

Practicum Preceptor Handbook

Graduate Nursing

2024-2025 Academic Year



Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Contact Information	2
Welcome	3
Clarkson College Mission Statement	4
Clarkson College Values	4
Clarkson College Faculty Philosophy of Education	4
Graduate Nursing Programs of Study	5
Graduate Nursing Program Outcomes	5
Master of Science in Nursing	5
Accreditation	5
State Board of Nursing Regulations	6
Preceptor Qualifications & Responsibilities	6
Preceptor Qualification	6
Preceptor Responsibilities	6
Practicum Teaching Strategies	7
Graduate Nursing Student Responsibilities	7
Practicum Site Selection	7
Onboarding & Clinical/Practicum Placement	7
DocuSign Agreement	8
Practicum Preparedness	8
Health & Safety Requirements	9
Student ID & Dress Code	10
Faculty Responsibilities	11
Student & Preceptor Assessment	11
Assessment Methods	11
Preceptor Assessments	11
Student Evaluations	12
Thank You	12

Introduction

This handbook provides guidelines for the preceptors and for the students in the Graduate Nursing Programs at Clarkson College. The handbook should be used, as a reference, for the preceptors, students, and faculty of Clarkson College.

All students are subject to the policies of Clarkson College, as delineated in the Graduate Nursing Student Handbook(s) as well as the Academic Catalog. It is recognized that this document may not contravene any policy of the college or laws of the state of Nebraska, or any rules, regulations, or policies of any state the student may be active in the capacity of receiving clinical education.

Contact Information

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Welcome

Dear Preceptor,

Thank-you for your willingness to serve as a preceptor for the Graduate Nursing students at Clarkson College. The faculty appreciates your interest in contributing to the education of future nurse educators and nurse leaders/administrators. You are the key to successful learning experiences in the clinical/hospital settings and or higher education. The experience and the expertise that you share with these students enables them to develop the skills and clinical judgement that is necessary to become an Advanced Practice Nurse.

It is the goal of Clarkson College to work closely with preceptors to promote an educational experience for the students that is also professionally rewarding for the preceptors. The expected practicum experiences for students are aligned with the requirements of the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) which is the accrediting body for the nursing programs and advanced practice guidelines set forth by the National League for Nursing (NLN) and American Organization for Nurse Leadership (AONL).

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with information about various aspects of the Graduate nursing program at Clarkson College and to assist you in your role as a preceptor. If, at any time, you have concerns about a student's performance or professional behavior please do not hesitate to contact us.

Again, we appreciate your participation in this educational experience and we look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jessica Fitzgerald, DNP, RN, CCRN
Director, Graduate Nursing

CLARKSON COLLEGE MISSION STATEMENT

Preparing students to professionally provide high quality, ethical and compassionate health care services.

CLARKSON COLLEGE VALUES

Learning: The lifelong process of education through both structured and unstructured interprofessional experiences.

Caring: An empowering relationship through an attitude of empathy, trust, compassion and respect for those with whom we interact, serve and lead.

Commitment: Dedication and accountability to the shared mission of Clarkson College.

Integrity: Adherence to moral and ethical standards to inspire trust in personal, professional and organizational actions.

Excellence: A level of performance in which all individuals strive for extraordinary quality.

CLARKSON COLLEGE FACULTY PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

We, the faculty of Clarkson College, support and express the values of the College—learning, caring, commitment, integrity, and excellence—in preparing students to professionally provide high quality, ethical and compassionate health care services. These values form the framework within which our philosophy of teaching is developed and nurtured.

We respect students as unique individuals whose diverse backgrounds, experiences, expectations, and learning styles provide opportunities for learning that enrich both students and faculty alike.

As educators and mentors, we therefore seek to empower students to participate in their own learning, creating an environment conducive to both learning and teaching. When successful, it produces health care professionals who are skilled in communication, technology, professionalism, critical thinking, and diversity.

GRADUATE NURSING PROGRAMS OF STUDY

Please refer to Clarkson College website for specific information pertaining to graduate nursing programs of study <https://www.clarksoncollege.edu/nursing/index#degrees>

GRADUATE NURSING PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Curricula development and measurement of student competence is guided by program and course outcomes. Learning competencies describe essential learning that students are expected to have achieved at the conclusion of a course or a program. Program competencies are very broad and describe end-of-program expected learning. Individual course competencies are more specific to each individual clinical/practicum course.

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING

Upon completion of the MSN requirements, the graduate will be able to demonstrate:

- Demonstrate the ability to engage in effective and caring communication with diverse individuals and groups to educate, inform, collaborate, and reflect.
- Apply complex and evidence-based nursing knowledge and experience to analyze and evaluate strategies and outcomes in healthcare and educational settings to inform decision-making and/or problem-solving.
- Promote the nursing profession by recognizing and engaging in competent, accountable, ethical, and holistic practice; caring and collaborative relationships; respectful interactions with diverse individuals and groups; and quality- and safety-based decision-making.
- Utilize and evaluate healthcare information technology systems and processes for communication, decision-making, management, and interdisciplinary collaboration to enhance healthcare delivery.
- Demonstrate the awareness of the unique characteristics inherent in all individuals, by appreciating similarities and differences and advocating for caring holistic nursing approaches.

ACCREDITATION

The Master of Science in Nursing and Doctorate of Nursing Practice programs are accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) located at 3390 Peachtree Road NE, Suite 1400 Atlanta, GA. 30326 PH 404 975 5000 <https://www.acenursing.org>

STATE BOARD OF NURSING REGULATIONS

Clarkson College serves students who reside throughout the United States. Each student and preceptor are expected to adhere to individual state board of nursing regulations. Please refer to state-specific board of nursing websites for specific information.

PRECEPTOR QUALIFICATIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES

PRECEPTOR QUALIFICATIONS

Clarkson College graduate nursing students are expected to identify and select preceptors for each practicum rotation who align with their ability to meet course competencies. Preceptors must be licensed health professionals in the student's home state or a nurse license compact state where practicum experiences are taking place. Preceptors may not be related, a personal friend, and/or co-worker of the student. Preceptors must be approved by the Clarkson College Graduate Clinical Program Administrator and/or assigned faculty member.

Several factors are considered prior to preceptor approval including but not limited to knowledge of the organization, precepting experience, and ability to serve as a role model and mentor to the student. Preceptors should be previously identified by their organization as leaders in their area of practice. The preceptor should demonstrate skills necessary for effective instructing, mentoring, and critical evaluation of the student. Verification of preceptor education, licensure, and/or certification is required and kept on file with Clarkson College. Overall organizational support for the preceptor is essential for positive preceptor and student experiences. Organizational contracts are provided by Clarkson College.

PRECEPTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Review appropriate practicum competencies with student;
- Provide or arrange for the orientation for the student to the affiliated facilities;
- Select and supervise practicum activities of the student during the preceptorship. Although the Department of Nursing faculty will be available for consultation and monitoring, they will not be present in the facility for direct participation in practicum activities or supervision of the student;
- Assist the student to develop and revise learning goals;
- Guide the student to select learning experiences, which will facilitate the student's learning;
- Demonstrate proper medical management of persons with common health care problems;
- Provide ongoing feedback concerning the student's progress throughout the preceptorship. The preceptor will also formally assess the student at midterm and at the

end of each semester. The college will provide information regarding the assessment process in which to complete;

- Notify the college nursing faculty and or staff immediately if any problems arise which significantly impact the student's ability to meet learning goals or the delivery of safe patient care; and
- Maintain current licensure in his/her professional area (ie., RN license) during the duration of this contract period if currently supervising a student.

PRACTICUM TEACHING STRATEGIES

Based on research that has been performed on preceptor effectiveness we would like to offer the following "tips" which you may find useful throughout the preceptor process:

- Demonstrate an interest in student learning and success
- Set clear expectations at the start of the experience
- Provide ongoing feedback; if there is something that is not going well do not wait until the end assessment period to address; discuss with student and faculty as needed
- Set aside time at the end of the day for review
- Tailor teaching and learning opportunities to the individual student's needs
- Encourage questions
- Promote student independence
- Build on previously learned knowledge
- Select a variety of patients, students, and or employees that are appropriate for the student's current level of learning and to provide opportunities for the student to achieve individual learning goals
- Challenge students with progressively more complex situations/patients
- Promote an optimal learning environment; student should feel comfortable asking questions
- Consider using the "Ask, Tell, Ask" Method:
 - **ASK** students how they think they did on a specific task
 - **TELL** them how you see the situation and ways for improvement and provide specific feedback
 - **ASK** them how they will change their process moving forward

GRADUATE NURSING STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

PRACTICUM SITE SELECTION

It is highly recommended that students start the preceptor selection process immediately upon enrollment to the graduate nursing program. Students should complete practicum specific assignments that begin the first week of each course. Students must complete the required practicum hours specific to each course during the semester enrolled. The preceptor selected

by the student should be in the student's home state or a nurse license compact state. In addition to identifying preceptors, the student is expected to meet with the preceptor to discuss practicum expectations, preceptor schedule availability and the ability to meet course competencies.

ONBOARDING & CLINICAL/PRACTICUM PLACEMENT

It is the student's responsibility to adhere to the policies and procedures of their clinical/practicum site. Graduate Program Academic Advisors and students will work together to handle any onboarding and clinical/practicum placement with additional attestation from the Compliance office. Onboarding relates to any additional requirements a site may need before a student can begin clinical/practicum. It is the student's responsibility to work with the clinical/practicum site and preceptor to ensure that any onboarding is completed prior to starting the clinical/practicum experience.

DOCUSIGN AGREEMENT

Students may not attend **any** clinical/practicum hours until all paperwork is final/completed. All students must receive approval from course faculty as well as "final DocuSign email of paperwork completion" prior to beginning any clinical preceptorship hours. Any preceptorship hours completed prior to the final completion will not be included in the total clinical preceptorship hours required for course completion.

Once DocuSign paperwork is complete and the semester begins, it is preferred for practicum hours to be evenly distributed throughout the course of the semester. Students should not be front or backloading the semester with clinical/practicum hours. If the student's paperwork is not complete by the semester's start, the student must reach out to the course instructor immediately and let him/her know where they are in the process.

Questions concerning DocuSign, can be directed to MSNAdvising@clarksoncollege.edu

PRACTICUM PREPAREDNESS

The Graduate nursing student is expected to arrive at each practicum experience prepared to engage in a meaningful learning experience. The student is expected to apply knowledge gained through coursework in the practicum setting and seek evidence-based information to supplement learning experiences as needed when presented with uncertainty.

The student is responsible for developing and providing the preceptor specific learning competencies for each semester, as well as their plan for meeting these specific competencies. The preceptor, the student, and the College faculty member will then develop specific strategies for implementing the plan as appropriate to the preceptor's practice and the students' learning needs.

The specific learning plan will include:

- The student's individual goals and learning competencies;
- Schedule of dates and times when the student will be present at the facility performing practicum activities;
- The nature of the activities the students will perform, including any limitations to which the preceptor and the student may agree; and
- The method to be followed for assessing the student, including the instructions for completing the midterm and final assessments and documentation.

In addition to the development of a specific learning plan, the student is responsible for:

- Following the administrative policies, regulations, standards, practices, and procedures of affiliated facilities;
- Providing his/her own transportation and living arrangements;
- Reporting to the preceptor on time and as scheduled;
- Accruing half of the required number of practicum hours by midterm; and
- Conforming to the standards of professional practice established by the preceptor, affiliated facilities, Clarkson College, the profession, and any applicable regulatory body, while participating in the preceptorship experiences.

HEALTH & SAFETY REQUIREMENTS (HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY SW-7)

Clarkson College is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all members of the campus community, our students, and the patients that our students interact with. To protect themselves and others, it is essential for Graduate Nursing students to complete the specified health and safety requirements according to the program of study.

These health and safety requirements must be completed upon admission to the College. Information will be provided upon formal acceptance into the program. At that time, an online CastleBranch account will be created to verify and track these requirements. In addition to the initial requirements, there are annual requirements. CastleBranch will send reminders to the student's college email when items are due or require attention. Compliance with these requirements is at the expense of the student and non-refundable. These requirements include, but are not limited to, background check, drug testing, immunizations, proof of immunity, certification, and employment requirements may be required by the college or clinical agency, with or without cause.

Graduate Nursing students who fail to maintain their CastleBranch account (i.e., update certification, license, or other information) will be blocked from their online classes. Blocked access is not a valid excuse for late assignments.

Failure to complete or update these requirements will suspend eligibility for clinical participation until compliant. If students complete any clinical hours during non-compliance, hours will not count towards class requirements.

Any questions regarding these requirements or this process may be directed to a Graduate Nursing Clinical Program Administrator or your Advisor.

STUDENT ID & DRESS CODE

Practicum Attire

Clothing appropriate to the practicum site:

A white lab coat with current student ID badge worn in the chest area.

The following are minimal expectations of the personal appearance of a Clarkson College Graduate nursing student:

1. **Hair:** Students must have human colored hair. Extreme looks such as multiple colors; extremes in bleaching, dyeing, or tinting; or shaved eyebrows are not appropriate. Hair must be clean and pulled back from the face so as not to fall forward while providing patient care. Beards or moustaches for men will be neatly trimmed.
2. **Make-up:** If worn, is to be conservative and not detract from the attire, uniform or work environment and must reflect a professional image.
3. **Nails:** Need to be smooth, of a moderate length and clean. Artificial nails, nail polish/products are not to be worn by anyone with responsibility for hands-on patient care, as they are an infection control risk.
4. **Jewelry:** Decorative jewelry is to be conservative and not detract from the attire or work environment and must not pose a safety/infection risk. Jewelry should be minimal.

Students are allowed:

- No more than one ring per hand (unless otherwise stated by the clinical agency). Plain-type wedding bands are preferred.
 - No piercings on the body are permitted with the exception of one post/stud type earring on the lower ear lobe.
 - Body piercings (other than the one piercing allowed in the lower ear lobe) will be removed for all clinical settings and experiences. Covering up body piercings with Band-Aids or other types of concealing methods (i.e.: clear spacers, retainers, or make-up) are not permitted. This includes surgically implanted jewelry.
 - One small necklace that fits snug to neck or is able to be tucked into a shirt is permitted. Dangling necklaces are a safety issue.
5. **Aftershave, cologne, and perfume:** Will be applied sparingly, as patient's sensitivity to scents/odors must be considered at all times.

6. **Tattoos:** Tattoos located on the face and neck are not allowed. Tattoos must not be offensive or cause distress to the patient or public and are not allowed. The final decision if a tattoo is allowed is up to the policies of the clinical facility.
7. **Personal cleanliness:** Daily attention to one's personal hygiene is an extremely important component of each student's overall image. Students will maintain a high level of personal hygiene. Students' breath and clothing/lab coats must not smell of smoke.

FACULTY RESPONSIBILITIES

Clarkson College maintains the responsibility to verify clinical/practicum sites and ensure a clinical/practicum agreement is in place between the organization and the college of nursing. Faculty members are responsible for ensuring a current clinical/practicum agreement is in place before students begin precepting in a clinical/practicum setting.

Clarkson College faculty will provide coursework and learning opportunities that offer the student a foundation to build upon in the clinical/practicum setting. Clarkson College faculty will ensure that the student has met any/all clinical/practicum requirements prior to starting clinical/practicum. Faculty will serve as a resource for the preceptor and the student by assisting with identification of student roles and being available when issues or concerns arise. Faculty are expected to make routine contact with the student and preceptor at designated times throughout the semester that meet both college and state guidelines. This allows for the opportunity to address any concerns and to complete the student assessment process. Preceptor assessment input is critical in order for faculty to determine student progress and document satisfactory completion of clinical/practicum competencies. Clarkson College will also request feedback from preceptors as a way to examine program effectiveness and improve our ability to prepare students for advanced practice nursing.

STUDENT & PRECEPTOR ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT METHODS

Course, agency, student, and faculty evaluations are an expected part of any educational experience. These assessments are important because not only regional and national accrediting bodies require them, but they provide information that leads to future improvement of the student, program, and Clarkson College. Grading in the practicum options includes consideration of the preceptor's assessment of the student's skills, the quality of written assignments, and performance on written and/or on-site work.

PRECEPTOR ASSESSMENTS

While the course faculty are responsible for issuing the final course grade, preceptor assessment is an important component of the faculty's evaluation of each student. The course

faculty may contact preceptors during practicum courses regarding the student's practicum performance. The student and faculty are expected to inform each preceptor prior to the beginning of the practicum experience about course-related information. The preceptor may also request a copy of the course syllabus. When discussing the practicum course, the student should be sure that the preceptor is willing to participate in an online assessment of their progress.

At mid-term and at the completion of the practicum rotation, the preceptor will complete the Preceptor Assessment emailed from Clarkson College.

The minimum acceptable score for Clinical/Practicum Assessment of student performance is 75%. If the student receives below 75%, faculty will review the assessment and obtain additional information from the preceptor regarding the assessment, if necessary. After discussing the preceptor assessment with the student, the faculty will make the final determination regarding whether the student's performance is Pass or Fail. The faculty will notify the student of the rationale for the clinical preceptorship grade.

STUDENT EVALUATIONS

All students will complete a midterm and/or final evaluation based on a self-assessment of their practicum competence. Additionally, students completing a practicum course will complete the agency evaluation.

Faculty will contact all preceptors and communicate student progress throughout each semester. If at any time, you as the preceptor need to contact faculty or the college, please do so, using the contact information provided.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COMMITMENT TO PRECEPTING

Welcome to precepting! We hope that you enjoy your precepting experience. While providing a service to our students you also may enjoy some benefits of precepting such as:

- Enhanced practice and professional growth
- An addition to your curriculum vitae or resume
- Fulfillment of re-certification or re-licensure requirements
- Self-satisfaction by mentoring; learning new information from students and enhancing your own thinking as you explain and review clinical reasoning

The faculty and administration at Clarkson College would like to thank you for collaborating with us to educate our graduate nursing students and contributing to their future excellence.