



Suggestion for Utilization of Preceptors Approved Nursing Education Programs

Purpose

The Suggestions for the Utilization of Preceptors are not mandated by law and have been developed consultatively to assist faculty who utilize this type of teaching strategy to provide quality learning experiences. The North Carolina Board of Nursing (NCBON), recognizing the benefits to nursing education programs and clinical agencies gained by utilizing agency employees as preceptors, has developed the following criteria for preceptorships.

The teaching methodology is not considered appropriate for teaching beginning nursing knowledge, skills, and abilities; but rather to provide more advanced students the opportunity to apply and synthesize knowledge. The NCBON envisions the preceptor as a registered nurse for all pre-licensure students (RN/PN) with a minimum of a bachelor's degree, who functions in a role that enhances nursing students' learning experiences; and is not a substitute or replacement for nurse faculty. Preceptor experiences are planned experiences for a specific nursing course, are incorporated into the clinical experiences of a student in a particular course and occur in a clinical agency for nursing student experiences. Preceptorships require clearly defined objectives that match the student's needs with an identified professional to facilitate meeting the defined objectives. The role of the faculty member shifts to one of facilitator of the total preceptor experience by planning, counseling, and evaluating the preceptorship throughout its entirety. The nurse faculty maintains the ultimate responsibility and accountability for the student's achievement of the course goals and evaluation of the student.

The following definitions are consistent with the preceptor experiences envisioned by the NCBON:

- **Nurse Faculty** - A registered nurse meeting the criteria as defined in **Approval of Nursing Programs: Process and Standards** for Nursing Programs, who maintains the ultimate responsibility for the student's learning in a specific course in an NCBON-approved nursing program. A faculty should not be responsible for more than ten students involved in preceptor relationships at one time.
- **Preceptor** - A registered nurse, with a minimum of a bachelor's degree, who is a highly qualified professional with specific clinical expertise and knowledge of the teaching/learning process. The preceptor is not an employee of the nursing program. The preceptor agrees to serve as a role model, resource, and to provide support for a nursing student while supervising the student's clinical experiences. The preceptor-student relationship ideally is a one-to-one experience. However, depending on the complexity of patient needs, the level of the student in the nursing program, and the identified objectives, the preceptor-student ratio may be 1:2 per working shift per preceptor. The number of preceptor/student

arrangements per clinical site is based upon but not limited to size of unit, patient acuity, staffing patterns, and availability of preceptors.

- **Nursing Student** - An individual who is enrolled in an approved nursing curriculum. The student, during a portion of a nursing course, may be assigned to a preceptor for the purpose of meeting specific objectives by synthesizing previously obtained knowledge and skills. The student is self-directed, supervised by the preceptor, and responsible to the preceptor and nurse faculty for the achievement of the objectives.

1. **Preceptor Selection:**

- Selected by agency clinical supervisor and nursing program faculty.
- Qualifications:
 - a. Licensed Registered Nurse with qualifications, BS degree minimum, and experience commensurate with role functions.
 - b. Demonstrated clinical competence commensurate with objectives.
 - c. Participated in professional learning activities commensurate with clinical expertise.
 - d. Interested in assuming the preceptor role.
 - e. Knowledgeable regarding the teaching-learning process.

2. **Preceptor Orientation:**

- Overview of the preceptor relationship including each role and responsibility of preceptor, faculty, and student(s).
- Specific preceptor responsibilities.
- Methods of clinical evaluation of student by preceptor and faculty.
- Goals and objectives for the clinical experience.

3. **Implementation of the Preceptor Relationship:**

- Assessment of learner(s) needs by faculty, student, and preceptor.
- Determination of goals and objectives for learning by faculty, student, and preceptor.
- Gradual assumption of activities by student as specified by objectives.
- Resolution of any problem by preceptor and student with input from faculty and clinical supervisor when indicated.

- Periodic meetings with students, preceptor, faculty, and clinical supervisor to discuss the student's progress and to plan for future experiences. (Student encouraged to verbalize learning needs, strengths, and areas of improvement)
- Availability of faculty for consultation and/or collaboration as well as the performance of periodic observations to determine progress and effectiveness of the relationship.
- Retention by faculty of the ultimate responsibility for evaluating clinical learning experiences.

4. Evaluation Tools Elicit:

- Advantages and disadvantages of the experience.
- Impact on student(s) knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- Suggestions for future preceptor relationships.
- Faculty, student, preceptor, and clinical supervisor input regarding progress toward accomplishment of objectives.

5. Other:

- Nursing Program maintains a vitae for each preceptor. Letters from preceptor and his/her supervisor should also be on file that acknowledge acceptance of relationship.

Responsibilities in Nurse/Preceptor Relationship

Preceptor:

1. Attend preceptor orientation.
2. Review with faculty:
 - Responsibilities of faculty member, preceptor and student
 - Clinical objectives
 - Student performance expectations
 - Skills checklist
 - Clinical evaluation tool
3. Assess with faculty and students the learning needs, as well as set goals and objectives for experience based upon identified learning needs.
4. Familiarize students with staff, policies, and organization of the unit.
5. Plan appropriate learning activities.

6. Serve as a role model and clinical resource for student(s).
7. Identify problems related to the preceptor role and/or student and refer these to the clinical supervisor and faculty.
8. Periodically convene with students, faculty, and clinical supervisors to determine student progress.

Nursing Student:

1. Set goals with faculty and preceptor consistent with objectives for the clinical experience, based upon identified learning needs.
2. Assume responsibility for patient care, within limitations of knowledge and skills, with guidance from the preceptor.
3. Utilize resources to increase knowledge, skills, and abilities.
4. Evaluate the learning experiences and the preceptor relationship.
5. Collaborate with preceptor in planning the student learning activities.
6. Identify problems related to the preceptor role and/or student and refer these to the clinical supervisor and faculty.
7. Periodically convene with preceptor, faculty, and clinical supervisor to determine student progress.

Clinical Supervisor:

1. Select preceptor for nursing student with nursing program faculty.
2. Approve scheduling of time and assignments to ensure the preceptor is always available to the student.
3. Support preceptor and student by assisting with the identification of problems and the development of the student's skills.
4. Evaluate the learning experiences and the preceptor relationship.
5. Collaborate with preceptor in planning the student learning activities.
6. Consult and/or collaborate as well as conduct periodic observations to determine progress and effectiveness of the relationship.
7. Periodically convene with preceptor, student, and faculty to determine student progress.
8. Evaluate the preceptor's performance, the learning experiences, and the preceptor relationship.

Nursing Faculty:

1. Select preceptor for nursing student along with clinical supervisor.
2. Conduct the preceptor orientation session.
3. Along with preceptor reviews:
 - Clinical objectives
 - Student(s) performance expectations
 - Skills checklist
 - Clinical evaluation tool
4. Assist student and preceptor in setting goals and objectives based on identified learning needs.
5. Collaborate with preceptor in planning the student learning activities.
6. Assist preceptor and student in identifying problems and provides additional instruction when indicated.
7. Consult and/or collaborate as well as make periodic observations to determine progress and effectiveness of the relationship.
8. Periodically convene with preceptor, student, and clinical supervisor to determine student progress.
9. Evaluate student performance and make recommendations regarding student's achievement of goals and objectives.
10. Evaluate student clinical performance and determine if the student is meeting goals and objectives.
11. Evaluate the learning experiences and the preceptor relationship.