



Master of Science in Nursing Program

Nurse Educator / Clinical Leader
Orientation Handbook for Preceptors

Angelo State University

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Dear Preceptor:

Thank you for agreeing to precept a student in the Angelo State University Master's degree program. Your expert guidance in providing students the opportunity to apply their skills and knowledge as well as their teaching/learning skills is critical to preparing them for the nurse educator role. As a busy professional with numerous demands and responsibilities, your commitment to this process demonstrates personal dedication to the continuing quality development of the nursing profession. The student will gain confidence and validation as you provide teaching, coaching, and role modeling opportunities. It is difficult to imagine successfully preparing these individuals without the collaboration of our colleagues in the community!

In this Orientation Handbook for Preceptors you will find our mission statement, philosophy, program outcomes, and nurse educator competencies of the MSN program at Angelo State University. The student should also supply you with a copy of the course syllabus communicating course and practicum objectives. Practicum students are required to formulate personal objectives that relate to course outcomes according to nurse educator or clinical leader competencies. You and the student should review and refine these objectives which are specific to the student's goals for the experience and the opportunities available in your practice. Evaluation of the student will be in line with the NLN Nurse Educator Competencies. Copies of the Student Practicum Evaluation forms are provided for you to complete near the end of the semester.

As for now and before the student begins the experience, please complete the following forms (included in this packet):

- Preceptor Profile form indicating professional preparation and licensure is required for all preceptors.
- Preceptor Agreement form acknowledging your willingness to serve as a preceptor for the specified student.

The Angelo State University graduate nursing faculty values your service as a preceptor and welcomes your recommendations for making the preceptor role more effective and satisfying. Please feel free to contact me or the course instructor if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for your service on behalf of continuing excellence in the practicum education of professional nurses.

Sincerely,



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Introduction

A preceptorship is a directly supervised practicum that allows students to apply knowledge gained in the didactic portion of a program. Nursing Educator students have the opportunity to work with preceptors in academic, clinical, and community-based settings. Practicum experiences provide Angelo State University Nursing students with the opportunity to observe and actively participate in the delivery of nursing education and clinical focused leadership. Preceptors actively practicing in academic and clinical settings are uniquely qualified to facilitate the development of students in this advanced practice role.

Because each student enters the practicum experience with a varied amount of past experience and technical competence, providing practicum learning opportunities that support the student's individual learning needs may be challenging. Therefore, the purpose of this *Orientation Handbook for Preceptors* is to provide preceptors with helpful information and effective teaching strategies to optimize learning for students.

Definitions and Responsibilities

The Nurse Educator track at Angelo State University prepares nurses for graduate level practice in one of two ways: Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) degree or a Post-Masters Certificate for nurses who already have an MSN. All graduate students at ASU have core graduate nursing courses as a part of their curriculum. The nurse educator track requires additional coursework in preparation for the nurse educator role. This track provides the student with knowledge related to curricular development, instructional design, pedagogy, course development, learning outcome measures and effective teaching/facilitating strategies.

On-line classroom study is combined with community-based practicum experiences that are supervised by qualified preceptors. The MSN program is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) and is approved as an Advanced Practice Nursing program by the Board of Nurse Examiners for the State of Texas.

The advanced practice nurse educator may utilize practicum expertise and practice in academic, inpatient, outpatient and community based settings.

Preceptor Selection Criteria

A qualified preceptor must directly supervise the practicum experience. Angelo State University adheres to the following guidelines related to preceptor qualifications:

1. The preceptor must hold a current, active license in the state where the student will engage in the practicum experience.
2. The preceptor must have a Master of Science Degree in Nursing from a ACEN or CCNE accredited program for nurse educator and leadership practicum experiences. Consideration will be made on a case-by-case basis for the clinical-focused leadership practicum experiences if the leader has a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing or higher degree with extensive experience in the nurse leadership role.
3. The student may not be precepted by an immediate supervisor at his / her current place of employment.

In addition to the preceptor qualifications, the student should also consider the following when selecting a preceptor:

1. Amount of teaching / work experience
2. Availability to work with and adequately supervise the student
3. Ability to facilitate student learning and evaluate student progress
4. Adaptability in order to assist the student to achieve his/her learning goals and objectives
5. Agreeable to allowing the student to attend nurse educator or clinical leadership meetings / workshops / other activities with students.
6. Appreciation of the applicable role (nurse educator / clinical leader)

Responsibilities of the Student

The student is responsible for being self-directed in identifying initial and ongoing learning needs, for seeking learning opportunities to meet identified needs, and for being accountable for their performance in nurse educator and clinical leader roles. The student should:

- Provide the preceptor with the *Nurse Educator / Clinical Leader Orientation Handbook for Preceptors* and complete all preceptor agreements prior to the initiation of the practicum experience.
- Discuss specific practicum objectives and negotiate a practicum schedule with the preceptor prior to the actual practicum experience.
- Provide the practicum site with the necessary licensure liability insurance, and educational information as required. Submit a completed student profile to the preceptor and to faculty on or before the first practicum day.
- Perform the nurse educator role under the supervision of a nurse educator preceptor, recognizing the limitations of education preparation and complying with professional standards, academic and practicum site policies and protocols
- Perform the clinical leader role under the supervision of a clinical-focused nurse leader preceptor, recognizing the limitations of education preparation and complying with professional standards, academic and practicum site policies and protocols
- Demonstrate professional role behaviors.
- Demonstrate accountability for thoroughness and timeliness in completing assigned role responsibilities.
- Maintain a practicum log according to course requirements and submit it to the faculty at designated intervals.
- Demonstrate progressive independence and competency in the Nurse educator or clinical leader role in accordance with his/her academic progression.
- Arrive at the practicum experience prepared to perform in accordance with assigned learning activities in accordance with the course.
- Actively seek input in the evaluation process and participate in self-evaluation of strengths and identified area for professional growth with the preceptor and designated faculty.
- Contact faculty by telephone or email if faculty assistance is necessary.
- Respect the confidential nature of all information obtained during the practicum experience.
- Complete the Student Evaluation of Preceptor / Facility at the end of the practicum experience.

Responsibilities of ASU Faculty

Faculty identify practicum learning objectives specific to the program, course, and learning needs of the students. They facilitate student achievement of these objectives through provision of didactic instruction, identification of appropriate practicum facilities and preceptors, evaluation of students in the practicum setting, and establishment of close working relationships with preceptors.

The faculty should:

- Identify and evaluate practicum sites for appropriateness of learning experiences.
- Review the expectations for the students, the preceptor, and the faculty.
- Assure establishment of affiliation or preceptor agreements prior to initiation of practicum experience.
- Review the policies of the agency to be followed by faculty and assigned students.
- Act as counselor, consultant, and teacher and be responsible for providing immediate consultation and/or support to the preceptor when needs or problems are reported.
- Serve as role model to demonstrate effective communication, leadership, and practicum expertise.
- Seek preceptor input regarding student's practicum performance and other practicum related activities.
- Maintain communication with the preceptor / facility / agency and make site visits as needed.
- Encourage student to verbalize and demonstrate the use of theoretical frameworks and the application of relevant research and evidence-based guidelines related to nursing education and clinical-focused leadership.
- Document the student's progress using practicum objectives for the specific semester, and assign a pass/fail grade by the completion of the practicum experience.

Responsibilities within the Preceptorship

The preceptor will guide the graduate student enrolled in the practicum course through the learning process, serve as a role model and mentor, and provide constructive feedback for their specialty role (nurse educator or clinical leader). In addition, the preceptor will also promote role socialization and adoption of specialty role standards of practice.

Orientation

The student should arrange to meet with the preceptor for orientation prior to the actual practicum experience. During initial orientation to the practicum setting, the preceptor should:

- Communicate general guidelines to be used for preceptor / student interactions (how to address one another, appropriate modes of contact, etc.) and for review and feedback of student performance.
- Review policies and protocols specific to the practice setting
- Review preceptor, agency and student expectations regarding documentation
- Discuss overall plan for student learning opportunities (i.e. lectures, practicum supervision, facilitating pre/post conferences, grading assignments, attending leadership meetings, collecting and reporting quality improvement data, etc.)
- Review student's previous learning experiences and practicum objectives to be accomplished
- Encourage student to identify strengths and areas for continued professional growth
- Involve student in assessment and validation decisions about learning strategies to be employed
- Negotiate a practicum schedule with the student. If the student will be absent on a scheduled practicum day, the student is responsible for notifying the preceptor prior to the designated time

Practicum Supervision

- Assess student ability to communicate effectively when interacting with faculty, staff and students
- Ensure that student activities are consistent with standards set forth in academic and practicum site policies, procedures, and protocols
- Direct progression of applicable student assignments. Review student's work and offer constructive suggestions for improvement.
- Directly supervise the student in the performance of nurse educator or nurse leader role

responsibilities. (The student will require direct supervision until such a time the preceptor and the student deem it no longer necessary).

- Sign the student's practicum hours tracking log.
- Discuss specific written learning objective and experiences. These discussions should review:
 - a. The student's teaching or leadership abilities
 - b. The student's ability to communicate and collaborate effectively with preceptors, faculty, and students
 - c. Professional issues related to nurse educators or nurse leaders
 - d. Plans for future learning experiences based on an assessment of the student's strengths and areas for continued professional growth

Evaluation of Student Performance

- When applicable, students are to sign all notations with their first name, last name, title, and school.
- Assess student progress through a formal, written evaluation at the completion of the practicum experience
- Assess through review of practicum log entries
- Inform the designated MSN faculty of concerns related to practicum practice by the student or if the student is identified as having difficulties in meeting the requirements of the preceptorship experience

The Preceptor Role

A practicum preceptor is an experienced nurse educator or Clinical-focused Nurse Leader who plays a crucial role in the student's learning experiences and learning outcomes. The preceptor guides the student into the real world and allows the student to learn new skills, gain confidence and validation. As a preceptor you will teach, coach and role model. It is hard to imagine how students could successfully prepare for such roles without the guidance of preceptors. The faculty values your services as a preceptor and welcomes your recommendations for making the preceptor role more effective and satisfying.

Issues in Precepting

Some issues may arise when precepting and may recur in different forms with different students in different settings and/or situations. When you face such issues please feel free to consult with the faculty member for advice about some of the approaches that have proven effective in the past.

Time management may become a problem when adding precepting responsibilities to a busy work day. Maximizing the time with realistic expectations requires planning with the student, realistic expectations, and continuing assessment of the experience and progress.

Students enrolled in the academic setting or attending the practicum site where the nurse educator or clinical leader may do his/her practicum may feel apprehensive initially about having someone other than their "regular" instructor giving assignments or providing direction. In order to allay these feelings, as preceptor, freely express and affirm your confidence in the student's competence.

Planning

The student will come to you with objectives to accomplish and will collaborate with you to formulate additional objectives. These objectives will serve as the foundation for your plan. Objectives specify at what level the student will perform at the conclusion of the learning experience. Broad, general objectives are sometimes referred to as goals.

Review the course objective with the student. Course objectives are usually broad in scope. Assure that you and the student share a mutual understanding of the expectations for accomplishing the objectives for the practicum. Objectives are constructed in such a way that student performance may be measured and judged. The box below (figure 1) contains some sample practicum objectives.

Figure 1 - Sample Practicum Objectives
Nurse Educator Role
1. Apply a variety of teaching strategies in the on campus and online environment.
2. Incorporate a variety of teaching strategies in the practicum setting
3. Collaborate with faculty members to improve student outcome
Clinical Leader Role
1. Apply needs assessment framework to gather data regarding staff knowledge gaps
2. Incorporate needs assessment questionnaire to assist with educational planning of staff
3. Collaborate with Nurse Leader to gain confidence in the role

You and the student will refine objectives which are specific to the student's goals for the experience and the opportunities available in your practice. Guide the student toward objectives that are realistic given the timeframe of the experience, the opportunities available and the resources required. Consider the student's priorities and your own priorities for the student's learning. As the student accomplishes some goals, others may emerge. As the student learns more about the opportunities in your practice setting, new goals may take shape. Figure 2 contains some examples of objectives established by a preceptor and student together as additional objectives for the practicum. These objectives are additional to objectives established by the faculty and reflect interests of the student and opportunities available in the practice setting. Periodically review objectives accomplished and not yet attained with the student.

Figure 2 - Sample of Student's Personal Objectives
1. Develop a learning strategy.
2. Carry out a practicum post conference debriefing.
3. Attend a faculty (or leader) work session.

Whenever possible, plan to give the student feedback at the conclusion of each day's experience. Precepting requires additional to plan with the student, to "think-out-loud" with the student, to formulate and ask questions, to observe student performance and coach, and to empower the student to perform skills that you could do yourself more rapidly. We again, appreciate your willingness to take the extra time to do this.

Role Modeling

Students will learn from your role modeling whether or not you purposefully present

yourself as a role model. Two of the most significant aspects of learning accomplished through role modeling are critical thinking and professional role behavior in interaction with patients, interdisciplinary colleagues, and others. The approach that you model in your academic or practicum setting can profoundly effects the student's approach.

Practicum Failure

Students deemed unsafe or incompetent will fail the practicum course. Behaviors constituting practicum failure can include the following:

- Demonstrates unsafe performance and makes questionable decisions
- Lacks insight and understanding of own behaviors and behaviors of others
- Needs continuous specific and detailed supervision
- Has difficulty adapting to new ideas and roles
- Fails to submit required written practicum exercises/assignments
- Falsifies practicum hours
- Violates student confidentiality agreement

ASU Nursing Program Mission, Vision and Philosophy

Mission

The Department of Nursing supports the overall Mission of Angelo State University by offering graduate and undergraduate nursing programs that produce professionals committed to improving the health of individuals, groups and communities both locally and globally. As practitioners and educators, our graduates effectively lead and advocate for safe, high-quality healthcare that respects diversity and is responsive to a dynamic and technologically complex society.

Vision

We will be recognized as visionary leaders committed to delivering innovative nursing education that promotes optimal patient outcomes.

Philosophy

We believe nursing is a unique, caring, scientific and practice discipline built upon a solid foundation of knowledge in the liberal arts and sciences. Each level of nursing education expands upon prior knowledge and competency through the integration of research-based evidence. Our programs produce compassionate and skilled nurses prepared to meet the healthcare needs of a global society.

We believe the nurse delivers person-centered care as a member of the interprofessional team utilizing therapeutic partnerships and patient advocacy that emphasizes health promotion, health restoration and disease prevention.

We believe in student-centered, adult learning principles and provide a supportive, engaging educational environment facilitating personal and professional growth for leadership and lifelong learning.

We believe lifelong learning is nurtured in an environment of mutual respect and shared responsibility for the development of clinical reasoning, ethical conduct and personal accountability.

ASU MSN Program Outcomes

The purpose of the Master of Science in Nursing Program at Angelo State University is to prepare graduates to practice nursing within an expanded role. Master's education prepares nurses with essential knowledge in professional leadership; patient centered care, and advanced nursing practice. These outcomes are met by a combination of online course delivery, on-campus orientation, skills lab and assessment and precepted practicum experiences.

Upon program completion, the graduate will be prepared to:

1. Integrate nursing and related sciences into the delivery of advanced nursing care to diverse populations.
2. Apply organizational and systems leadership skills.
3. Design and implement quality improvement initiatives.
4. Integrate best research evidence to improve health outcomes.
5. Utilize informatics, healthcare technology and information systems.
6. Advocate through system level policy development.
7. Employ effective communication in inter-professional teams.
8. Synthesize the impact of health determinants for provision of culturally relevant health promotion/disease prevention strategies.
9. Practice at the level of a Master's prepared nurse.

Nurse Educator & Post Master's Program Track Competencies

Students completing the Nurse Educator track / Post Master's certificate will possess the eight (8) core competencies identified by the National League of Nursing Certification Commission's The Scope of Practice for Academic Nurse Educators (2012). These competencies include:

1. Facilitate Learning
2. Facilitate Learner Development and Socialization
3. Use Assessment and Evaluation Strategies
4. Participate in Curriculum Design and Evaluation of Program Outcomes
5. Function as a Change Agent and Leader
6. Pursue Continuous Quality Improvement in the Nurse Educator Role
7. Engage in Scholarship
8. Function within the Educational Environment