

Preceptorship and the UNB Nursing Program

What is Preceptorship

Concentrated clinical practice is a 12 credit hour nursing practice course. The course will provide you with the opportunity to choose a concentrated clinical experience working in collaboration with practicing Registered Nurses within health care and health service delivery. The goal of this experience is to facilitate your transition from student nurse to graduate nurse. It is intended to help you to increase your independence and your autonomy in the coordination and provision of nursing care. You will have the opportunity to work with an experienced practicing nurse, and will follow their scheduled work hours throughout the course. They will assume, in collaboration with you, responsibility for guiding, facilitating, and assessing your development within the practice setting.

In 2017, we transitioned from a seven to a twelve week preceptorship experience. This change followed 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 you for the transition from student to graduate nurse.

You have an opportunity to consider options and preferences for your preceptorship placement. You collaborate with faculty members to identify practice areas of interest that will provide you with rich learning opportunities. You 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. Students are required to cover all of the personal costs incurred during the planning and delivery of preceptorship including travel, accommodation, and clinical placement requirements.

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 your 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).

Choosing Your Experience

After considering your personal learning needs and interests, determine some areas in which you would like to develop your clinical practice. i.e. gerontology, medicine, surgery, community health, mental health etc. Consider what clinical practice environment would best help you to achieve your learning goals and to meet the outcomes of the course. It is important that you consider areas in which you as a student nurse, can actively participate in the direct provision of care for clients. This is why highly specialized areas of clinical practice are not the best choice for this course (i.e. ICU or NICU) as there are significant limitations on student scope of practice. Remember, this experience is intended to allow you to develop your ability to practice independently and to increase your autonomy in provision of care. You may find it helpful to explore your ideas with various faculty members such as your clinical instructors. This may also provide you with ideas and opportunities that you had not considered.

Once you have determined a few personal options for the type of clinical setting you may want to pursue, you will submit a request form to the coordinator of the course. You can request a specific "area of practice" as well as a specific geographical location and faculty will work together with you to assess the suitability and feasibility of the placement option. There must be a nurse that is willing to be a preceptor in order for a placement to be secured. Any requests or contact with agencies regarding placement opportunities will only be made by the faculty member as there are strict guidelines and processes in place between agencies that must be respected and followed. Students are not permitted to contact agencies to inquire about placement opportunities. This is very important that you understand and comply with this. After access to the institution /agency has been confirmed, you may be involved in further planning for your experience such as communicating with your preceptor at the direction of the faculty member.

Assessment

As with other clinical courses, grading for this course is Credit/No Credit. The CASA is used by the student and the preceptor to assess progress and professional development toward course outcomes. You must achieve Outcome Met for each of the course outcomes by the end of the 12 week period to be successful in the course. A faculty liaison is dedicated to each student and preceptor team to support them throughout the experience and to engage in the assessment process with frequent and regular meetings.