

Preceptorship and the UNB Nursing Program

What is Preceptorship

This clinical course is intended to enable senior nursing students to enhance their nursing practice through collaboration with experienced nurses within the health care system. This experience will help students to increase their independence and autonomy in the coordination and provision of nursing care within a variety of health care settings.

In 2017, the UNB Faculty of Nursing in Fredericton and the Department of Nursing & Health Sciences in Saint John transitioned from a seven to a twelve week preceptorship experience. This change follows several years of discussion and feedback from students, preceptors, employers, and other practice partners which supported the findings of current literature and research specific to preceptorship. This longer preceptorship placement provides students with additional learning experiences, increased opportunities for developing independence in practice, and helps to prepare students for the transition from student to graduate nurse.

Students have an opportunity to consider options and preferences for their preceptorship placement. Students collaborate with faculty members to identify practice areas of interest that will provide them with rich learning opportunities. Students reflect upon previous clinical experiences as well as future aspirations within the nursing profession when considering placement requests.

Preceptorship occurs during the final term of the nursing program. While students participate in the preceptorship experience, they will also be taking *Trends and Leadership in Nursing*, a capstone course with a focus on preparing for the transition to practice as a graduate nurse. This course is delivered in an online format to ensure that students will be able to follow your scheduled work hours.

The Importance of Preceptorship

The transition from being a student nurse to a graduate nurse is challenging. A concentrated period of clinical practice with an experienced nurse is one way to ease that transition in a significant and meaningful way. Preceptorship enhances learning and professional socialization, develops knowledge and skills, and promotes critical thinking with the intent to ease the transition to the 'real world' of nursing practice (Myrick & Yonge, 2005; Gaberson, Oermann, & Shellenbarger, 2015). The preceptor can ease the transition from the student to novice role within professional practice.

Preceptorship can help to bridge senior nursing students' expectations of professional work life with the reality of employment (Duchscher, 2012). In fact, "facilitating the transition from student to new graduate to independent nurse is as important as adequately preparing new graduates during an academic program. Both have an impact on the number of nurses in the workforce available to provide safe, quality patient care" (Hickey, 2009, p.36). The transition from student to

graduate nurse during the first year of practice is challenging, often described by those experiencing it as “an obstacle course....overwhelming , primarily because of expectations of employers (and graduates themselves) that they will hit the ground running”, (Duchscher, 2012, p.7). Your involvement as a preceptor is a key component of a student’s preparation for future practice.

Teaching and Learning in the UNB Nursing Program

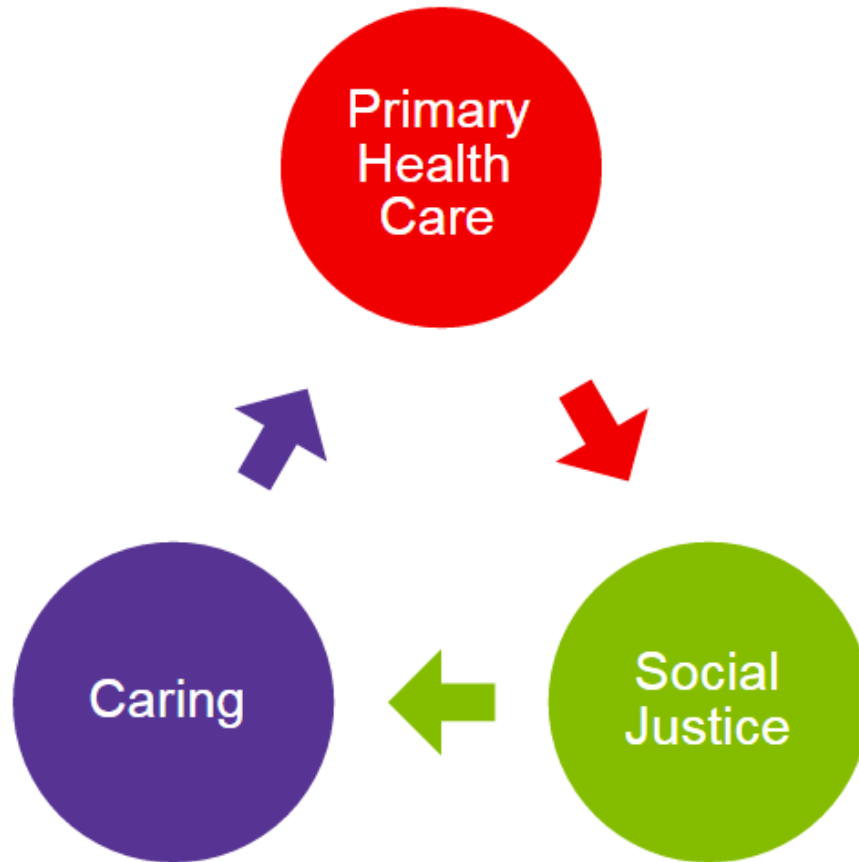
Prior to participating in the preceptorship experience, it will be helpful to know the context of the nursing curriculum at UNB. This section is intended to familiarize you with some of the underlying principles of the curriculum so that you and the student can communicate effectively about learning experiences.

Students are equal partners in the educational process and the curriculum is directed toward helping the students to think critically, problem solve, and question. The focus of learning is clinically grounded.

The preceptor is a participant and co-learner. The preceptor brings experience and background knowledge into the learning encounter as a starting point for learning and development (Chinn, 2013; Gaberson et al., 2015). The student will learn much from your personal and professional experience in nursing.

Major Concepts within the Curriculum

The following section includes descriptions of the underlying philosophy of the UNB Nursing Program curriculum. Students will refer to these concepts throughout the preceptorship experience.



Primary Health Care

Essential health care includes preventative, promotive, curative, supportive and rehabilitative services. This understanding is based upon the World Health Organization (WHO) definition which embraces the principles of social justice and equity and incorporates caring approaches.

Social Justice

Social justice is a philosophical approach that recognizes that all persons deserve fair treatment, basic necessities, and freedoms or rights simply because they are human. Fair treatment involves equitable distribution of benefits and burdens among members of society.

Caring

Caring as a universal phenomenon is essential to human development and survival and is a moral imperative of nursing. Caring responses can be enhanced, elicited, or inhibited by education and past experiences and by the presence or absence of role models.

Five Abilities

The Nursing program at UNB emphasizes five abilities that are essential for working in the primary health-care environment. These five abilities are key to the clinical assessment documents preceptors, students and faculty liaisons will be utilizing during this course.

Knowledge and Its Application

Nursing Students integrate and apply knowledge from nursing and an array of disciplines in the arts and sciences to provide comprehensive nursing care in times of health and illness.

Communication

Nursing students communicate orally and in writing using structured coherent arguments to convey accurate and reliable information to diverse audiences in practice. Nursing students engage in authentic, purposeful and collaborative communication using the concepts and techniques of the discipline.

Critical Thinking/Skills of Analysis

Nursing students engage in critical, reflective, and holistic analysis to evaluate the strength of a wide spectrum of evidence to formulate decisions.

Professional Identity/Ethics

Nursing students develop a dynamic and evolving professional identity and capability, incorporating personal and professional attributes and skills for practice in complex and unpredictable contexts.

Social Justice/Effective Citizenship

Nursing students become responsible global citizens by engaging the principles of Primary Health Care and the ethics of caring and social justice in diverse contexts.

Curriculum Structure

Nursing courses throughout the program cover a broad range of topics to prepare students for their role as Registered Nurses. The curriculum is structured to include theory and clinical courses which provide students with a solid foundation of knowledge.

The University of New Brunswick offers a 4 year Bachelor of Nursing program on the Fredericton and Saint John campuses. The students at the Fredericton and Saint John sites complete their preceptorship experience from January until April of each academic year. UNB also offers a 2 year Bachelor of Nursing Advanced Standing Program (BNASP) at its Moncton site and the students at Moncton complete their preceptorship experience from May until August. Students in the BNASP have already completed a minimum of two years of university coursework and five pre-requisite courses including statistics and several biology courses and typically complete their nursing degree in two years of full time study (three terms per year - fall, winter, summer - for two years).

Bachelor of Nursing Curriculum Overview

Foundational theory courses focusing on:

- Anatomy and physiology
- Nursing as a profession
- Concepts of wellness, health and illness
- Experiences of individuals living with chronic physical, mental or psychiatric conditions and associated nursing therapeutics
- Counselling skills and the therapeutic nurse/client relationship
- Knowledge and skill required to conduct health assessments
- Health of young families including childbearing and childrearing
- Pharmacotherapeutics
- Community health nursing within a population health framework
- Pathophysiology

Foundational clinical courses focusing on:

- Family and/or geriatric medicine
- Maternity and/or pediatrics
- Adult mental health
- Community settings with diverse populations

Advanced theory courses focusing on:

- Nursing therapeutics related to acute health challenges across the lifespan
- Nursing theories in the context of nursing practice and research
- The purpose, processes and utilization of nursing research
- Families living with complex health challenges from a population health perspective
- Nursing therapeutics related to complex health challenges
- Trends and leadership within nursing practice

Advanced clinical courses focusing on:

- Acute medical/surgical units
- Preceptored clinical experience facilitating transition to graduate nurse