



ALLEGANY COLLEGE OF MARYLAND  
DEPARTMENT OF NURSING  
PRECEPTOR HANDBOOK



## **Welcome:**

Dear Colleagues:

As the course faculty for the LPN-RN Online Degree Program, we would like to thank you for sharing your expertise with our students as a preceptor. The overall goal of the preceptorship is to allow students to gain practice experience while working with experts in the field.

The benefits obtained from precepted assignments cannot be underestimated. The use of preceptors is a viable and important part of nursing education. Learning from the experiences of veteran nurses is one of the most effective ways to advance novice nurses' knowledge and clinical expertise to develop the skills needed to become an expert nurse. As a preceptor, you serve a very important function in the education of our students.

The faculty values your service as a preceptor and welcomes your recommendations. The student's clinical faculty will contact you during the semester to discuss the student's performance and progress. If at any time, you need assistance or have questions, please contact either of us. Thank you again for your commitment to nursing education.

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## **ALLEGANY COLLEGE OF MARYLAND**

### **ASSOCIATE DEGREE NURSING PROGRAM**

Allegany College of Maryland is accredited by the Commission of Higher Education, Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, and approved by the Maryland Higher Education Commission.

The Nursing Program is approved by the Maryland Board of Nursing, 4140 Patterson Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland, 21215 and the Pennsylvania Board of Nursing, PO Box 2649, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17105. The Nursing Program is also accredited by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission, 3343 Peachtree Road NE Suite 850, Atlanta, Georgia 30326.

### **HISTORY**

Allegany College of Maryland is a state and county supported community college. The Cumberland Campus is located on a 370-acre campus among the beautiful mountains in rural Allegany County adjacent to the corporate limits of Cumberland, Maryland. The college was established in 1961 and the present modern campus, consisting of nine major buildings, was dedicated in 1971.

Recognizing the need to address a critical shortage of professional nurses, and bedside nurses in particular, in the state of Maryland, the nursing department was awarded a grant through the Nurse Support II program funded by the Maryland Higher Education Commission. The purpose of the awarded project was to create a fully online program for licensed practical nurses (LPNs) to complete the Associate Degree (RN) in nursing in preparation for the NCLEX-RN exam.

The LPN-RN Online program is designed to address the needs of the adult learner and full time nurse employee through a 24/7 asynchronous online delivery model. All didactic courses are taught online. Clinical courses are arranged for local delivery through an approved preceptor in consultation with course faculty. The online program offers the same curriculum as the traditional classroom program and all courses are taught by qualified faculty.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

The Nursing Faculty adheres to the mission and philosophy of Allegany College of Maryland and believes that man is a unique, rational, holistic being. Inherent in this belief is the value of man with basic physical, spiritual, social, and emotional needs that encompass the entire life span. Man interacts with the environment in unique ways and shares with all people the need for dignity, respect, and self-worth. Man has the right to the best possible health care and the right to an active role in this care.

Health can be viewed on a continuum with the point of optimal functioning characterized by physical and psycho-social well-being. The individual's perceptions of health and need deficits determine their point of reference on this continuum. Society exists to protect and provide for the welfare of its members and has a responsibility to provide adequate health care to all of its members. Society meets this obligation through the health care system consisting of various professions, including nursing.

The Nursing Faculty believes that nursing is an art, a science, and an essential dynamic service directed toward promotion and maintenance of health. When there are threats to man's basic needs which could or do produce consequences beyond the individual's capacity to adapt, then nursing intervention is necessary to promote wellness, prevent illness, maintain and/or restore optimal health, or achieve a peaceful and dignified death. Recipients of nursing services include individuals, groups of individuals, families, and/or communities.

## **ORGANIZING FRAMEWORK**

The foundation of the organizing framework of Allegany College of Maryland's Nursing Program incorporates the core values of caring, diversity, ethics, excellence, holism, integrity, and patient-centeredness and is based on two major concepts: 1) Nursing Process and 2) Man's Basic Needs. The core components of professional behaviors, communication, assessment, clinical decision-making, caring interventions, teaching and learning, collaboration, and managing care are essential elements of the curriculum. These core components operationalize the integrating concepts of context and environment, knowledge and science, personal and professional development, quality and safety, relationship-centered care, and teamwork. They serve to guide the students through an increasingly complex application of theory to practice.

## **PRECEPTOR PROGRAM**

The purpose of the clinical preceptor program is to provide the students with a professional role model whose guidance will enhance the attainment of student learning. The preceptor will act as a facilitator and resource person to the student during the clinical learning experiences and will participate in the evaluation of the students learning.

### **OVERVIEW OF AGENCY FUNCTIONS:**

1. Assist students in the selection of appropriate preceptors for the experience.
2. Orient other agency personnel to the preceptor program and the clinical expectations for students as necessary.
3. Retain responsibility to review state background clearances of students seeking to complete clinical hours at the agency.
4. Retain ultimate responsibility for the nursing care for patients.
5. Retain responsibility for the preceptor salary, benefits, and liability.
6. Actively support the preceptor and student during the preceptorship with adequate time, facilities, and experiences as possible.
7. Participate in the evaluation of the preceptorship program experience.

### **FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF NURSING FACULTY:**

1. Develop course specific expectations for preceptors and students as appropriate to the preceptor experience.
2. Conduct an orientation to the philosophy, curriculum, course and clinical objectives and method of evaluation of students for preceptors.
3. Conduct an orientation for the students and preceptors to the preceptor experience.
4. Evaluate the preceptor's performance based on preceptor responsibilities.
5. Provide regular feedback to student and agency/preceptor on progress and development. Is available to answer questions via phone, email, or meetings.
6. Monitor student progress through student/preceptor/faculty conferences and reviewing nursing student assignments and activities.
7. T h e course faculty is ultimately responsible for the overall teaching and evaluation of the student's achievement of course objectives. Faculty collaborates with the preceptor to complete written and verbal student evaluations. The Course Faculty assigns the final grade.
8. Provide recognition to the preceptor for participation.

### **FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT:**

1. Maintains current CPR and licensure.
2. Participate in the selection of a clinical practicum and preceptor, when appropriate.
3. Reads the clinical preceptor orientation packet and reviews course objectives for learning outcomes for clinical experiences.
4. Collaborates with course faculty and clinical preceptor concerning learning goals for the clinical experience.
5. Adheres to the policies and procedures of the clinical facility where clinical preceptor hours are being completed.
6. Demonstrates professional behavior appropriate to the environment of the facility, including protecting the confidentiality of patient information and maintaining high standards of care.

7. Dress in a professional manner consistent with clinical facility guidelines and be clearly identified as being a student.
8. Prepare for each clinical experience and participate in the selection of day to day clinical activities to meet clinical objectives.
9. Maintain accountability for his/her learning activities. Demonstrate self-direction by actively seeking learning experiences and being prepared to accomplish the learning objectives for the experience.
10. Be accountable for nursing actions while in the clinical setting. Performs skills within the guidelines of the facility and for which the student has had didactic preparation. Arrange for preceptor's supervision when performing procedures.
11. Reads and adheres to the Clinical Guidelines and Critical Behaviors for acceptable clinical performance.
12. Share learning experiences in rounds, clinical seminars, and student/preceptor/faculty conferences.
13. Keep open communication with preceptor and faculty.
14. Attend ALL established clinical days/hours or notify clinical preceptor of absence for emergency reasons only, and establish clinical make-up experience. All clinical hours must be completed within the semester as per course timelines.
15. Complete all required course assignments including submission of clinical log.
16. Complete evaluation of preceptor(s).
17. Complete written self-evaluation(s) as outlined in the clinical course.

#### **ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CLINICAL PRECEPTOR AS:**

##### **Facilitator:**

1. Participate in and acknowledge completion of an orientation to the clinical preceptor role.
2. Orient the student to the facility and to the unit as necessary, including facility policies and procedures.
3. Discuss with student the preferred method for communication with clinical preceptor and/or clinic site.
4. Provide scheduled clinical hours for the duration of the clinical experience.
5. Provide a variety of learning experiences with appropriate client populations designed to meet the student's clinical objectives. If available, encourage participation in interdisciplinary team meetings.
6. Assure safe nursing practice by supervising the student's performance of clinical skills.
7. Be available on site for assistance during all patient care activities.
8. Provide patient care in accordance with established, evidence-based nursing practice standards. Allow the student to participate in patient management to a degree appropriate for the level of education.
9. Promptly communicate to the Course Faculty issues of concern or unsafe practice (student behavior, clinical skills, and/or student progression) regarding the student.
10. Demonstrate leadership skills in problem solving, decision making, priority setting, and delegation of responsibility and in being accountable.
11. Assume responsibility for providing a substitute preceptor in the event of an absence.

##### **Evaluator:**

1. Provide the student with feedback on his/her progress, based on preceptor's observation of clinical performance, assessment of achievement of clinical competencies and patient care documentation.

2. Sign the student's clinical hour tracking log each day the student is present.
3. Assist course faculty with the formative evaluation of the student's progress at the completion of the clinical experience. \*\* Preceptors are to complete at least one "Student Clinical Care Experience Evaluation" and if worked with the student more than 24 hours, are asked to complete the "Student Final Clinical Evaluation= Critical Behaviors".
4. Participate in ongoing evaluation of the program.

### **Definitions –**

**Clinical preceptor** – A registered nurse who meets the minimum requirements of this title (as listed in the Preceptor Qualifications in the Online Program Information Book), is not paid as a faculty member by the governing institution, and who directly supervises a student's clinical learning experience. A clinical preceptor facilitates student learning in a manner prescribed by a signed written agreement between the educational institution, preceptor, and affiliate agency (as applicable). Preceptors must sign the '*Preceptor Letter of Agreement*' and be approved by the clinical agency and program coordinator prior to any clinical hours being completed by the student.

### **Benefits of being an ACM Clinical Preceptor**

1. Access to free nursing webinars that may be used toward continuing education credits.
2. You may be eligible to use the preceptor efforts toward the requirements of a clinical ladder at your institution.
3. You may be eligible to use preceptor efforts toward the requirements of ANCC and other accrediting bodies for the accrual of continuing education credit.
4. You will receive recognition by ACM and the Department of Nursing.

### **Legal Considerations**

Preceptors are the direct supervisor of the student and must be available while the student is on duty. Students retain responsibility for their own performance at the level of their training.

Students must not perform acts which the agency does not allow students to perform. They may not take verbal or telephone orders without the registered nurse hearing the conversation and signing for the orders. Students do not count as the second licensed person for medications or procedures which require two licensed people. Students do not count as part of the staff to patient ratio.

**PRECEPTORSHIP** is a one-to-one relationship between an expert nurse and a nursing student in order that the student may learn the roles and responsibilities of clinical nursing in a particular area of practice. This learning occurs as nursing students practice alongside the expert nurse.

Preceptors serve as role models for students. A role model allows students to see and experience what you, the expert, do on a daily basis while encouraging the student to ask questions. Preceptors challenge, guide, and direct.

Students benefit from an in-depth understanding of the role through exposure to everyday practice with its satisfactions and frustrations; increased ability to problem solve; and feelings of satisfaction resulting from professional nurturance. Preceptors benefit from the opportunity to share knowledge and facilitate the growth of an enthusiastic learner. Preceptors may find that the preceptor role brings status, recognition of expert practice, increased job satisfaction, increased learning, and advancement of their practice.



As a guide in the clinical practice setting, preceptors allow students to perform direct patient activities under their supervision. The preceptor and the student decide on the specific clinical experiences selected to meet learning objectives. This may involve caring for patients at different acuity levels, patients requiring specific monitoring interventions, or teaching of individuals within the agency. Preceptors should work closely with the student to provide interesting or challenging opportunities to learn.

Preceptors should consider that they are working with adult learners. The characteristics of an adult learner are:

- Adults prefer to know why they need to learn something before undertaking to learn it.
- Adults will invest considerable energy to something that they want to learn and perceived value in learning.
- Adult learners wish to be treated with respect and are capable of self-direction.
- Adults bring with them a volume of past experience, including experiences with learning. These experiences can be either/both positive or negative.
- Adults want to learn materials that have practical application.

Please do not hesitate to call us if there are concerns or issues regarding the student's experience. We hope that you enjoy this time and find that the experience is well worth the effort for you and your patients.

## **Clinical Guidelines:**

**1. Clinical Course Objectives** – are located for each course on the Preceptor Website on the Clinical Course Materials page.

### **2. Evaluations:**

*a) Critical Behaviors– Guidelines for Student Evaluation* are the expected behaviors of students for each respective clinical course. Students are to show progression from one clinical course to the next. Students in the LPN-RN Online program are expected to meet the guidelines under **Nursing 150 – Basic Medical-Surgical; Nursing 206- Mental Health; Nursing 205 -Women's Health & Pediatrics; and Nursing 215 – Advanced Medical-Surgical respectively.**

*b) Preceptors are to complete at least one "Student Clinical Care Experience" and the "Student Clinical Evaluation= Critical Behaviors" for the student.*

*c) Students and preceptors should read the guidelines to be cognizant of expected outcomes while completing clinical course hours and experiences. The Critical Behaviors, Critical Behavior Evaluation Tool, and the Student Clinical Care Experience forms are posted in the Preceptor Orientation website "LPN-RN Clinical Information" and the clinical file folders in each clinical course for student access.*

**2. Unsafe Clinical Practice:** Any act of omission or commission which may result in harm to the patient is considered unsafe clinical practice. During the clinical practicum, unsafe clinical practice is defined as any one of the following:

When the student:

- a. Violates or threatens the physical, psychological, microbiological, chemical, or thermal safety of the patient.
- b. Violates previously mastered principles/learning objectives in carrying out nursing care skills and/or delegated medical functions.
- c. Assumes inappropriate independence in action or decisions.
- d. Does not adhere to current CDC guidelines for infection control.
- e. Fails to recognize own limitations, incompetence, and/or legal responsibilities.
- f. Fails to accept moral and legal responsibility for his/her own actions thereby violating professional integrity as expressed in the Code for Nurses.
- g. Arrives at clinical settings in an impaired condition as determined by the clinical instructor.

Failure to comply with any of the above requirements may result in an unexcused clinical and/or negative clinical evaluation.

### **3. Student**

#### **Accountability:**

A. Students may **NOT**:

- a. Take verbal or telephone orders from physicians, midwives or physician assistants
- b. Transcribe or note physician, midwife orders or those from a physician assistant
- c. Witness operative or procedural permits
- d. Perform any skill that violates the Nurse Practice Act, even if under a physician's supervision (i.e.: intubation of a client)
- e. Initiate or adjust IV Pitocin drips during the labor process
- f. Initiate IV therapy in the nursery
- g. Take possession of the narcotic keys
- h. Initiate infusion of blood products

B. Students **MUST** be supervised by the preceptor when:

- a. performing any IV related procedures (including IV initiation, hanging solutions or changing tubing, flushes, IVPB, IVP)
- b. signing out controlled substances
- c. performing an unfamiliar skill
- d. administering medications/blood transfusions

If present during a code, student may:

- a. perform CPR except on a newborn
- b. document code procedures
- c. NOT administer drugs or perform skills other than basic CPR

### **C. Clinical Attendance:**

If the student knows that he/she will be late or absent to clinical, the student must notify the assigned clinical unit, the preceptor, and/or the clinical instructor (depending on the facility and your clinical instructor) at least sixty (60) minutes prior to the beginning of the shift.

The student may be sent home with an unexcused absence from clinical for four primary reasons (not exclusive):

- a. tardiness
- b. unprepared for patient care (written or otherwise)
- c. violation of dress code
- d. violation of safe patient care

Failure to comply with the above requirements may result in an unexcused clinical absence and/or negative clinical evaluation.

Students must Satisfactorily complete all required hours associated with clinical for the course and are responsible to obtain preceptor signatures and submit their documents on time to faculty.

**Allegany College of Maryland  
Department of Nursing**

**CLINICAL EXPERIENCE DOCUMENTATION (OF HOURS)**

A record is to be kept of each scheduled time period spent with the preceptor. It is to be signed by the preceptor and initialed by the student upon completion of each shift. It must be submitted along with the final clinical papers for the course at the end of the semester.

In the following table, record the student's clinical experience hours.

Course Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>DATE</b>	<b>Clinical Hours</b> List actual time. Ex. 0700-1100	<b>Activities Completed</b>	<b>Preceptor's Signature</b>	<b>Student's Initials</b>
<b>TOTAL HOURS</b>				

I verify \_\_\_\_\_ (student) has completed the above clinical experience hours under my supervision.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Preceptor's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Faculty Validation of Cumulative Course Hours \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_