaboration between the faculty, the preceptor, and the RN nursing student is formally created at the start of the practicum rotation. It is essential that all members of this relationship have a full understanding of the objectives, responsibilities, and purpose of each role. Communication should be established from the beginning and continue throughout the experience. Each of the responsibilities for the faculty, the preceptor, and the RN nursing student will be addressed in greater detail.

**Faculty’s Responsibilities** include the following:

- The faculty is responsible for providing useful and meaningful orientation to the RN nursing student and the preceptor regarding the preceptorship experience and the course policies as indicated in the syllabus.
- The faculty assures that all required of the RN nursing student’s and preceptor’s required paperwork is returned promptly.
- The faculty provides the necessary information such as the syllabus, preceptor orientation packet, evaluation forms, and any other essential details specific for the course.
- The faculty establishes communications to discuss the progression of the RN nursing student and to assist in the evaluation of the student. Communication opportunities could be face-to-face, emails, and/or phone calls.
- The faculty will provide support to the preceptor in guiding the practicum experience for the RN nursing student.
• The faculty will be readily available to assist with concerns and problems that may develop during the practicum experience. Periodic visits will be made by the faculty or Director of Nursing Programs to ensure that concerns and issues are addressed promptly.

• The faculty will provide student feedback in support of RN nursing student’s efforts to refine performance.

• The faculty will assume overall responsibility for assigning the RN nursing student’s practicum performance grade.

• The faculty will obtain evaluation feedback from the preceptor regarding the preceptorship experience.

• The faculty will document all encounters with the preceptor and the RN nursing student.

Preceptor’s Responsibilities include the following:

• The preceptor will retain full responsibility for the role that they are in with the facility.

• The preceptor will share their work schedule with the RN nursing student and confirm the RN nursing student’s attendance plan.

• The preceptor will contact the faculty for urgent issues or problems such as performance, illness, accidents, or any other critical concern that the preceptor may have with the RN nursing student.

• The preceptor will provide the faculty and RN nursing student the necessary contact information such as practicum facility and home.

• The preceptor will display professionalism when involved with the RN nursing student at the practicum site.

• The preceptor will facilitate learning activities for no more than two RN nursing students.

• The preceptor will orient the RN nursing student to the practicum unit and the
healthcare/facility system.

- The preceptor will supervise the RN nursing student in their clinical performance by guiding them to achieve their objectives and encouraging the RN nursing student to function independently specific tasks assigned by preceptor while maintaining safe practice.
- The preceptor will contact the faculty (via phone, email, or in person) midway and the final week to provide feedback on RN nursing student’s clinical performance.
- The preceptor will evaluate the RN nursing student’s performance utilizing the evaluation tool.
- The preceptor will provide the RN nursing student feedback on a regular base regarding their clinical performance.
- The preceptor will contact the RN nursing student if the preceptor is unable to meet with the RN nursing student due to illness, absences, or any other reason.
- The preceptor will complete the Preceptor Evaluation on the Preceptorship Experience as well as the Clinical Hour Log.

**RN Nursing Student’s Responsibilities** include the following:

- The RN nursing student will collaborate with the preceptor to arrange for practicum hours and schedule. The RN nursing student is required to complete 45 hours.
- The RN nursing student is responsible for selecting a practicum site and preceptor.
- The RN nursing student is responsible for contacting the faculty regarding the selected practicum site and preceptor.
- The RN nursing student is responsible in collaborating with the preceptor in developing practicum objectives which are shared and approved by the faculty.
• The RN nursing student will contact the faculty on a weekly base with the practicum hours and days or a designated by the faculty. Any changes to the schedule require the RN nursing student to notify the faculty immediately.

• The RN nursing student will maintain open communication with the faculty, the staff, and the preceptor.

• The RN nursing student will adhere to principles and standards associated with safety, legal, and ethics.

• The RN nursing student is responsible for nursing actions and learning activities in the practicum setting.

• The RN nursing student will contact faculty via phone or email, as needed.

• The RN nursing student will notify the faculty immediately with any clinical incident.

The RN nursing student will complete the required incident forms required by the healthcare facility and Lackawanna College.

• The RN nursing student will develop greater competency in the management of nursing care.

• The RN nursing student will complete all evaluations related to the practicum experience.

• The RN nursing student will complete all course requirements that relate to the practicum experience (see syllabus).

• The RN nursing student will submit the signed practicum log that is signed by the preceptor for each clinical opportunity.

Requirements of the Clinical Facility and the Nursing Program

The Lackawanna College’s RN Nursing program and the practicum facility enter into a
formal agreement before the start of the preceptorship. The designated representative of the facility and the nursing course faculty collaborate to establish responsibilities for providing a productive and meaningful practicum experience. The written agreement specifies the responsibilities of both organizations.

**Nursing Program’s Requirements** include the following:

- The Nursing Program’s faculty or director assures that the preceptor meets the requirements as stipulated by the State Board of Nursing for the designated practicum area.
- The Nursing Program’s faculty or director maintains a currently written affiliation with the healthcare facility to provide a nursing student practicum experience.
- The Nursing Program’s faculty or director confirms training for the preceptor before the start of the practicum rotation.
- The Nursing Program’s faculty or director ensures that the RN nursing student is compliant with healthcare requirements, background checks, liability insurance coverage, and any other requirements dictated by the facility.
- The Nursing Program’s faculty or director work cooperatively with the preceptor and facility for appropriate assignments and practicum placements.

**Clinical Facility’s Requirements** include the following:

- The Facility’s representative assures that the preceptor assumes full responsibility of their role.
- The Facility’s representative maintains the responsibility for the preceptor’s salary, benefits, and liability.
- The Facility’s representative interprets the preceptor program and the RN nursing student
expectations to other personnel not directly involved with the preceptorship.

**Ethical and Legal Qualities of being a Preceptor**

Preceptors must exhibit legal and ethical concerns for the patient/client while attending to the legal and moral rights and responsibilities for the RN nursing student and the nursing program’s faculty. Below are some examples that a preceptor can address the legal and ethical characteristics of being a preceptor.

- As a preceptor, demonstrate to the RN nursing student how you use your knowledge and skills to problem solve and make a clinical judgment to address a problem. Inform RN nursing students that HIPPA means that careful attention to the privacy of patient/client information is the priority.
- As a preceptor, display respect regarding the diversity of the RN nursing student and inquire about the RN nursing student’s experiences and expectations for their practicum and the role of a preceptor.
- As a preceptor, maintain confidentiality regarding the RN nursing student’s written work and provide constructive feedback privately. The preceptor is also required to uphold the requirements for Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) which indicates that RN student’s records are confidential and discussion of RN student’s performance with external individuals not associated with preceptorship is prohibited. For example, a physician who is inquiring about an RN nursing student for the intention of hiring that person, the preceptor may not share any specific academic information without the written consent of the RN nursing student.
- As a preceptor, keep your relationship with the RN nursing student on a professional
level. It is recommended that external socialization should not occur while acting as a preceptor.

- As a preceptor, protect the RN nursing student’s safety in the practicum setting. You want to make sure that the RN nursing student has a clear understanding in the care of patient/client. Further instruction may be required before caring for these specific patients.

- As a preceptor, RN nursing student learns from the role modeling that you display in the practicum setting. How you critically think and your professional behavior with patients, families, and interdisciplinary/interprofessional colleagues are two important aspects of learning for the RN nursing student.

**Practicum Teaching Approaches**

Some of the most essential teaching approaches to utilize with RN nursing students during their practicum include:

- Providing questions and giving feedback. Using questions such as “What do you think?” or “Why do you think that?” stimulate the RN nursing student’s thinking and encourages them to share observations and interpretations with the preceptor. By providing feedback, whether it is negative or positive, the RN nursing student will understand if they are making good decisions and increasing their critical thinking skills. Even negative feedback can provide guidance for the RN nursing student to alert them that there is some misunderstood or omitted information that is required in the care of the patient. There are guidelines in providing constructive criticism.
- Concentrate on changeable things
- Make informative not interpretative statements
- Keep statements specific
- Immediately provide feedback. The sooner the better!
- Choose the appropriate time to provide negative feedback.
- Select one issue at a time
- Do not mandate a modification

- Assessing their knowledge as an RN. You might want to use probing questions or confirming statements as you begin to assess the educational level of the RN nursing student.

- Evaluating the RN nursing student progression and competency which is needed to providing high quality and a safe practicum experience. As a preceptor, you are constantly giving formative feedback with every encounter with the RN nursing student. During these formative evaluations, you are making observations on the RN nursing student’s nursing care and activities with patients/clients, organizational skills, and critical thinking abilities in making clinical judgment.

The faculty will be responsible for providing the final clinical grade for the RN nursing student but will require your input. By assisting the RN nursing student to improve throughout the practicum experience hopefully will guide them to a successful practicum experience because the RN nursing student will have met all of their objectives. The successful practicum experience eventually will lead the RN nursing student to be a successful practicing BSN registered nurse.
LACKAWANNA COLLEGE  
RN NURSING PROGRAM  
NUR 410 – Capstone Experience  
Preceptor’s Evaluation of RN Nursing Student

Date: ___________________________  Semester: ___________________________

Preceptor: ___________________________  Agency/Organization: ___________________________

RN Nursing Student: ___________________________  Total Number of Practicum Hours: _______

Preceptor – This form needs to be reviewed with the RN nursing student before the start of the practicum hours. It is the responsibility of the RN nursing student to submit the final and completed evaluation form with the final grade (Satisfaction or Un-satisfaction) to the faculty or Director of Nursing Programs for NUR401 – Capstone Experience at the last conference meeting.

Please evaluate the following statements regarding the RN nursing student.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professionalism and Objectives</th>
<th>Midterm</th>
<th>Final</th>
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<tr>
<td>RN nursing student displays motivation in the practicum setting.</td>
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<td>The RN nursing student demonstrates professionalism in manner and appearance in the practicum setting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RN nursing student exhibits self-direction and ownership of learning.</td>
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<td>The RN nursing student arrives at practicum site on time.</td>
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<td>The RN nursing student notifies preceptor promptly if unable to meet obligations in coming to the practicum site.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RN nursing student displays professional values,</td>
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<tr>
<td>RN nursing student demonstrates caring behavior for all patients/clients with a focus of autonomy by respecting the rights of patient/client with self-determination.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RN nursing student satisfactorily addresses all 10 objectives which include:</td>
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<tr>
<td>RN nursing student reveals competence in critical thinking and making clinical judgement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RN nursing student exhibits effective and therapeutic communication skills in dealing with patients, families, staff, and other members of healthcare disciplines</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall performance in the clinical setting</td>
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Preceptor’s comments: ________________________________________________________________

Signature of Agency Preceptor: ___________________________  Date: __________________
Student Comments: ________________________________________________________________

Signature of RN Nursing Student: ___________________________  Date: __________________
LACKAWANNA COLLEGE RN NURSING PROGRAM
NUR 401 Capstone Experience
Evaluation of Practicum Program

RN Nursing Student or Preceptor: ______________________________ Date: ___________

Practicum Site: _______________ Semester: _______________

Evaluate the following statements about the Practicum:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structure of the practicum provided opportunities for RN nursing student to apply knowledge at a novice level.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course and clinical objectives were met through the various learning opportunities</td>
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<td>The course objectives are appropriate for this level RN nursing student.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The duration of the practicum is adequate to meet course objectives.</td>
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<td>The practicum is a valuable experience for the RN nursing student in this practicum area and should be continued.</td>
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<td>Faculty available for preceptor and/or RN nursing student for support and collaboration when necessary.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall evaluation of the Practicum Experience</td>
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Comments:
____________________________________________________________________________
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RN Nursing Student’s or Preceptor’s Signature: ________________________________

Date: ____________
LACKAWANNA COLLEGE RN NURSING PROGRAM
NUR 401 Capstone Experience
RN Nursing Student’s Evaluation of Preceptor and Practicum Site

RN Nursing Student: ___________________________ Practicum Site: ________
Semester: ___________________________ Date: ________

Evaluate the following statements about the preceptor:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The preceptor display values, skills, and attitudes that were beneficial for the student’s academic development.</td>
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<td>The preceptor provided learning opportunities to meet the objectives for the practicum.</td>
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<td>The preceptor provided constructive feedback and reinforcement.</td>
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<td>The preceptor supported the RN nursing student’s strengths and provided opportunities to strengthen weaknesses</td>
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<td>The preceptor displayed professionalism and leadership skills</td>
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<td>The preceptor included the RN nursing student in the evaluation process and considered it fair</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall evaluation of the preceptor</td>
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Evaluate the following statements about the practicum site:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The practicum site had adequate resources to support the RN nursing student’s practicum.</td>
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<td>The practicum site supplied a favorable learning environment</td>
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<td>The practicum site provided learning opportunities to address the practicum objectives.</td>
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<td>Overall evaluation of the practicum site</td>
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Comments:
________________________________________________________________________
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RN Student’s Signature: ___________________________ Date: ________
**LACKAWANNA COLLEGE RN NURSING PROGRAM**  
NUR 401 Capstone Experience  
Practicum Clinical Unit Sign-In Log

RN Nursing Student’s Name: _____________________  
Facility/Unit:  __________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Begin/End Times</th>
<th>Shift Hours</th>
<th>Preceptor’s Signature</th>
<th>RN Nursing Student’s Signature</th>
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Cumulative Hours
References


