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Overview

Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL) 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:** ensures that clients, families and communities are well-informed and included in care planning. Serve as 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 the role and needs of the healthcare system evolve.

NRSG 575 Professional Paper/Project

The professional paper/project provides a means for you to demonstrate mastery of graduate level competencies through application of course content. The topic must be mutually agreed upon by you, your major committee chair/academic advisor, and members of your graduate committee. See MN Professional Project Handbook for more details.

Clinical Practica

The goal of the clinical practica is to prepare you for practice as Clinical Nurse Leaders.
Persons Involved in the Clinical Practica

The clinical practica have at their foundation a partnership among you (the student), course faculty, and mentor/preceptor.

**Course Faculty** — A faculty member who has overall responsibility for the graduate course and who supervises clinical experiences for CNL students. Faculty will assist you to develop your clinical plan and select clinical sites and mentors/preceptors.

**Mentor / Preceptor** — An experienced clinician and leader who agrees to provide clinical practica for you and who will evaluate your performance throughout the clinical experience. Generally speaking, mentors provide short-term clinical practica while preceptors work with students over a longer period of time. Each mentor / preceptor must have the appropriate educational preparation and/or hold certification required for his/her position. Mentors / preceptors will provide you and course faculty with formative and summative evaluative data.

1. Formative evaluation is the ongoing evaluation provided over the course of the semester.
2. Summative evaluation is the final or summary evaluation of your performance at the end of clinical practica.
3. The preceptor will complete a final evaluation of your clinical performance.

**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 Nurse (APRN): Nurse Practitioner, Nurse Midwife, Clinical Nurse Specialist, Nurse Anesthetist**
- Actively involved in clinical practice.
- Nationally certified as a CNP, CNM, CNS, or CRNA
- Has a 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)].
- Understands the CNL role.

**Nurse Educator, Expert Clinician, Nurse Manager**
- Actively involved in clinical practice and patient education.
• Expertise acquired through licensure, national certification, education, or reputation.
• Has a bachelor’s, master’s, and/or doctorate degree with at least one year of experience in their role.
• Understands the CNL role.

Administrators, Outcomes Managers, Risk Managers
• Actively involved in clinical practice / health care.
• Expertise acquired through licensure, national certification, education, or reputation.
• Has a bachelor’s, master’s, and/or doctorate degree with at least one year experience in their role.
• Understands the CNL role.

Physicians
• Actively involved in clinical practice.
• Board certified (preferred).
• Licensed as MD / DO or recognized as physician by federal guidelines.
• Understands the CNL role.

Responsibilities and Accountabilities Related To Clinical Placement For Clinical Practica

NRSG 509 (a 2 credit clinical course) and NRSG 508 (a 7 credit clinical course):

1. Review the course syllabus.
2. Develop individual clinical learning objectives in collaboration with course faculty.  
   a) Clinical objectives must be congruent with the course objectives, and must be approved by the faculty prior to clinical experience.
3. Prior to the beginning of the semester or early in the semester meet with the course faculty.  
   a) Discuss self-evaluation, individual learning objectives, a clinical plan, ideas for clinical sites, and potential mentors / preceptors.  
   b) Gain faculty approval for clinical plan, and permission to contact a clinical preceptor.  
      You will be instructed on how to contact the preceptor by course faculty. Please do not contact the preceptor prior to receiving approval from the course faculty.  
   c) Complete the Confidentiality Agreement Form (Appendix A). Fax the form to the course faculty. The FAX number will be in the course syllabus.  
   d) At the end of the semester discuss final clinical evaluation(s) with course faculty.

Required Forms and Agreements - Prior to Clinical Practica.

1. An agreement is required between MSU College of Nursing (CoN) and each agency prior to your clinical practicum.
a) The faculty will initiate a Clinical Agreement for the Clinical Agency. Faculty will notify you if the anticipated clinical agency agreement is not on file in the CoN.

b) Students may not attend clinical until the course instructor has notified them that a signed agency agreement is on file with the CoN.

2. Students must have a current Compliance Card from the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education prior to beginning the clinical practicum.

3. Faculty will assure that the preceptor receives the course syllabus and the preceptor clinical evaluation tool (Mentor/Preceptor Short Evaluation of Student form, Appendix C).

4. Prior to beginning the clinical practicum you must complete and submit all required activities / forms specifically requested by the agency.

Travel To Clinical Sites

MSU has an extensive policy on student travel (which includes travel to sites in the town where you live). The Associate Dean is required to:

- maintain a list of emergency contacts for each CNL student (provided by faculty)
- have a copy of each student’s clinical schedule for each semester (provided by faculty)

Link to full policy: http://www.montana.edu/policy/student_trips/

Clinical Hours

Clinical hours are identified in the course syllabus and are scheduled at the convenience and availability of the mentor / preceptor.

1. You, your faculty, and your mentors / preceptors must agree on the days and times that you will be in the clinical agency prior to beginning the practica experiences.

2. NRSG 509 requires 90 total clinical hours per course or approximately 6 clinical hours per week per course.

3. NRGS 508 requires a minimum 315 total clinical hours or approximately 21 clinical hours per week.

4. Documentation of clinical hours is required for satisfactory completion of each clinical course. You are responsible for documenting your clinical hours throughout the semester and submitting evaluation materials per instructions in the course syllabus. Clinical hours must be approved by faculty. A total of 405 clinical hours must be documented and verified by the faculty prior to taking the CNL exam for national certification.
Attendance / Absences

To receive a satisfactory grade for a clinical course you must complete the required clinical hours for each course within the duration of the course. You shall:

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

2. Monitor and record the number of clinical hours.

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

4. Notify your mentor / preceptor immediately when unable to attend clinical. Failure to notify the mentor / preceptor as negotiated prior to the beginning of the scheduled clinical day is unacceptable and may place you and clinical placement in jeopardy.

5. Collaborate with your faculty member and mentor / preceptor to reschedule missed hours and opportunities.
   a) Missed clinical hours due to absences must be approved by your faculty and completed before the end of the semester.
   b) Rescheduling missed clinical hours or extension of the clinical time period cannot be assumed.

Professional Dress and Behavior

- As a graduate student in the College of Nursing you represent and are an ambassador for Montana State University, the College, and the Graduate Program.

- Professional dress and site specific attire are required. You will wear a MSU College of Nursing graduate student ID badge (provided at Orientation).

- Reports of unprofessional behavior will result in review by the faculty and discussion with you and the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education in the College of Nursing.

Required Forms and Evaluations – Following Clinical Practica:

You will submit:

1. Evaluation of Mentor/Preceptor by Student form (Appendix B)
2. Mentor/Preceptor Short Evaluation of Student (Appendix C)
3. Written Documentation of clinical hours per course syllabus
4. Self-evaluation per course syllabus
Certification as a Clinical Nurse Leader

Graduates who have earned the MN degree are encouraged to take the Clinical Nurse Leader Certification Examination. Prior to submitting the exam application, it is essential that you 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. Note: The CNL Program Director is Donna A. Williams, PhD, Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education, College of Nursing, Montana State University.

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 you with an opportunity to undertake self-assessment of your individual competence. In addition, certification provides an opportunity for you to reflect on your 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 you have acquired knowledge beyond RN licensure
- Recognize that you have demonstrated standards and knowledge of the profession
- Assure the public that you, as a CNL, are well prepared for safe practice
- Promote life-long learning through recertification requirements (AACN Clinical Nurse Leader Certification). http://www.aacn.nche.edu/cnl
Appendix A

College of Nursing
Montana State University
Clinical Nursing Course Confidentiality Agreement

Students enrolled in the College of Nursing recognize the importance of protection of confidential information about patients and their families and of the operations of agencies where students are placed for clinical experiences. It is the obligation of every student to protect and maintain this confidentiality. All patient information stored via paper or computer system is considered confidential. It is the ethical and legal responsibility of all students to maintain and comply with all confidentiality requirements of the agencies used for clinical experiences.

As a student at Montana State University College of Nursing, I agree to the following:
1. I will protect the confidentiality of all patient, family and clinical agency information.
2. I will not release unauthorized information to any source.
3. I will not access or attempt to access information other than that information that I have authorized access to and need to know in order to complete my assignment as a student.
4. I will report breaches of this confidentiality agreement by others to my course faculty instructor for NRSG ______. I understand that failure to report breaches is an ethical violation and subjects me to disciplinary action.
5. I will not put patient/family/clinical agency identifying information on any written work completed for any assignment.
6. I will not put patient/family/clinical agency identifying information on any stored information (disk or hard drive) on my own personal computer or on any other public or private computer.

____________________________________
Signature/Date

____________________________________
Printed Name

This form will be placed in my academic file; I was given a copy of this agreement for my records.
Appendix B

Montana State University College of Nursing
Evaluation of Mentor/Preceptor by Student

Mentor/Preceptor Name____________________ Course ___________

Agency____________________________________ Date_____________

Student or Faculty Evaluator____________________________________

The individual listed above has served as a mentor/preceptor for a MSU nursing student. As the student evaluator or faculty evaluator your observations of this individual's skills as a preceptor would be greatly valued. Please rate the individual on how frequently she/he demonstrates the following characteristics.

**RATING SCALE**

1 = Unsatisfactory  2 = Needs Improvement  3 = Average  4 = Above Average  5 = Excellent

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<tr>
<th>CHARACTERISTIC</th>
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<th>COMMENTS</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Role Model</strong> 1. Provides patient care according to professional practice standards</td>
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<td>2. Acts according to established agency and unit policies and procedures</td>
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<td>3. Maintains mature and effective working relationships with members of the health care team</td>
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<td>4. Uses resources effectively and appropriately</td>
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<td>5. Demonstrates effective verbal and written communication</td>
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<td>6. Demonstrates leadership skills and critical thinking</td>
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<td>7. Priority setting</td>
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<td>8. Work delegation</td>
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<td>9. Work organization</td>
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<td>10. Ethical considerations for practice decisions</td>
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11. Provider of high quality cost effective care

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<td>Facilitator of Socialization</td>
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<td>12. Recognizes characteristics that may be new to the student</td>
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<td>13. Contrasts the value systems of the work setting with those of MSU’s College of Nursing (blending the academic with the real world)</td>
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<td>Educator</td>
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<td>14. Identifies mutually agreed upon set of learning needs with the student</td>
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<td>15. Paces clinical experience to balance patient, agency, and student’s needs</td>
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<td>16. Formulates mutually acceptable learning style preferences</td>
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<td>17. Determines the student’s clinical performance ability through both formative and summative evaluation</td>
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<td>18. Provides feedback and critique of documentation</td>
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Additional Comments:

Signature (Student or Faculty)
Appendix C

Master of Nursing Clinical Nurse Leader Program
Mentor/Preceptor Short Evaluation of Student

Preceptor Name ____________________________ Student ____________________________
Agency ___________________________________ Date ___________________________________

Please assist with the evaluation of the clinical nurse leader student by completing this brief evaluation tool using the following guide:

- NA = cannot evaluate, 1 = unsatisfactory, 2 = average, 3 = above average, 4 = excellent

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<tr>
<th>Clinician</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Plans and delegates care for clients with multiple chronic health problems, identifies nursing interventions to impact outcomes of care</td>
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<td>• Using an existing database, evaluates aggregate care outcomes for a designated microsystem with focus on specific nursing interventions</td>
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<td>• Contributes to interdisciplinary plans of care based on best practice guidelines and evidence-based practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Synthesizes data, information and knowledge to evaluate and achieve optimal client and care environment outcomes</td>
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<td>• Effects change through advocacy for the profession, interdisciplinary health care team and the client</td>
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<td>• Communicates effectively to achieve quality client outcomes and lateral integration of care for a cohort of clients</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Uses appropriate teaching/learning principles and strategies as well as current information, materials and technologies to facilitate learning of clients, groups and other health care professionals</td>
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<td>• Uses information systems and technology at the point of care to improve health care outcomes</td>
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<th>Systems Analyst/Risk Anticipator</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Participates in systems review to critically evaluate and anticipate risks to client safety to improve quality of client care delivery and prevent medical errors</td>
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<th>Team Manager</th>
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<td>• Properly delegates and utilizes the nursing team resources (human and fiscal)</td>
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<td>• Serves as a leader and partner in the interdisciplinary health care team</td>
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<td>• Identifies clinical and cost outcomes that improve safety, effectiveness, timeliness, efficiency, quality, and the degree to which they are client-centered</td>
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<td>• Actively pursues new knowledge and skills as the CNL role, needs of clients and health care systems evolve</td>
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<td>• Incorporates professional nursing standards and accountability into practice.</td>
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Thank you for your support of advanced nursing education