



DEPARTMENT OF NURSING

**RN to BSN Completion Program  
Practicum Handbook:**

**NSG 442A**

**NSG 444A**

**NSG 447A**

**2020-2021**

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## **WELCOME!**

The faculty and staff at National University Department of Nursing are pleased to welcome you as a mentor for students in the RN-BSN Completion Program.

The RN-BSN Completion Program is designed to prepare graduates to provide excellent care with compassion to patients and to be leaders in their respective professions. Upon completion of the program, students will be eligible to obtain a Public Health Certificate. Graduates will be prepared to improve health care outcomes through excellent leadership, quality improvement project experience and application of evidence-based practice.

This handbook provides information about the RN-BSN Completion Program's Practicum Courses and important components of being a mentor. Students are required to refer and comply with all university policies found in the University Catalog and RN-BSN Program Student Handbook. Please note that policies in the Student Handbook are specific to the program. All policies and procedures are subject to change. For questions and clarifications about RN-BSN Completion Program policies and procedures, please feel free to contact either:

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## **PREAMBLE**

According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN, 2012) practice experiences are embedded in baccalaureate nursing programs to prepare students to care for a variety of patients across the lifespan and across the continuum of care. Practice experiences refer to experiential learning in any setting where health care is delivered, or health is influenced that allow for and require the student to integrate new practice related knowledge and skills. Practice experiences include activities that support health and/or provide care, interacting with a variety of providers and/or with patients and cannot be completed solely by a student in isolation. “Patients” are defined as individuals, families, groups, communities, or populations.

Practice experiences to transition the nursing student’s competencies to the baccalaureate level of proficiency include organization/systems understanding, leadership development, evidence-based practice, information management and integration of technologies into practice, interprofessional collaboration and communication, clinical prevention and population health, comprehensive assessment, and quality improvement strategies. Didactic and practice experiences should be provided to all baccalaureate students, including those in RN to BSN programs, in order for the student to achieve these expected skills and knowledge and to integrate them into one’s practice.

## **REQUIRED PRACTICUM COURSES**

The National University RN to BSN Completion Program curriculum includes the following **three** required practicum courses:

### **1. Nursing Leadership and Management Practicum (NSG 442A)**

This 8-week course requires 90 hours of **mentor**/faculty guided practice experience that may include activities that support health and/or improve clinical outcomes.

### **2. Community and Population Based Nursing Lab/Practicum (NSG 444A)**

This 8-week course requires 90 hours of faculty guided experience in a community setting. Students are required to implement a community health project and evaluate the results of the project during the course.

### **3. Quality Improvement Practicum (NSG 447A)**

This 8-week course requires 135 hours of a **mentor**/faculty guided experience where students collaborate on a quality improvement project.

#### **NOTE:**

- 1. IT IS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED THAT STUDENTS BEGIN LOOKING FOR A MENTOR PRIOR TO THE BEGINNING OF THE LEADERSHIP AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PRACTICUM COURSES. QUESTIONS REGARDING PRACTICUMS MAY BE SENT TO THE LEAD FACULTY OF THE COURSE LISTED ABOVE.***

## **THE MENTOR ROLE**

Mentorship is a coach/guidance *role* in which a registered nurse is paired for a specific time period with a learner (student) in order to assist and support learning experiences that are designed and directed by a faculty member. A mentor is an identified experienced practitioner who provides transitional role support and learning experiences within a collegial relationship with a student (also called a mentee) while continuing to perform some or all of the other responsibilities of their current employment position

## **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Select a mentor who meets the following requirements:
  - a. BSN (minimum requirement), MSN or doctorate in nursing or related field is preferred.
  - b. Relevant professional experience and a role in the facility where the project(s) will take place is ideal.
  - c. Ability to create opportunities for student to meet Course Learning Outcomes.
  - d. Ability to facilitate effective student self-reflection as a learning process.
  - e. A fundamental understanding of student learning outcomes assessment and the ability to assess student learning in a practice environment.
  - f. Ability to assess and manage the professional environment to ensure safe and effective performance.
  - g. Provide guidance and supervision for the student during practicum activities.
  - h. Use the NU course instructor as a resource, consultant, and support as
    - i. appropriate.
    - i. Meet physically or virtually (by phone, Zoom, or other telecommunications) with
      - ii. the course instructor as needed during the practicum.
2. Provide to the NU course instructor all of the required forms, completed thoroughly.
3. Demonstrate flexibility, willingness to learn, and self-direction throughout the learning process.
4. Communicate with the mentor and faculty about all aspects of work planned and performed.
5. Adhere to the standards and scope of professional ethics.
6. Follow the practicum organization's policies and procedures.
7. Protect the facility's confidentiality including that of staff and patients. Students shall respect all confidential information that may arise during the course of the practicum experience and be sensitive to products and processes that may be considered proprietary by the clinical facility. Specifically, no staff names or facility documents are to be included in the journal, and as always, no patient names are to be included in communications outside the facility or be written in any student papers, journals, or personal or course documents.

8. Participate in conferences with the mentor and/or faculty to discuss progress, problems, and reflect on learning as needed.
9. Arrange a mutually agreeable work schedule.
10. Expect them to always arrive at the practicum site on time, prepared, and dressed in professional attire.
11. Notify the mentor promptly of illness or absence and arrange to make up the missed time.
  - a. Note any absences and reason for absences in journal.
  - b. (Refer to official absence policy in course outline)

## **INFORMATION FOR THE MENTOR**

### **Pandemic Guidelines**

Due to recent events, DON practices and policies may evolve to accommodate updated government guidelines and university protocol. Students will be updated by administration and faculty as changes occur.

### **National University Mission Statement**

National University is dedicated to making lifelong learning opportunities accessible, challenging, and relevant to a diverse student population. Its aim is to facilitate educational access and academic excellence through exceptional management of University operations and resources, innovative delivery systems and student services, and relevant programs that are learner-centered, success-oriented, and responsive to technology.

### **National University Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs)**

1. Apply information literacy skills to support continuous, lifelong learning.
2. Communicate effectively through oral, written, and other appropriate modes of expression.
3. Display mastery of knowledge and skills in a discipline.
4. Demonstrate cultural and global awareness to be responsible citizens in a diverse society..
5. Demonstrate professional ethics and practice academic integrity.
6. Utilize research and critical thinking to solve problems.
7. Use collaboration and group processes to achieve a common goal.

### **Baccalaureate Nursing Program**

Baccalaureate nursing education provides the foundation for professional nursing practice as a beginning generalist clinician who provides care to individuals, families, communities and populations. The baccalaureate degree prepares nurses for leadership in providing direct care and collaborating within care teams that work to improve the quality and safety of health care.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the Department of Nursing is to prepare at National University is to prepare nurses as professional leaders through interprofessional collaborative practice, promote, person-centered care, utilize evidence-based practice, and use emerging technologies resulting in positive health outcomes in dynamic healthcare settings.

## **VISION STATEMENT**

The vision of the Department of Nursing is to become a center of nursing academic excellence.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

We believe the process of educating nurses is focused on guiding students to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to continuously improve the quality and safety of nursing practice to diverse individuals, families, communities, and populations. Nursing knowledge, skills, and attitudes advance from simple to complex as students' progress through their educational programs as self-directed lifelong learners.

Knowledge, skills, and attitudes are the foundation of nursing judgment. Knowledge is defined as the integration of data and information into an organized cognitive structure which creates meaning and perspective. The fundamental structure of nursing education is developed through knowledge gained in theory courses and clinical learning experiences. Nursing skills include cognitive, psychomotor, and affective competencies necessary to make judgments and implement safe, effective and evidence-based nursing care that results in positive patient outcomes. The concept of attitude is defined as the development of professional identity and values. The development of professional identity involves personal reflection and the application of standards and ethics of nursing practice. Nursing practice incorporates personal integrity, patient advocacy, membership in a collaborative healthcare team, and lifelong learning.

Nursing judgment is the outcome of applied clinical reasoning skills to nursing practice. Nurses employ specialized knowledge and skills to provide evidence-based, culturally competent, best practices, to improve the health of individuals, families, communities, and populations. Nursing judgment and professional identity are enhanced through concepts of adult centered learning principles. As adult learners, nursing students are responsible for their own learning and incorporate self-directed activities relevant to practice-oriented situations.

Educators facilitate student learning by functioning as partners, role models, coaches, and mentors of students in their discovery of new knowledge. Nursing educators assist the student to bridge past experiences with current content and practice to develop nursing knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Faculty members foster a spirit of inquiry by promoting personal reflection and incorporating the principles of evidence-based practice as students work to attain excellence in nursing practice.

## **Organizing Concepts**

### **Caring**

The essence of nursing is caring, defined as an interpersonal relationship characterized by a view of the patient as a holistic being, by unconditional acceptance of the patient, and by respect and positive regard for the patient. The caring relationship has the purpose of improving the wellbeing of the patient through the nurse's therapeutic use of self. Caring forms the basis for development of therapeutic relationships with patients and is integral to the science and art of nursing.

### **Patient-Centered Care**

Nurses develop therapeutic relationships that recognize the patient (individuals, families, or communities) as the source of control and partner in providing culturally competent, holistic, compassionate care grounded in respect for the patient's preferences, values, and needs. Inherent in this therapeutic relationship is the concept of caring and interpersonal concern about another.

### **Safety and Quality of Care**

Nurses deliver care consistent with current professional knowledge that minimizes the risk of harm to patients and providers, increasing the likelihood of desired health outcomes.

### **Nursing Judgment**

Nursing judgment incorporates the utilization of the nursing process to prioritize and delegate safe, quality nursing care. Clinical judgments and decisions are substantiated with evidence that builds on knowledge from the sciences, arts, and humanities; life and practice experiences; and applied thinking to promote the health of patients within a family and community context.

### **Collaborative Care**

Collaborative care is the nurse's participation as an integral member of an interdisciplinary healthcare team, which includes the patient, family, and community. In order for the team to function effectively, nurses foster open communication, mutual respect, and shared decision making to achieve quality patient care. Professional identity is a developmental process by which nurses integrate their roles as leaders, educators, clinicians, and patient-centered advocates upholding legal and ethical standards of practice.

### **Evidence-Based Practice**

Evidence-based practice originates as systematic inquiry that substantiates the best nursing practices to provide high quality, safe patient care. Evidence-based practice requires continuous learning as the method for improving and updating nursing practice.

### **BSN Completion Program Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of the RN to BSN Completion Program the graduate will:

1. Develop caring, therapeutic nursing relationships with individuals, families and groups.
2. Provide safe, high quality, culturally competent, patient-centered nursing care for individuals across the life span in a variety of settings.

3. Participate in the continuous improvement of nursing care quality and safety
4. Use nursing judgment to manage, prioritize, and delegate patient care in a variety of health care settings.
5. Effectively communicate and collaborate with patients and the interdisciplinary team.
6. Demonstrate professional identity by incorporating established standards of practice within the legal and ethical framework of nursing.
7. Apply best, current evidence into nursing practice to achieve desired outcomes

## **PRACTICUM COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) are listed in each course outline. All CLOs closely align with the Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) which are, in turn, aligned with the Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs). Therefore, it is imperative that faculty identify what the CLOs are for the particular course they are teaching. Similarly, CLOs from prior courses taken may assist faculty to identify and understand prerequisite knowledge that students bring to any given course. CLOs for all National University courses may be viewed on the University website at [www.nu.edu](http://www.nu.edu).

### **1. NSG 442A Leadership and Management Practicum CLOs:**

- A. Examine strategies focused on improving health care in today's healthcare environment.
- B. Determine how critical and ethical issues affect health care in a variety of health care settings.
- C. Apply strategies that may be used to effectively improve an organization's culture.
- D. Apply concepts of quality and safety using structure, processes, and outcomes measures to identify clinical questions and describe the process of changing current practice.

### **2. NSG 444A Community Population Nursing Practicum CLOs:**

- A. Collaborate with community partners to promote the delivery of population health services to individuals and families.
- B. Partner effectively with key stakeholders in health care delivery to target populations including individuals, families, groups and communities.
- C. Identify gaps and redundancies in data sources through work with individuals, families, groups and communities.
- D. Completion of community health courses of instruction that can lead to Public Health Nursing Certification in California.

### **3. NSG 447A Quality Improvement Practicum CLOs:**

- A. Analyze variation or problems in outcomes of health care or systems designed to support health care.
- B. Participate in an evidence-based, quality improvement project focused on patient safety or care delivery improvement.

- C. Employ project management, consultative and leadership skills with a collaborative, interdisciplinary team in a project designed to improve clinical practice and or patient safety.
- D. Evaluate the process and/or outcomes of the quality improvement project, depending on the progression of the project during the student's practicum.

## **MENTOR QUALIFICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. BSN (minimum requirement), MSN or doctorate in nursing or related field is preferred.
2. Provide a current resume if available and copy of your active RN license.
3. Relevant professional experience and a role in the in the facility where the project(s) will take place is ideal.
4. Ability to create opportunities for student to meet Course Learning Outcomes.
5. Ability to facilitate effective student self-reflection as a learning process.
6. A fundamental understanding of student learning outcomes assessment and the ability to assess student learning in a practice environment.
7. Ability to assess and manage the professional environment to ensure safe and effective performance.
8. Provide guidance and supervision for the student during practicum activities.
9. Use the NU course instructor as a resource, consultant, and support as appropriate.
10. Meet physically or virtually (by phone, Zoom, or other telecommunications) with the course instructor as needed during the practicum.
11. Agree to maintain regular communication with the student.
12. Be available for conferences as needed.
13. Participate in the student evaluation process.
14. Provide to the NU student or course instructor all of the required forms, completed thoroughly.
15. Communicate with the student about all aspects of work planned and performed.
16. Adhere to the standards and scope of professional ethics.

17. Follow the practicum organization's policies and procedures.
18. Participate in conferences with the mentor and/or faculty to discuss progress, problems, and reflect on learning.
19. Arrange a mutually agreeable work schedule.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **What can I expect from the National University course faculty who is coordinating the course?**

The faculty member will:

1. Be responsible for ongoing and final evaluation of the student.
2. Solicit input from the mentor about the student's performance as needed.
3. Be available to the mentor and student throughout the course.
4. Arrange a communication system whereby faculty assistance is immediately available should urgent issues arise.

### **How many students will I be mentoring?**

The mentor/student ratio is one to one through the duration of the course to allow sufficient coaching and guidance of the student.

### **What required paperwork needs to be completed?**

The course outline has detailed information as well as evaluation tools you will need to complete for your assigned student. The student will provide you with a copy of course outline and related course practicum forms.

The mentor helps the student apply didactic content to practice, develop critical thinking and advanced reasoning skills.



## DEPARTMENT OF NURSING

### MENTOR APPROVAL FORM

NSG 442A Leadership and Management       NSG 447A Quality Improvement

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Project Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Facility Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mentor's Name and Credentials:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mentor's Current Position:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mentor's Home Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Mentor's Cell Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mentor's E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Mentor,

Thank you for volunteering to mentor the above- named National University student during this practicum course. This is a very important role, and your efforts are greatly appreciated. The suggested responsibilities of the mentor are to guide the student through the project process, confirm the number of hours the student has spent working on the project, and verify that the project has been completed. Please plan to spend some time with the student. Your role as mentor is one of guidance and support. The student is responsible for making and keeping all arranged appointments, performing all necessary research, planning and implementing the project, and providing any necessary supplies.

In addition to guiding the student, the National University course faculty will need you to complete an evaluation form at the conclusion of the course.

Faculty contact information for this student is: \_\_\_\_\_

(Faculty name, email, phone)

Please provide the student with either an electronic or hard copy of your current curriculum vitae or resume.

Mentor Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Mentee Signature \_\_\_\_\_



DEPARTMENT OF NURSING

**PRACTICUM JOURNAL AND TIME RECORD**

- NSG 442A Leadership and Management Population       NSG 444A Community
- NSG 447A Quality Improvement

Journal and Time Record (add rows as needed)			Cumulative Hours
Date	Activities/Reflection	Hours	

**Student Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mentor Verification (NSG 442A & 447A):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Hours:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



DEPARTMENT OF NURSING  
**EVALUATION FORM COMPLETED BY MENTOR**

NSG 442A Leadership and Management       NSG 447A Quality Improvement

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Facility Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor's Name and Credentials: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Mentor,

As the student's Mentor, you have worked closely with and have guided this student through all phases of his/her Academic Project. Your input and comments are valuable to the National University, Department of Nursing, RN to BSN Completion Program. We would appreciate your honest feedback regarding the student's experience. Thank you for the time and effort you have spent helping the student.

1. Briefly describe the project:
  
2. What impressed you most about this mentee/student?
  
3. How do you think the mentee/student could have improved his/her development and implementation of the project?
  
4. What did you learn from being a mentor?

Please rate the student's overall performance.

	Excellent	Acceptable	Lacking
Attitude			
Efficiency			
Effort			
Follow-Through			
Initiative			

Please include additional comments concerning this mentee/student's performance on project activities and your experiences as a mentor. You may either give this form to the student to submit or you may email the completed form to the course faculty. Thank you for your service.