QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE
FOR SENIOR PRACTICUM PRECEPTORS

The following guide provides information and answers to questions frequently asked by preceptors about the senior practicum course.

How to Prepare for the Preceptor Role: The following suggestions will help you prepare to carry out the functions of a preceptor:
1. Review the course syllabus, evaluation tool and Preceptor Handbook included in your preceptor folder. Please contact the Faculty Advisor if you have any questions.
2. If possible attend a Preceptor Workshop. These day long workshops are offered by the Faculty free-of-charge. Notices of dates and locations are sent to unit managers at all placement sites.
3. Clarify your student’s learning objectives by reviewing the student’s goals and objectives assignment and cover letter. Students will provide these to you approximately before the start of the practicum. This information will help you get to know the student and plan their experience.

How to Orientate Your Student: Preceptors should ensure that students are well oriented to:
- the physical lay-out;
- location of supplies and equipment;
- policies and procedures and how to access them;
- emergency procedures;
- nursing roles and responsibilities;
- organization of the health care team in your area.

How to Organize Your Students Assignments: Patient assignments, responsibilities and expectations for independent functioning should be gradually increased during the placement. The following is recommended in most circumstances: start by having your student assist you with your assignment for a few days;
then, assign the student a small number of your less complex patients;
once they are managing this well, gradually increase the number and the complexity of the patient assignment.

What to Expect of the Student: At approximately the mid way point of the practicum students are expected to manage 50-75% of a typical workload assignment competently, confidently and independently, at the beginning practitioner level. This expectation increases to 75-100% by the end of the practicum. These expectations may vary in special care areas such as Emergency Depts. and L&D units.

Students are expected to follow all institutional policies regarding issues such as dress, conduct, and limitations on student practice. They are also expected to contact their faculty advisor on a regular basis.

How to Evaluate Your Student: Your input into your student’s clinical performance evaluation is crucial not only for the grading process but for the students continued growth and progress. Plan to complete the evaluation form at or near the times indicated in the syllabus.

Daily post-shift debriefings are recommended to provide the student with on-going positive and negative feedback and strategies for improvement. Concerns should promptly be made known to both the student and the faculty advisor.
**Remember** - Your student is performing in a full-time nursing role for the first time and will require many more years to reach your level of experience and expertise.

**Student/Preceptor Relationship:** Preceptors mentor, supervise the student and plan and coordinate their experience. Your most important roles are:

1) learning resource,
2) clinical teacher, when new procedures are introduced or when those previously learned require supervised review;
3) professional role model. The preceptors professional behavior, e.g. dress, whether they introduce themselves to patients, their communication style, how they handle interpersonal conflict, and deal with mistakes can have a profound influence on the student.

**Faculty Advisor/Preceptor Relationship:** Each student is assigned to a faculty advisor who can assist you in planning the student experiences, with evaluations, in identifying problems areas in the student’s performance and in developing and implementing strategies to deal with them. Faculty advisors should be contacted immediately whenever:

1) you identify a pattern or single occurrence of **unsafe behavior** (see syllabus for Unsafe Practice Policy);
2) if you have other repeated concerns regarding the students psychomotor skills, knowledge base, organizational, decision-making, communication abilities, or their professional conduct;
3) if the student becomes ill or injured at work;
4) whenever you have any questions or concerns about the program, the course or the students general preparation; and
5) if the student fails to arrive for an assigned shift without notice.

Please rely on the faculty advisor as an academic resource and support throughout the practicum.

**Other Frequently Asked Questions:**

**How long is the practicum?**
The practicum length is based on a full-time 8 or 12 hour work week for a total of 450 hours. It is approximately 12 weeks in length although some shift rotations will provide the required hours over a shorter period.

**How are preceptors chosen?**
Ideally preceptors are chosen for their clinical expertise, their professional behavior and their interest and willingness to work with students. The College relies on unit managers to identify and recommend nurses for the preceptor role.

Your student’s Faculty Advisor is ________________________________

Phone: (bus) ___________________ (res) ___________________________

E-mail: __________________________________________________________

Best times to contact advisor: _________________________________

*Thank you for your interest in the preceptor role* Consult the course syllabus for additional details.