Guidelines for Practicum Experiences

Overview
A practicum is a defined field experience whereby students have an opportunity to apply concepts and integrate professional knowledge learned during a distinct supervised learning experience. Students are required to complete two practicum courses in the Hondros College of Nursing RN-BSN Completion Program with a specified number of hours assigned to each of the two courses:

NUR 343 Community Health Nursing Practicum (2 quarter credit hours): In a practicum experience in the community, the student will use skills in community health assessment, program planning as well as interventions to help identified populations attain and maintain their optimum level of health. Students will spend 60 hours in an identified community setting with a preceptor.

NUR463 Leadership & Management Practicum (2 quarter credit hours): In a practicum experience, students will work with an identified nurse leader and utilize leadership and management skills to manage problems in a rapidly changing healthcare environment to improve quality and safety of nursing care. Students will spend 60 hours shadowing this preceptor. Possible settings: hospitals, long term care facilities, community agencies.

A Hondros College of Nursing Faculty Member teaches each practicum course and guides the development of individual student learning objectives consistent with course and program objectives through direct collaboration with the student. The student is responsible for locating and securing the practicum site and preceptor which best meets the learning objectives formulated by the student in collaboration with course faculty.

A practicum site is a health care agency or other appropriate setting, in which preceptors selected by students are employed. Practicum sites and the preceptors utilized help students obtain practical experiences consistent with the student’s educational goals. Site(s) utilized enter into a Practicum/Field Site Affiliation Agreement with Hondros College Nursing Programs in which they agree to provide appropriate support and supervision for the students’ learning objectives during the experience. Practicum sites do not receive monetary support for the learning experience from the College.

A preceptor is a qualified individual employed by the practicum site responsible for mentoring and guiding the student’s experience. Preceptors are selected and secured by the student. Preferred preceptors are Master's prepared, professional nurses.

Approved: JHJ 3/2017
appropriately licensed with a minimum of one year current post graduate nursing experience in the field of interest chosen by the student. A Baccalaureate degree is required to precept a RN-BSN student from Hondros College of Nursing. The preceptor provides access to the practicum site, assures all regulatory requirements of the agency are met and guides the learning experience in accordance with the learning objectives developed by the student in conjunction with Hondros College of Nursing faculty. It is expected that preceptors be available and accessible to students throughout the course and provide guidance and feedback that promotes the educational growth of the students consistent with professional nursing practice, established learning objectives and Hondros College of Nursing program objectives. Preceptors are not monetarily compensated by Hondros College of Nursing.

Upon securing the practicum site and obtaining a preceptor who has agreed to mentor the student, a conference call is coordinated with the faculty member, student and preceptor. The intent of the conference call is to assure practicum goals are being addressed, and assure the student and preceptor agree on the purpose of the practicum, the role of the student and the preceptor, and the objectives established for the experience. An opportunity to answer questions is provided and a plan is established for continued follow-up. Upon completion of the course, the preceptor provides feedback and input regarding the student’s performance to the student and course faculty member. However, the course faculty member remains responsible for determining satisfactory completion of course objectives.

Practicum field experiences may not begin until the practicum course in which the student has enrolled has officially started and the following are completed:

- Submission of all required documents
- Approval of preceptor and practicum site from Director of Online Programs or designee

Students must successfully complete all course requirements outlined in the respective syllabus to successfully complete a practicum course.

**Steps to Planning the Practicum:**

1. Identify a practicum site – N343 Practicum is to take place in a community health setting. N463 Practicum may take place in one of many types of settings including hospitals, long term care facilities or community agencies. A student may only have one practicum site per course. Although, students may complete the practicum in the agency in which they are employed, the experience must
occur in a setting other than the student’s usual assigned work setting and be completed outside of scheduled work hours.

2. Locate a preceptor - The student is to identify a preceptor who will mentor the student and supervise the practicum field experience. If the practicum site is the agency in which the student is employed, the preceptor may not be the student’s immediate supervisor. The student is to contact the preceptor and assure the preceptor is willing to fulfill the role of preceptor during the practicum experience and meets the following requirements for the role:
   a. Minimum of a BSN degree (MSN preferred)
   b. Active license to practice as a registered nurse in the state of the practicum experience
   c. At least one year of full time experience as a registered nurse, or part time equivalent. For preceptors in N343, the preceptor must have experience in community or public health nursing
   d. Desire and willingness to work with the student throughout the practicum

3. Once the student has secured a site and preceptor, the student should begin to gather and submit all the required documents for the practicum experience as listed below. These documents are to be submitted as one file via email with the subject title “Student’s First Initial and Last Name, Course Number and Term practicum is scheduled”.
   a. Preceptor Approval Form, including Preceptor’s CV/resume and verification of RN licensure
   b. Practicum Field Experience Affiliation Agreement
   c. Verification of Student’s RN license
   d. Proof of Student’s Professional Liability Insurance
   e. FERPA Release Form

4. Once approved, the Director of Online Programs or designee will return the signed approval form to the student via email. Students may not begin the practicum until all required documentation has been submitted, practicum site and preceptor have been approved and the course has officially started.

Ensuring the quality of practicum experiences is a priority for the College. The student must ensure his/her preceptor submits the required student performance evaluation as outlined in the course syllabus as well as the “Preceptor Evaluation of Practicum Experience”. Students must also complete the “Student Evaluation of the Practicum Experience”.

Approved: JHJ 3/2017
In the event a student experiences a problem in the practicum setting which the student either cannot resolve effectively or feels ill-equipped to manage, the student should immediately notify their course faculty. Course faculty shall help guide the student in resolving the issue or concern. Depending on the severity of the situation, the Director of Online Programs or other administrative personnel may become involved.

Students are expected to adhere to all policies outlined in the Student Catalog throughout the program including during practicum field experiences. Students are further expected to abide by all applicable policies and procedures of the agency whereby the practicum is being completed. It is expected that the Agency utilized for the Practicum Field Experience provide an orientation to the site which includes an overview of all applicable policies, rules and regulations.

**Background Check/Drug Screen/Clinical Requirements:** The College does not require a background check or drug screen prior to being enrolled in the Program. However, some practicum agencies and/or sites may require a background check, drug screen, and proof of immunizations or immunity. It is the obligation of the student to meet the established requirements, if any, and failure to complete these requirements will prohibit practicum attendance, thus impacting completion of the Program.