Clinical Nurse Leader Option

Master of Nursing
Graduate Degree Program

Clinical Manual
2012-2013

Reviewed June, 2012
Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education
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Introduction

This manual has been designed to assist CNL graduate students with their clinical experience. Detailed within this manual are student responsibilities related to:

1) Requesting clinical placements
2) Establishing clinical objectives
3) Selecting mentors / preceptors and scheduling clinical hours
4) Preparing for the clinical practicum
5) Documenting clinical activities
6) Evaluating mentors / preceptors

Clinical Nurse Leader Major Role Functions

- **Clinician**: designer/coordinator/integrator/evaluator of care to individuals, families, groups, communities, and populations; able to understand the rationale for care and competently deliver this care to an increasingly complex and diverse population in multiple environments. The CNL provides care at the point of care to individuals across the lifespan with particular emphasis on health promotion and risk reduction services.

- **Outcomes Manager**: synthesizes data, information and knowledge to evaluate and achieve optimal client outcomes.

- **Client Advocate**: adept at ensuring that clients, families and communities are well-informed and included in care planning and is an informed leader for improving care. The CNL also serves as an advocate for the profession and the interdisciplinary health care team.

- **Educator**: uses appropriate teaching principles and strategies as well as current information, materials and technologies to teach clients, groups and other health care professionals under their supervision.

- **Information Manager**: able to use information systems and technology that put knowledge at the point of care to improve health care outcomes.

- **Systems Analyst/Risk Anticipator**: able to participate in systems review to improve quality of client care delivery and at the individual level to critically evaluate and anticipate risks to client safety with the aim of preventing medical error.

- **Team Manager**: able to properly delegate and manage the nursing team resources (human and fiscal) and serve as a leader and partner in the interdisciplinary health care team.

- **Member of a Profession**: accountable for the ongoing acquisition of knowledge and skills to effect change in health care practice and outcomes and in the profession.

- **Lifelong Learner**: recognizes the need for and actively pursues new knowledge and skills as one’s role and needs of the health care system evolve.
Goal of the Clinical Practicum

The goal of the clinical practicum is to prepare students for practice as Clinical Nurse Leaders. Together with the didactic portion of the program of study, the clinical practicum allows students the opportunity to develop beginning level competencies.

Persons Involved in the Clinical Practicum

The clinical practicum has at its foundation a partnership among the student, mentor / preceptor and course faculty.

Course Faculty—Faculty member who has overall responsibility for the graduate course and who supervises clinical experiences for CNL students. Faculty are excellent resources and will assist students to develop their clinical plan and select clinical sites, and mentors / preceptors.

Mentor / Preceptor—an experienced clinician and leader who agrees to provide clinical experiences for students. Generally speaking, mentors provide short-term clinical experiences while preceptors work with students over a longer period of time. Each mentor / preceptor holds the appropriate educational preparation and/or certification required for his/her position.

Who Can Act as a Mentor / Preceptor?

Clinical Nurse Leader

- Actively involved in clinical practice.
- Nationally certified as a CNL (optional).
- Holds a master's degree with at least 1 year of clinical experience.

Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRN): Nurse Practitioner / Nurse Midwife / Clinical Nurse Specialist / Nurse Anesthetist

- Actively involved in clinical practice.
- Nationally certified as a CNP, CNM, CNS, or CRNA
- Holds master’s degree with at least 1 year of clinical experience or educated / certified as a CNP, CNM, CNS and/or CRNA with at least 1 year of clinical experience.
- Recognized as an APRN in Montana or recognized as APRN meeting federal guidelines. [Federal facility requirements for VA clinics, military, US Public Health Service Corps (USPHSC), etc]

Nurse Educator / Expert Clinician / Nurse Manager

- Actively involved in clinical practice.
- Recognized for their expertise through licensure, national certification, education, or reputation.
• Holds a bachelor’s, masters, and/or doctorate degree with at least one year of experience in their role.

Administrators / Outcomes Managers / Risk Managers
• Actively involved in clinical practice / health care.
• Recognized for their expertise through licensure, national certification, education, or reputation.
• Holds a bachelor’s, master’s, and/or doctorate degree with at least one year experience in their role.

Physicians
• Actively involved in clinical practice.
• Board certification preferred.
• Licensed in Montana as MD / DO or recognized as physician by federal guidelines.

Responsibilities and Accountabilities of the Graduate Student

Clinical Placement

1. Complete the Clinical Self-Evaluation Tool and submit to the clinical faculty assigned prior to the start of the semester (Appendix A).

2. Review clinical objectives for the course (course syllabus).

3. Develop individual clinical learning objectives
   a) Clinical objectives should be congruent and complement the course objectives and reflect the level of competency the student would like to achieve by the end of the semester, e.g., minimal competency, proficient, etc.

4. Using the self-evaluation and individual learning objectives, develop a plan to meet the clinical objectives

5. Meet with the faculty instructor.
   a) Discuss your self-evaluation, individual learning objectives, clinical plan, ideas for clinical sites, and potential mentors / preceptors.
   b) Gain approval for your clinical plan.
   c) Complete the Confidentiality Agreement Form (Appendix B). Fax the form to the CNL Administrative Assistant at 406-243-5745, who will notify the course faculty.

6. Following approval of your plan, contact potential mentors / preceptors. You will be instructed on how to contact the preceptor by the clinical faculty. DO NOT contact the preceptor prior to approval of the clinical faculty.
Required Forms and Agreements

1. An agreement is required between MSU College of Nursing (CON) and each agency where a student has a clinical practicum.
   
a) Faculty will make sure the agency agreement is sent to your mentor / preceptor prior to your first clinical rotation.
   
b) No student may attend clinical until the signed agency agreement is returned to the CNL administrative assistant who will notify the course faculty.

2. Students must have a current compliance card from the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education before entering the clinical setting.

3. Faculty will email the course syllabus and clinical evaluation tool to the preceptor.

4. Students must complete and submit all required activities / forms specifically requested by the agency.

5. Students will document their clinical hours throughout the semester and submit a completed clinical evaluation form per instructions in the course syllabus.

6. Students complete an evaluation of the mentor / preceptor at the end of clinical and return the form to clinical faculty (Appendix C).

Scheduling of Clinical Hours

Clinical practicum hours are scheduled at the convenience and availability of the mentor / preceptor.

1. Students, faculty, and mentors / preceptors must agree on the days and times that the student will be in the clinical agency prior to beginning the practicum experience.

2. NRSG 507 and NRSG 509 require 45 total clinical hours or approximately 3 clinical hours per week.

3. NRGS 508 requires a minimum 360 total clinical hours or approximately 28 clinical hours per week.

Clinical Hours

Documentation of clinical hours is required for satisfactory completion of each clinical course. It is the student’s responsibility to maintain documentation of clinical hours. If the student is in a course that is not limited to one mentor / preceptor but includes a broad scope of practice activities, the student should seek faculty counsel. A total of 450 clinical hours must be verified prior to taking the CNL exam for national certification.
Attendance / Absences

The student must complete the required clinical hours for each course to satisfactorily meet the course objectives.

1. Carefully plan clinical hours with your mentor / preceptor to avoid conflicts.

2. It is the student’s responsibility to monitor and record the number of clinical hours.

3. Confirm the procedure of notifying the mentor / preceptor and faculty for unexpected absences when developing the clinical plan for the semester.

4. When unable to attend clinical on the scheduled day, the student must immediately notify the mentor / preceptor. Failure to notify the mentor / preceptor as negotiated prior to the beginning of the scheduled clinical day is unacceptable and may place the student and clinical placement in jeopardy.

5. Work with faculty member and mentor / preceptor to reschedule missed hours and opportunities.
   a) Lost clinical hours due to absences must be completed before the end of the semester with the approval of faculty and at the convenience of the mentor / preceptor.
   b) Keep in mind that rescheduling of missed clinical hours / extension of the clinical period with the preceptor cannot be assumed.

Professional Dress and Behavior

• Students represent Montana State University, the College of Nursing, and the graduate program and must present themselves as ambassadors.

• Reports of unprofessional behavior will result in the student being counseled subject to review by the College of Nursing Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education.

• Students should be dressed professionally (site-specific attire) and wear an approved MSU College of Nursing student ID badge.

• Students are encouraged to send their mentor / preceptor a thank you note.

Mentor / Preceptor Evaluation of the Student

Mentors / preceptors provide the student and clinical faculty with formative and summative evaluative data.

1. Formative evaluation is the ongoing evaluation provided over the course of the semester. Formative evaluation is valuable to students because feedback can build the student’s confidence, as well as identify areas needing improvement.
2. Summative evaluation is the final or summary evaluation of the student’s performance at the end of clinical practicum. The preceptor will document the summative evaluation on the form provided by the graduate program.

3. Faculty will collect a final evaluation of the student – Mentor/Preceptor Short Evaluation of Student form (Appendix D).

**Certification as a Clinical Nurse Leader**

The expectation is that, graduates of the CNL program will take the Clinical Nurse Leader Certification Examination. Prior to submitting the exam application, it is essential that the graduate adhere to the policies and procedures related to the application process and examination. This information is found at: [http://www.aacn.nche.edu/cnl/cnl-certification/pdf/ExamHndbk.pdf](http://www.aacn.nche.edu/cnl/cnl-certification/pdf/ExamHndbk.pdf). Note: CNL Program Director in the MSU College of Nursing is the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education.

**Purpose and Benefits of CNL Certification**

Certification has national precedence and respect and adheres to the principles of regulation promulgated by the International Council of Nursing and adopted by major nursing organizations and regulators. CNL certification provides individuals an opportunity to undertake self-assessment of one’s individual competence. In addition, certification provides an opportunity for individuals to reflect on one’s practice and establish goals for ongoing professional development and growth.

**Why seek certification**

Certification is voluntary and serves to:

- Demonstrate a commitment to the profession
- Indicate that an individual has acquired knowledge beyond RN licensure
- Recognize that an individual has demonstrated standards and knowledge of the profession
- Assure the public that the CNL is well prepared for safe practice

**Additional Resources**

**College of Nursing CNL Faculty Members**

- Dr. Wade Hill—406-994-4011; whill@montana.edu
- Dr. Elizabeth Kinion – 406- 334-2725; ekinion@montana.edu
- Dr. Sandy Kuntz– 406-243-2551; skuntz@montana.edu
- Dr. Linda Torma – 406-243-2599; ltorma@montana.edu
- Dr. Charlene “Charlie” Winters – 406-243-4608; winters@montana.edu (CNL Grant Project Director)
Internet Resources


• American Association of Colleges of Nursing [http://www.aacn.nche.edu/CNL/index.htm](http://www.aacn.nche.edu/CNL/index.htm)

• American Association of Critical Care Nurses [http://www.aacn.org/](http://www.aacn.org/)


• American Nurses Credentialing Center [http://www.nursecredentialing.org/](http://www.nursecredentialing.org/)

• Medline [http://medline.com/](http://medline.com/)


• Montana State University-Bozeman College of Nursing [http://www.montana.edu/nursing/](http://www.montana.edu/nursing/)


• Nurse Practitioner Resources [http://nurseweb.ucsf.edu/www/arwwebpg.htm](http://nurseweb.ucsf.edu/www/arwwebpg.htm)


• Sigma Theta Tau International [http://www.nursingsociety.org/](http://www.nursingsociety.org/)

• Western Institute of Nursing [http://www.winursing.org/](http://www.winursing.org/)