

# **Eastern Michigan University** *School of Nursing*

*Handbook for Students & Preceptors for Creating  
Practice Placements in the RN2BSN Program*

*NURS 483: RN to BSN Capstone Population-focused  
Practice Experience*



## ***Handbook for NURS 483 Capstone Practice Course***

### **Table of Contents**

Purpose of Handbook	3
Capstone Practice Course Overview	3
Pre-Enrollment Practice Course Requirements	4
Preceptor Qualification Requirements	5
Summary of Pre-Enrollment Responsibilities	5
Practice Experience Requirements	6
Student Responsibilities	6
Preceptor Responsibilities	6
Faculty Role & Responsibilities	7
School of Nursing Role & Responsibilities	7
Practice Evaluation of Student	8
Preceptor and Student Relationship Expectations	8
Communication and Feedback	8
Preceptor and Student	8
Preceptor and Faculty	9
Adherence to Approved Practice Work Schedule	9
Student absences and/or schedule deviations	9
Preceptor absences and/or schedule change demands	9
Practice Capstone Project Completion	10
Schedule Plan Calendar	11
Documentation of Practice Hours	12
Final Preceptor Evaluation of Student	13

### **Purpose of the Handbook**

This handbook provides the preceptor and student with an explanation and expectations of the role & responsibilities of the preceptor, the student, the faculty, and the School of Nursing. The handbook discusses relevant clinical policies and assumptions about how faculty, preceptor, and student interact to facilitate student achievement of course objectives. Below is contact information for School of Nursing members directly involved with this program.

Melissa Karchaturoff  
RN2BSN Coordinator  
311 Marshall Hall  
Ypsilanti, MI 48197  
Office: 734-487-6635  
Email: [mkachatu@emich.edu](mailto:mkachatu@emich.edu)

Avery, Jennifer, PhD, RN  
Interim Director, School of Nursing  
355 Marshall Hall  
Ypsilanti, MI 48197  
Office: 734-487-7676  
Email: [javery10@emich.edu](mailto:javery10@emich.edu)

Vicki Washington, DNP, RN,  
APRN, ACNS-BC  
Associate Director for Online  
Nursing Studies & Assistant  
Professor  
360 Marshall  
Ypsilanti, MI 48197  
Office: 734-487-7671  
Email: [vwashing@emich.edu](mailto:vwashing@emich.edu)

### **Capstone Practice Course Overview**

The faculty of the School of Nursing (SON) at Eastern Michigan University (EMU) believes that student development in the professional role is enhanced through a precepted, one-to-one concentrated practice experience. The experienced preceptor has the opportunity to transmit the role and skills unique to their professional role addressing population health needs. The capstone practice experience allows the student to apply concepts and content from across the curriculum to an actual practice situation. A focused practice experience affords the student the opportunity to observe and engage the nuances of the “real world” of nursing. Further, the student’s completion of a meaningful project can positively contribute to the preceptor’s workplace.

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing White Paper on the Expectations for Practice Experiences in the RN to Baccalaureate Curriculum highlights example direct care and indirect care experiences that can help define appropriate projects. Some direct care examples include working in health care provider settings to identify gaps in patient care and implement quality improvement strategies or using an evidence-base to development and implement new procedures or nursing care policy that directly impacts patient care. Some indirect care examples include developing policies and educating other health care providers regarding safe and effective use of new technologies, or working collaboratively with interdisciplinary stakeholder groups to develop and implement policies that can improve facility communication within organizations (e.g., electronic medical records, or disaster/emergency preparedness).

A careful review of the course syllabus is required to best understand the NURS 483 Capstone Practice Experience course, and the course focus on Population Health. As titled the course serves the purpose of creating a culminating experience for the student that integrates the application of core nursing program concepts studied throughout the program. The practice experience should involve having the student gain exposure to the preceptor's professional role, and having the student create a population-focused project that benefits the preceptor's practice environment. The course requires the student to spend 50 hours during the semester in the precepted practice experience. It is expected that a majority of hours are spent working with the preceptor in the agency to gain insight into the preceptor's role and to develop and implement the practice project. It is also understood that as required for project development the student will invest some practice hours for project work that occurs outside of the agency (e.g., library literature searches, meeting with key contacts outside of the agency as needed for project success). Of the required 50 hours, up to 10 hours may be claimed for work outside the agency.

### **Pre-enrollment Practice Course Requirements**

The following items must be completed prior to the student's enrollment in the practice course. The student needs to identify a qualified preceptor and begin initial planning with them well prior to the start of the practice course term. Additionally, there must be a working agreement between the University and practice agency. You need to check with Melissa Kachaturoff to see if an official Affiliation Agreement is needed, since these agreements can take *months* to gain final approval. As such, the student needs to begin thinking about and planning for the practice course soon after enrollment in the nursing program! If an official Affiliation Agreement is needed, it is essential that this legal paperwork be started well in advance, and not later than the start of the term preceding the capstone course (i.e., minimally allowing 7 ½ weeks prior to the start of the capstone course). When students have identified a qualified preceptor, they should contact Melissa Kachaturoff, to check if a formal Affiliation Agreements is needed and if the School has an active affiliation agreement on file with the preceptor's agency. *If needed*, one needs to be completed before the student can start the capstone course. Given the expedited nature of this program, early and clear communication between all stakeholders is essential.

To reduce the potential for an ethically strained work and academic environment and a conflict of interest the School is agreeable to the student completing the practice experience at the student's place of employment under the following conditions. The student should not be completing the capstone experience on the unit or floor they normally work on. They shall not accrue course hours at the same time they are working paid hours. The preceptor they work with should not be a family member of the student (e.g., first-cousin or closer). The preceptors work role should be distinct from the students work role, such that the student is exposed to work expectations different from their usual employment appointment. If the student feels there are unique circumstances for which these conditions create undue hardship, the student may seek approval for exemption from the School by providing written rationale to the School. The School must provide a written response (approval or rejection) in response to the student request. Failure to abide by these conditions will be considered academic misconduct and grounds for academic discipline.

## Preceptor Qualification Requirements

Those interested in being a student preceptor must meet the following requirements:

- Minimum educational preparation at the BSN level.
- Current unrestricted RN licensure in state/country where preceptor experience is to occur.
- Minimum of one year of BSN clinical experience as licensed RN.
- Minimum of 6 months of work experience in present setting that addresses *population health* needs (see course syllabus for more information on defining population health).
- Voluntary acceptance of preceptor role and responsibilities as described herein.
- Clinical competence supportive of ability to precept students within a selected domain.

The student must upload the following information to the School's Project Concert website for approval by the School before the student begins the practice experience:

- Copy of the preceptor's nursing license
- A current resume or curriculum vita (CV) for the preceptor
- Signed Placement Agreement Form (sent to the student prior to course enrollment)

## Summary of Pre-Enrollment Responsibilities

The student will:

- ◇ Identify a qualified course preceptor, and share course expectations with them
- ◇ Provide the preceptor a copy of this handbook and the course syllabus
- ◇ Contact the School of Nursing to determine type of working agreement needed, if an official Affiliation Agreement is needed and if one is on file
- ◇ Identify and complete any preceptor agency site orientation requirements.
- ◇ Assure compliance with agency standards on immunizations, OSHA standards, CPR and current health & liability insurance for the School of Nursing and as required for participation within all assigned clinical agencies.
- ◇ Contact the School (RN2BSN Coordinator Melissa Kachaturoff) with any questions regarding materials, or concerns uploading files to Project Concert.

The preceptor will:

- ◇ Review this handbook
- ◇ If interested in and willing to precept a student, provide the following to the student.
  - A completed copy of the Placement Agreement Form
  - A copy of their current resume/CV
  - A copy of their current nursing license

The School of Nursing will:

- ◇ Approximately 3 months prior to capstone enrollment, provide the student with course preparation information and required forms (e.g., health requirements, and Placement Agreement Form).
- ◇ Give initial approval of the student's preceptor assignment
- ◇ Return to the preceptor, a signed copy of the Placement Agreement Form

- ◇ Ensure the preceptor has a copy of this handbook and the course syllabus.
- ◇ Ensure that paperwork required for a work agreement/placement paperwork between the agency and EMU is in place before the clinical experience begins, (e.g., an affiliation agreement/contract when needed)
- ◇ Ensure student compliance with School standards before the clinical experience begins (e.g., on immunizations, OSHA standards, CPR, and current health & liability insurance)

## **Practice Experience Requirements**

### **Student Responsibilities**

The role of the student is to lead the development and implementation of a capstone practice experience that meets the course objectives. The plan is developed in collaboration with the preceptor and nursing faculty. Though the faculty and preceptor are committed to assisting the student in meeting course objectives, the ultimate responsibility for learning rests with the student. In coordination with the approved preceptor the student is to create and adhere to a clear work plan schedule for their nursing practice course. To best fit the current availability of the student and preceptor, the plan should be arranged immediately prior to the term of enrollment. The plan should directly address the scheduling of all clinical hours and summarize the intended population health project. The Schedule Plan Calendar near the end of this document should be used to document and communicate a plan to complete the required course hours. Understanding that extensive communication and planning has occurred prior to the start of term, this plan must be submitted to and approved by faculty during the first week of the course. It is expected that the student will arrange their practice experience during the preceptor's regular working hours.

In summary, during the practice experience the student must:

- ◇ Arrange & document a work schedule plan that is agreeable to the preceptor.
- ◇ Submit the work schedule plan to faculty during the first week of the course.
- ◇ Maintain regular communication with preceptor and faculty regarding all activities.
- ◇ Clearly communicate in advance any request for Schedule Plan Calendar deviation.
- ◇ Assumes responsibility for performance of all practice activities.
- ◇ Promptly communicates with preceptor and faculty any practice concerns or when assistance is necessary.
- ◇ Engage in course assignments and activities as discussed in the syllabus.
- ◇ Maintain and submit the Documentation of Practice Hours form to faculty after obtaining the Preceptors signature.
- ◇ Provide a copy and remind preceptor to complete the Final Preceptor Evaluation of Student form.

### **Preceptor Responsibilities**

The role of the preceptor is to function as a teacher, mentor, role model and resource person in guiding, directing and supervising a nursing student's practice experiences. The preceptor guides, facilitates, supervises, and monitors the student's practice experiences & facilitates learning in a manner to assume safe practice and to meet the student's learning needs

and goals & objectives as prescribed by a signed written agreement between the preceptor, student and nursing faculty. The preceptor plans and welcomes the engagement of the student in appropriate learning activities that are directed toward student learning objectives. The preceptor facilitates orientation to and the student's understanding of and compliance with policies and the organization of the agency. It is essential that the preceptor provides prompt and ongoing feedback to the student and faculty regarding the student's practice performance. This includes the identification of any problems or concerns. At the conclusion of the course the preceptor provides a written evaluation of the student's practice performance for the term, and an evaluation of the preceptor experience of participation in the course.

In summary during the practice experience the preceptor should:

- ◇ Maintain regular communication with the student, including weekly feedback regarding student performance.
- ◇ Oversee and facilitate the completion of the student's capstone project.
- ◇ Seek input and support from faculty as needed, including promptly sharing any performance concerns.
- ◇ Complete and review with student the Final Preceptor Evaluation of Student form and submit to faculty at the end of the term.
- ◇ Complete the online survey sent from the School of Nursing to evaluate the preceptor's overall course participation experience.

### **Faculty Role & Responsibilities**

Faculty role includes being readily available to the student and the preceptor for consultation and/or collaboration. Faculty are to be involved in planning the student's learning activities and monitoring the student's progress. Faculty are to provide direction, support, and evaluate the student's progress toward meeting course objectives and to assign student grades. Faculty are also to be readily available to the preceptor by telephone and/or e-mail to consult with and assist the preceptor as needed. Faculty respect project planning and agreements between students and preceptors – but retain right for final approval of projects if any concerns are noted. The faculty retains the final responsibility for the student's course evaluation and course instruction.

In summary during the practice experience the faculty should:

- ◇ Review the student's Schedule Plan Calendar & project plan.
- ◇ Address any planning concerns with students and preceptors.
- ◇ Contacts (telephone, meeting, e-mail) preceptor to confirm semester planning near start of term, and near end of term to discuss the evaluation of the student's progress.
- ◇ Evaluation of student assignments and final course grades.

### **School of Nursing Role & Responsibilities**

The role of the School of Nursing is to provide support toward ensuring a productive practice course learning experience on behalf of the student, the preceptor and their agency and the School of Nursing faculty. The University provides a pathway for students to evaluate

courses at the end of each term. The School of Nursing will also seek input from preceptors regarding their course participation experience.

In summary during the practice experience the School of Nursing should:

- ◇ Ensure there are written guidelines that delineate the functions and responsibilities of the practice preceptor, nursing faculty, student, clinical agency & School of Nursing; as discussed within this handbook.
- ◇ Make available administrative representation to manage student, preceptor, faculty and clinical agency concerns that may arise.
- ◇ Provides the student and preceptor with an opportunity to evaluate the course program.

### **Practice Evaluation of Student**

The accelerated nature of the course demands all parties communicate clearly and regularly both informally and formally (e.g., in writing) throughout the course. This is particularly important when any concerns arise, so that they can be promptly addressed. While the faculty is ultimately responsible for determining the student's final grade, the preceptor plays a large role in the faculty's decision about a student's grade. The preceptor completes the Final Preceptor Evaluation of Student form and shares evaluation with the student and submits this form to the course faculty. The final decision about the course grade and communication of that grade to the student is the responsibility of the faculty.

### **Preceptor and Student Clinical Relationship Expectations**

The relationship between a preceptor and student typically progresses through phases. In the first phase, the preceptor is more directive and the student takes a more passive role. The preceptor is more actively involved facilitating the student's orientation to the agency setting, resources, and culture. As the student becomes more confident and competent, the preceptor shifts more toward assisting the student as needed. Throughout the clinical experience, the preceptor assists the student in problem solving and decision making, allowing progressively more autonomy and encouraging increasing responsibility.

### **Communication and Feedback**

**Preceptor and student.** In the preceptor's role it is important to give the student feedback about the student's practice performance. This feedback occurs in two forms: (a) the student should seek from the preceptor and the preceptor should give the student frequent and timely informal feedback on the student's daily performance discussing areas of strength, areas for growth, and reflection on the student's overall project progress; (b) the preceptor is responsible for providing the student and faculty with a written end-of-semester evaluation of the student.

The student is expected to seek regular feedback from the preceptor about his/her performance. The student is responsible for professionally communicating with the preceptor their expectations for specific supports needed from the preceptor and clinical agency. Expressed



need for support does not obligate the preceptor of agency to fulfill such needs but should facilitate clear communication in this regard so all participants positions are clear. Ideally such discussions result in clear expectations and a successfully coordinated clinical project.

**Preceptor and Faculty.** The faculty is available throughout the practice rotation by telephone and e-mail. The preceptor is encouraged to contact the faculty with any questions regarding the practice experience. Should a concern arise related to the practice experience, the preceptor should notify the faculty as soon as possible so the concern can be resolved. Minimally the faculty will contact the preceptor to ensure a clearly communicated plan for the start of the practice experience, during the semester to evaluate the student's progress, and at term end for final evaluation of the student's course progress.

### **Adherence to Approved Practice Work Schedule**

**Student absence and/or schedule deviations.** The student is expected to adhere to the approved schedule for attendance, as demonstrating respect, professionalism, and accountability. It is understood that at rare times unexpected events occur that demand we alter our plans. Ideally at least an hour prior to the start of a shift, or as soon as are reasonably possible depending on the source of the competing demand the student is required to contact the preceptor (or appropriate agency contact who is responsible for notification of the preceptor) to alert them of their absence. The student should also promptly alert faculty to any deviation from the approved schedule. As soon as possible, a plan should be coordinated that is approved by the preceptor and shared with faculty to make up the missed practice time. The student should understand that such deviations create additional work for all parties, and, especially in the case of repeated incidence, such events negatively impact grading. The student should not be enrolling in the course for this commitment until they are able to maintain the level of participation required to achieve the requisite clinical hours. If unexpected events occur during term enrollment, the student may need to withdrawal from the course or seek a University leave as appropriate. The goal is not be punitive to the student. For the successful completion of this practice course, engaged participation is required. Failure to complete the required practice hours is grounds for course failure.

**Preceptor absences and/or schedule change demands.** If a preceptor is ill or has competing demands that impact the students approved schedule, they should notify the student as soon as possible. As previously noted, ideally such notification should occur well prior to scheduled meetings or as soon as possible relative to the challenges presented by the competing demand. The student should coordinate with the preceptor a time to reschedule the practice hours and notify faculty of their schedule deviation and revised plan. The student should be aware that if events demand termination of the scheduled approved course plan with the preceptor, the School of Nursing and University are not liable nor able to offer any guarantee for the student's successful completion of the term. All involved parties should work to seek a successful student outcome, but if course requirements are not met and a new practice plan needs to be developed – related to the unexpected separation of the preceptor – faculty may need to enter an Incomplete (I) for the students grade while the student works to identify an alternative preceptor with whom to complete course requirements.

**Practice Capstone Project Completion.** Final grading is the responsibility of course faculty and shall consider feedback obtained from the preceptor regarding student performance. Consistent with this is the determination of when the capstone project work is completed. The completion of the capstone project is required for completion of the course. Failure to complete the project will yield a failure for the course. It is understood that unexpected events may occur. Such circumstances must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Faculty may determine that the students' performance earns a failing grade (i.e., C- through F letter grades), or that the entry of an Incomplete (I) is merited. In the case of an Incomplete (I) grade entry, it is expected that the student will work without delay to complete required coursework. Failure to complete Incomplete grades within one year may result in the conversion of the Incomplete grade to a failing grade (i.e., C- through F letter grades). Course failure shall be addressed in the Student Handbook and per University policies.

### Schedule Plan Calendar

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Clinical Unit:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Preceptor Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

[illegible]

Preceptor \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Eastern Michigan University  
School of Nursing  
Final Preceptor Evaluation of Student Form**

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Did student adhere to the arranged schedule? Circle One: Yes / No

Optional Additional Comments:

When schedule deviations were required or other concerns presented, did the student communicate with you in a prompt and timely professional manner? Circle One: Yes / No

Optional Additional Comments:

Did the student interact in the practice setting in a professional manner (e.g., includes professional attire, arriving prepared for work, communication with all stakeholders at the clinical site)? Circle One: Yes / No

Optional Additional Comments:

Was the final project completed as proposed? Circle One: Yes / No

Optional Additional Comments:

Practice Preceptor Evaluation Summary Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Preceptor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**It is expected that the Preceptor has shared their evaluation of student performance with the student across the term. Once completed, this form should be returned by the preceptor to the course faculty.**

**Eastern Michigan University  
School of Nursing  
Preceptor Evaluation of Course Experience Form**

We appreciate hearing about your experience as a preceptor, your input helps us improve.

**What was the most positive feature of the experience?**

**What was the least positive feature of the experience?**

**Do you have recommendations to improve the experience?**

**Other comments:**

Preceptor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (optional)

Agency: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for your time in providing feedback on the preceptor experience.*

**Please email to:**

EMU School of Nursing  
Melissa Kachaturoff  
RN to BSN Coordinator  
Email: [mkachatu@emich.edu](mailto:mkachatu@emich.edu)