



Partnering in Nurse Practitioner Education: Welcome to Precepting!

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What's in it for me?

An Opportunity

- Provide service
- Give back
- Build a stronger future for nurse practitioners

Your Professional Growth

- Enhance your practice and professional growth
- Build your Curriculum Vitae or resume
- Gain adjunct faculty member status at an academic institution
- Fulfill recertification or re-licensure requirements
- Feel re-energized by mentoring, learning new information from students, and clarifying your own thinking as you explain clinical reasoning

And More

- Access library resources or continuing education offerings
- Discover your teaching and mentoring styles

What's in it for my patients?

- Additional attention and care during clinical visits

- Opportunity to enhance future care by giving feedback to future NPs

What's in it for the students?

- Essential to the clinical education of nurse practitioner students
- Opportunity to translate classroom learning into clinical practice skills and knowledge

What's in it for nurse practitioner programs?

- You are a valued partner in educating the next generation of nurse practitioners.
- Nurse practitioner programs cannot prepare the next generation without this academic-practice partnership.

How do I get started?

- Open communication is key! The faculty member should communicate with you and your agency prior to the clinical practicum.
- Although some nurse practitioner programs allow students to find clinical sites and initiate contacts with preceptors, the faculty member is responsible for final clinical placement and oversight.
- Prior to the practicum, the faculty member should help facilitate academic-practice requirements:
 - Assure that there is a clinical contract between your agency and the institution
 - Guide you in completing institutional paperwork requirements to become a preceptor
 - Communicate with someone at your institution to assure that the student meets your agency requirements
- Faculty should provide you with a preceptor handbook or other documents that contain key information about your preceptor role:

- Clear guidelines and expectations including course content, objectives, and expectations
- Information on the time period you will have the student, the number of hours the student will be in your clinical setting, and how the schedule for the student experience is arranged
- Behavioral expectations for students
- Mechanisms for student evaluations and communication with faculty
- Name and contact information of faculty member supervising the student

What do I need to do before the student starts the clinical practicum?

- Understand what level the student is at in the program
- Clarify course practicum objectives and competencies, and faculty expectations
- “Meet” the student prior to the clinical practicum through email or phone communication
- Consider interviewing the student to learn about strengths, areas for growth, and goals for the experience
- Consider asking the student for a current resume so you can better understand the student’s background and experience.
- Review course and objectives with the student before the rotation
- Orient the student to your patient population by providing them with reading materials and resources

What can I expect from the students?

- Students should complete paperwork and training required by your institution in a timely manner (e.g., immunization records, RN license, student ID, computer and EMR training)
- Students should arrange clinical dates and times with you as soon as possible. They should work a schedule that is convenient for you. You do not have to work around their schedule!

- Students should introduce themselves as a student nurse practitioner to your staff ask what procedures need to be follow while in the clinical setting.
- Students must be punctual at the beginning of each clinical day and may not leave for the day until you approve it.
- Students should come prepared. If you have given them information to read or look up, it should be clear that they have done so.
- Professional dress and grooming are expected. In any clinical site requiring patient contact, students should wear appropriate lab coats or attire as directed by you.
- Most faculty now require students to have a PDA/smart phone and other clinical reference materials. In addition, most NP programs require that students log their clinical encounters in a Nurse Practitioner Student Tracking database.
- Students should only see patients under your direction. You should know about every patient they see, and they should ask and follow your directions about how you see this working best in your practice.
- You may decide after the student has been with you for some time to have the students see the patients first and then present to you, discuss the plan and treatment, and then see them together.
- Students are expected to discuss documentation specifics with you. In some agencies, any documentation in the legal patient record must be charted by the licensed provider (e.g., MD or NP). If policy permits nurse practitioner student documentation in the patient record, the student should sign his/her name, graduate program, and that they are a nurse practitioner student. It is also their responsibility to be sure that you review their notes for co-signature.
- Students should be interactive and ready to learn!

What is expected of me?

- Ensure that the clinical experience is appropriate for the student both in terms of scope of practice and the ability to meet the clinical course objectives
- Provide enough support for the student to feel comfortable asking questions and offering ideas
- This is an active learning situation. You are not there to "pour" knowledge into the student. Gently challenge the student to grow, not just regurgitate back information. Help the student make "connections" and understand how bits of information integrate to "paint the picture" of the patient and guide management.
- Students learn by example as they observe how you handle clinical situations, decision-making, and patient/family/peer relations. However, keep "observation only" to a minimum. Students learn best by "doing" under the supervision and guidance of an expert--YOU! As you get to know your student's abilities, you can allow more responsibility under your observation to maintain the quality of the encounter and add perspectives/questions/input when needed.
- Consider what is needed to get the student from where she/he is currently to where the student needs to be as a beginning practitioner.
- To avoid any misunderstandings or surprises, develop a continual and consistent feedback loop among the student, you, and the faculty.
- Address student learning challenges early to help facilitate student success. Remember that the goal is to help shape the quality of our developing nurse practitioners and help people succeed. You should see steady progress as the student spends more time with you. If you have concerns about the student's progress, discuss it with the student and contact the faculty member promptly.
- Inform agency colleagues that the individual is there as a "student" on clinical days and that the student is documenting encounters as a student.

What will students expect from me?

Students expect that you will:

- Provide feedback on their performance and that you will promptly discuss any issues or concerns.
- Create an optimal climate for learning that includes ongoing student assessment, close communication, quick response to student's stress, trusting relationships, mutual respect, and acceptance as part of the team.
- Provide opportunities for student growth and developing expertise, while providing a "safety net" for student learning and quality patient care.
- Provide feedback and guidance that is both ongoing and focused on developing the competencies needed for NP practice.
- Give feedback in a professional manner without demeaning or criticizing the student, especially in front of the patient or staff.
- Consider using the "Ask, Tell, Ask" Method:
 - Ask students how they think they did on a specific task (e.g., presenting on rounds). This allows students to reflect and they typically come up with the same items you were planning to discuss.
 - Tell them how you see the situation and ways for improvement and provide specific, directed feedback.
 - Then Ask them how they will change their behavior going forward. This confirms that you agree on specific ways to improve moving forward.

What can I do if there are problems?

- The faculty member should provide guidelines regarding when and how to contact them.

- You should expect that the faculty will collaborate with you on any questions, issues, or concerns throughout the student's rotation.
- The faculty should actively solicit feedback about the student's progress.
- The faculty are there to provide support and guidance to you in your role. Please contact the faculty member if there are any questions or concerns.

This is a lot to remember. What tips do you have to help me be successful?

- Plan ahead and think ahead about activities that will help the student's progress. Distinguish between activities that must be accomplished today versus those that would be nice to do if you had more time.
- Have your students write down questions during the day and you can address them in a batch over lunch or at the end of the day.
- Share the teaching with your expert colleagues; they may have a certain day when they see a unique patient population in clinic, present grand rounds, or give case presentations. Students are often asked to seek out as many clinical opportunities as possible in their practicums, so they should ask you for any such opportunities.
- It's OK to teach in small bits! Be realistic about the amount you attempt to teach in a day. Also keep your daily feedback short and directed.

Thank you for partnering with us to educate our nurse practitioner students.

**Together, we will build a bright future for continued nurse practitioner
healthcare excellence! Welcome to Precepting!**