



University of Colorado
Colorado Springs

Preceptor Handbook

For

Family, Adult/Gerontology & Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Students

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Nursing and Health Sciences
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Table of Contents

Welcome letter.....	3
Important Contact Information.....	4
Mission and Vision of Beth-El College of Nursing.....	5
Overview of Clinical Practicum Experience.....	5
Administrative Requirements.....	6
Preceptor as Educator.....	6
Getting Started.....	7
Evaluation Requirements.....	7
Site Visit Evaluation.....	7
Appendix A.....	8
Appendix B.....	11



Greetings,

Thank you for your willingness to serve as a preceptor. The faculty appreciates your interest in being an integral part of the education of future family, adult-gerontology, and psychiatric nurse practitioners. The University could not provide quality educational experiences for these students without you!

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with guidelines for the preceptor's role with regard to teaching, supervising, and evaluating students.

The expected clinical experiences for students follow the recommendations and requirements of the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), which is the national accreditation body for the College.

If you have any concerns about a student's performance or professional behavior during the course of the semester, please contact me.

We appreciate your participation in this educational experience and want to make this experience as smooth as possible.

Sincerely,

Denise Ostovich

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Graduate Clinical Practicum Coordinator
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IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Please call or email the faculty at the Helen and Arthur E. Johnson Beth-El College of Nursing if you have any questions.

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MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to develop exceptional nurses through innovative and experiential education, scholarship, and service.

VISION STATEMENT

Our vision is to create healthier communities by inspiring excellence through nursing leadership and lifelong learning.

OVERVIEW OF THE CLINICAL PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE

The goal of the nurse practitioner clinical practicum experience is to engage students in varied, quality clinical experiences.

Clinical practicum experiences in the FNP/AGNP options are embedded in primary care courses of 90 or 110 hours each and a final practicum of 360 or 440 hours designed to provide a synthesis experience for the student. Clinical Practicum experiences in the PMHNP option are embedded in psychiatric

mental health courses of 135 or 165 hours each and a final practicum of 225 or 275 hours designed to provide a synthesis experience for the student.

The number of hours required depends on the students' date of admission and cohort, as the college transitions to requiring an increased number of clinical hours, as recommended by the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF).

Students must complete a total of 630 or 770 practicum hours in primary care to meet the requirements for graduation.

The expectation is that students will progress from requiring close supervision in the first practicum experience to seeing a schedule of clients independently with your support by the end of their last clinical class.

ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

- Now that you have agreed to be a preceptor, the student will be required to fill out a clinical-site sheet with specific documentation requirements. This information includes: your name, credentials, and a current email address to complete this process.
- Preceptors are asked to provide a resume if available in accordance with CCNE requirements.
- The student will contact you to mutually agree upon what dates and number of hours for the clinical experience.
- Please clarify with the student the procedure the student should follow to contact you in case of an illness or emergency when they cannot attend clinical.

PRECEPTOR ROLE AS EDUCATOR

A preceptor is one who guides the student's clinical learning experience while acting as a role model. Preceptors help to promote the nurse practitioner role through facilitating student autonomy and promoting self-confidence that leads to clinical competency.

Preceptors help to bridge the gap between didactic education and clinical practice.

- Assists students in goal development
- Clarifies expectations
- Directs the learning experience based on the student's level of experience, recommending appropriate patient encounters
- Models clinical reasoning
- Assesses competency in a real-world environment
- Provides ongoing feedback in a supportive way

If this is your first time precepting or you would just like additional resources and guidance, you can refer to the links below:

GETTING STARTED

- Ask the student what class they are currently taking, their current rotation, and how many clinical hours they have completed so far in the program. This will help you to gauge where they are in regard to their clinical experience.
- Review the letter at the end of the handbook that correlates to the student's rotation and option. You will also be sent this through Medatrax at the beginning of the semester. This should help direct the student's learning (Appendix B).
- Discuss the student's clinical goals for that semester, ensuring they are realistic for the setting in which you practice.
- Explain any expectations you have so that the student is aware of what your requirements are.
- Provide any necessary orientation to the clinic.

EVALUATION REQUIREMENTS

- Preceptors are asked to complete an evaluation at the end of the semester on the student's performance (Appendix A).
- The same form is used for each level of student so that we can track progression in their learning. Please pick the rating that best describes the student's performance.
- Once the student adds a preceptor's name to Medatrax, an email will be sent to the address that you provided with a link and password so that you may access the student's evaluation form through Medatrax, the University's clinical tracking program. If you do not receive this email, reach out to Denise Ostovich at mostovic@uccs.edu. You can also request a paper copy if you prefer not to use the electronic system.

SITE EVALUATIONS

- During the course of the semester, each student will receive at least one site visit. If a student has more than one preceptor, you may not be asked to complete one.
- These visits are completed by phone or onsite.
- The student will coordinate this with you and their site visitor.

APPENDIX A

Preceptor Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Student

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Preceptor Name/Discipline (MD/DO/PA/NP): _____

Clinical Site: _____

Rating Scale

1 = Needs significant improvement: below expected level (Performance is inconsistent, unsafe, incomplete, or requires continuous prompting)

2 = Developing: needs guidance often (Performs tasks with guidance; beginning to integrate knowledge, skills, and judgment)

3 = Competent: occasional guidance (Performs safely and effectively with minimal prompting; demonstrates consistent progress)

4 = Advanced: functions at or near independent level (Performs independently, synthesizes information, anticipates needs, and demonstrates high-level competency for their level)

N/O = Not Observed

1. CLINICAL SKILLS & MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE

Competency	1	2	3	4	N/O
Obtains accurate, relevant patient history	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Performs focused/comprehensive physical exam correctly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Selects appropriate diagnostic tests	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Interprets labs/imaging appropriately	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Develops appropriate differential diagnoses	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Demonstrates sound clinical judgment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments:

2. PATIENT MANAGEMENT

Competency	1	2	3	4	N/O
Develops appropriate treatment plans	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Uses evidence-based guidelines	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Prescribes medications safely	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Recommends appropriate non-drug therapies	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Adjusts treatment plan based on response/results	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Recognizes when to seek help or refer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments:

3. COMMUNICATION & PATIENT INTERACTION

Competency	1	2	3	4	N/O
Communicates clearly using plain language	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Uses open-ended questions and listens effectively	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Explains diagnoses and treatment plans understandably	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Engages patients in shared decision-making	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Shows empathy and professionalism	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments:

4. TEAMWORK & WORKFLOW

Competency	1	2	3	4	N/O
Works effectively with healthcare team	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Communicates patient cases clearly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Accepts feedback and applies it	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Manages time and patient flow appropriately	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments:

5. PROFESSIONALISM

Competency	1	2	3	4	N/O
Arrives prepared and on time	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Maintains patient confidentiality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Practices within level of training	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Demonstrates respect for patients and team	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Shows awareness of cultural/social factors	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments:

6. OVERALL PERFORMANCE

Overall Rating: ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐N/O

Strengths:

Areas for Improvement:

Preceptor Signature:

APPENDIX B

1st ROTATION FNP/AGNP STUDENT

Hello

I wanted to provide some information regarding the expectations of our students in the clinical setting. This is a first-rotation student, which means they have completed 45 hours of a health assessment class, but this is their first opportunity to interview and examine patients.

Suggested Guidelines

- You can ask the student to explain what their goals are for this rotation, what class they are in, and what types of patients they would like to focus on.
- Please be sure to let them know your expectations also.
- Observation/Shadowing should be no more than a day or so.
- Use of artificial intelligence (AI) should be minimal during clinical training, as students must first develop foundational knowledge, clinical reasoning, and independent decision-making skills before relying on AI-supported prompts.
- The student should focus on taking an appropriate history, review of systems, and an exam.
- They should practice presenting patients to you, and you should feel free to give feedback.
- They can chart in the EMR if allowed at your site.
- They should begin to consider differential diagnoses.
- The expectation for a first rotation student is to see an average of one patient per hour
- When completing the preceptor evaluation, please choose from the rating scale the most accurate definition of where the student is performing during this rotation.

While the student is new to this role, they should be taking the initiative to begin learning the fundamentals of transitioning from an RN to the provider role.

Feel free to reach out to me for any additional clarification, and thank you again for taking the time to precept our nurse practitioner student.

Denise Ostovich, MPA, MSN, RN

mostovic@uccs.edu

1st ROTATION PMHNP STUDENT

Hello

I wanted to provide some information regarding the expectations of our students in the clinical setting. This is a first-rotation student, which means they have completed 45 hours of a health assessment class, but this is their first opportunity to interview and examine psychiatric patients.

Suggested Guidelines

- You can ask the student to explain what their goals are for this rotation, what class they are in, and what types of patients they would like to focus on.
- Please be sure to let them know your expectations also.
- Observation only should be no more than a day or so.
- Use of artificial intelligence (AI) should be minimal during clinical training, as students must first develop foundational knowledge, clinical reasoning, and independent decision-making skills before relying on AI-supported prompts.
- The student should focus on taking an appropriate psychiatric assessment (including a MSE) and administer/interpret screening tools (such as PHQ or GAD).
- They should practice presenting assessments to you, and you should feel free to give feedback.
- They can chart in the EMR if allowed at your site.
- They should begin to consider differential diagnoses.
- The expectation for a first rotation student is to continue to observe as well as complete assessments independently as determined appropriate.
- When completing the preceptor evaluation, please choose from the rating scale the most accurate definition of where the student is performing during this rotation.

While the student is new to this role, they should be taking the initiative to begin learning the fundamentals of transitioning from an RN to the provider role.

Feel free to reach out to me for any additional clarification, and thank you again for taking the time to precept our nurse practitioner student.

Denise Ostovich, MPA, MSN, RN

mostovic@uccs.edu

2nd or 3rd ROTATION FNP/AGNP STUDENT

Hello

I wanted to provide some information regarding the expectations of our students in the clinical setting. This is a second or third rotation student, which means they have completed 45 hours of a health assessment class, and 90-220 precepted clinical hours depending on their rotation.

Suggested Guidelines

- You can ask the student to explain what their goals are for this rotation, what class they are in, and what types of patients they would like to focus on.
- Please be sure to let them know your expectations also.
- Observation/Shadowing should be no more than a day or so.
- Use of artificial intelligence (AI) should be minimal during clinical training, as students must first develop foundational knowledge, clinical reasoning, and independent decision-making skills before relying on AI-supported prompts.
- The student should be able to complete a basic history, ROS, and exam.
- They should be presenting patients to you.
- They should be offering differentials, testing, and treatment options. Feel free to offer feedback on missed diagnoses and inappropriate testing/treatment.
- If allowed, they should be charting in the EMR with your feedback.
- The expectation for a second/third rotation is to average seeing a patient every 45 minutes.
- When completing the preceptor evaluation, please choose from the rating scale the most accurate definition of where the student is performing during this rotation.

The student should be taking initiative as they move into the provider role.

Feel free to reach out to me for any additional clarification, and thank you again for taking the time to precept our nurse practitioner student.

Denise Ostovich, MPA, MSN, RN

mostovic@uccs.edu

2nd or 3rd ROTATION PMHNP STUDENT

Hello

I wanted to provide some information regarding the expectations of our students in the clinical setting. This is a second or third rotation student, which means they have completed 45 hours of a health assessment class, and 135-330 precepted clinical hours depending on their rotation.

Suggested Guidelines

- You can ask the student to explain what their goals are for this rotation, what class they are in, and what types of patients they would like to focus on.
- Please be sure to let them know your expectations also.
- Use of artificial intelligence (AI) should be minimal during clinical training, as students must first develop foundational knowledge, clinical reasoning, and independent decision-making skills before relying on AI-supported prompts.
- The student should be able to complete a psychiatric assessment, formulate differential diagnoses, and begin developing treatment plans (to include pharmacological and non-pharmacological). Feel free to offer feedback on missed diagnoses and inappropriate testing/treatment.
- They should be presenting patients to you.
- If allowed, they should be charting in the EMR with your feedback.
- The expectation for a second/third rotation is to see patients independently as deemed appropriate.
- When completing the preceptor evaluation, please choose from the rating scale the most accurate definition of where the student is performing during this rotation.

The student should be taking initiative as they move into the provider role.

Feel free to reach out to me for any additional clarification, and thank you again for taking the time to precept our nurse practitioner student.

Denise Ostovich, MPA, MSN, RN

mostovic@uccs.edu

FNP/AGNP SYNTHESIS STUDENT

Hello

I wanted to provide some information regarding the expectations of our students in the clinical setting. This is a synthesis student, which means they have completed 45 hours of a health assessment class and a minimum of 270 precepted clinical hours.

Suggested Guidelines

- You can ask the student to explain what their goals are for this rotation, and what types of patients they would like to focus on.
- Please be sure to let them know your expectations also.
- Observation/Shadowing should be no more than a day or so (with the exception of a specialty site)
- Use of artificial intelligence (AI) should be minimal during clinical training, as students must first develop foundational knowledge, clinical reasoning, and independent decision-making skills before relying on AI-supported prompts.
- Depending on where the student is regarding their synthesis hours, the student should be able to do an entire visit (history, ROS, exam, diagnostics, diagnosis and treatment/education) by themselves with little input from you.
- They should be charting in a timely manner.
- They should be seeing a patient every 30 minutes as they get closer to graduation.
- When completing the preceptor evaluation, please choose from the rating scale the most accurate definition of where the student is performing during this rotation.

The student should be taking a lot of initiative and functioning close to the level of a new nurse practitioner about to graduate. Please reach out asap if you feel this student is not where they should be in regard to these expectations.

Thank you for precepting,

Denise Ostovich, MPA, MSN, RN

mostovic@uccs.edu

PMHNP SYNTHESIS STUDENT

Hello

I wanted to provide some information regarding the expectations of our students in the clinical setting. This is a synthesis student, which means they have completed 45 hours of a health assessment class, and a minimum of 405 precepted clinical hours.

Suggested Guidelines

- You can ask the student to explain what their goals are for this rotation, and what types of patients they would like to focus on.
- Please be sure to let them know your expectations also.
- Use of artificial intelligence (AI) should be minimal during clinical training, as students must first develop foundational knowledge, clinical reasoning, and independent decision-making skills before relying on AI-supported prompts.
- After the first few clinicals, the student should be able to do an entire visit (psychiatric assessment, diagnosis, and treatment plan) by themselves with little input from you.
- They should be charting in a timely manner.
- They should be seeing patients independently as deemed appropriate and present findings to you.
- When completing the preceptor evaluation, please choose from the rating scale the most accurate definition of where the student is performing during this rotation.

The student should be taking a lot of initiative and functioning close to the level of a new nurse practitioner about to graduate. Please reach out asap if you feel this student is not where they should be in regard to these expectations.

Thank you for precepting,

Denise Ostovich, MPA, MSN, RN

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