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# **Graduate Program Preceptor Handbook**

## **2023-2024**

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Dear Nursing Colleague and Preceptor,

I speak on behalf of the nursing faculty, staff, and students when I say **THANK YOU** for agreeing to take part in the UAM School of Nursing preceptorship program. Preceptorship enhances the quality of learning and strengthens the link between nursing education and practice. We believe learning is a team effort and are excited to partner with you.

The faculty and staff care deeply about our student's success. We challenge our students to strive for excellence. We recognize that working with a preceptor leads to their growth and development as a graduate nurse and scholar. We could not achieve that without your help.

Andrew Carnegie stated, "Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results." We consider you part of the UAM School of Nursing team.

We appreciate your willingness to take part in the learning exercises of our students. Welcome to our family!

*Dr. Brandy Haley*

Dean and Professor  
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## **Graduate Faculty**

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## **University of Arkansas at Monticello**

### **Accreditation**

The University of Arkansas at Monticello (UAM) is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, a Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. The Associate of Applied Science (AAS) in Nursing program and the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program are approved by the Arkansas State Board of Nursing. The AAS in Nursing and BSN programs are accredited by the National League for Nursing Commission for Nursing Education Accreditation (NLN CNEA). Accreditation was granted February 27, 2018 and is effective through February 29, 2024. The Master of Science Nursing program will seek accreditation through the NLN CNEA following the acceptance of the first student cohort.

### **UAM Mission**

The University of Arkansas at Monticello is a society of learners committed to individual achievement by:

- Fostering a quality, comprehensive, and seamless education for diverse student learners to succeed in a global environment;
- Serving the communities of Arkansas and beyond to improve the quality of life as well as generate, enrich, and sustain economic development;
- Promoting innovative leadership, scholarship and research which will provide for entrepreneurial endeavors and service learning opportunities;
- Creating a synergistic culture of safety, collegiality and productivity which engages a diverse community of learners.

### **UAM Vision**

The University of Arkansas at Monticello will be recognized as a model, open access regional institution with retention and graduation rates that meet or exceed its peer institutions. Through these efforts, UAM will develop key relationships and partnerships that contribute to the economic and quality of life indicators in the community, region, state, and beyond.

## UAM Core Values

- *Ethic of Care:* We care for those in our UAM community from a holistic perspective by supporting them in times of need and engaging them in ways that inspire and mentor.
- *Professionalism:* We promote personal integrity, a culture of servant leadership responsive to individuals' needs as well as responsible stewardship of resources.
- *Collaboration:* We foster a collegial culture that encourages open communication, cooperation, leadership and teamwork, as well as shared responsibility.
- *Evidence-based Decision Making:* We improve practices and foster innovation through assessment, research, and evaluation for continuous improvement.
- *Diversity:* We embrace difference by cultivating inclusiveness and respect of both people and points of view, and by promoting not only tolerance and acceptance, but support and advocacy.

## Institutional Learning Outcomes

- *Communication:* Students will communicate effectively in social, academic, and professional contexts using a variety of means, including written, oral, quantitative, and/or visual modes as appropriate to topic, audience, and discipline.
- *Critical Thinking:* Students will demonstrate critical thinking in evaluating all forms of persuasion and/or ideas, in formulating innovative strategies, and in solving problems.
- *Global Learning:* Students will demonstrate sensitivity to and understanding of diversity issues pertaining to race, ethnicity, and gender and will be capable of anticipating how their actions affect campus, local, and global communities.
- *Teamwork:* Students will work collaboratively to reach a common goal and will demonstrate the characteristics of productive citizens.

## School of Nursing Mission and Graduate Program Philosophy

### Mission

The mission of the SON is to strive for excellence in the preparation of nursing graduates to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to advance the discipline of nursing.

The MSN Program strives for excellence in the preparation of advanced nursing graduates through the following goals:

- demonstrate excellence through practicum experiences with populations across the lifespan:

- demonstrate nursing judgment to guide nursing practice specializing in public health, and;
- demonstrate leadership through a commitment to professional practice, lifelong learning, and implementation of evidence-based practice.

## Philosophy

The University of Arkansas (UAM) School of Nursing (SON) faculty believes that master's prepared nurses specializing in the field of public health, use nursing knowledge to influence health policy, research, and professional practice in many academic and workplace settings. The program framework is based on the curricular elements and expected outcomes identified by the National League for Nursing (NLN) in its *Outcomes and Competencies for Graduates of Practical/Vocational, Diploma, Associate Degree, Baccalaureate, Masters', Practice Doctorate, and Research Doctorate Programs in Nursing* (NLN, 2012). The program emphasizes master's prepared nurses as public health nurse leaders, interprofessional team members, and scholars who advance the nursing profession (NLN, 2012).

## Public Health Nurse Role

According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN, 2022), a graduate degree will prepare the nursing graduate for a wide variety of specialty practice areas, including the public health nurse specialty. The AACN (2022) states the following:

**Public health nurses** focus on preserving the health and well-being of the public. These specialists are licensed professional nurses who participate in activities related to population health, health promotion, disease prevention and control, and community education. Though their responsibilities vary by role and location, master's- and doctorally-prepared public health nurses often manage clinics in various state and community settings (e.g., immunizations, well-child, health screenings), investigate communicable disease cases to determine sources and implement action necessary to curtail the spread of disease; analyze data to identify needs and service gaps for individuals, families, and communities; provide education regarding disease control and prevention as well as general preventive health care to individuals and groups; and implement programs that address environmental and population health risks. These nurses work collaboratively with community leaders, government officials, teachers, parents, and other providers in areas related to community and population health. (para. 19)

## MSN Program Outcomes

### Graduate Program Strands with Outcomes

At the completion of the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program, the graduate will demonstrate competency in the following seven strands: (1) critical thinking, (2) research, (3) nursing process with a focus on public health, (4) leadership, (5)

communication, (6) teaching/learning principles, and (7) professionalism. The student achieves program outcomes through the following student learning outcomes:

| Strands           | Outcomes  |
|-------------------|---|
| Critical thinking | Synthesize theoretical and empirical knowledge from nursing and other healthcare team members that are vital for nursing judgement and practice.    |
| Research          | Translate evidence to develop health care practices in a culturally and ethnically diverse global society   |
| Nursing Process   | Implement the role of master's-prepared nurse as part of the interprofessional team with a focus on improving patient outcomes.                     |
| Leadership        | Function as a leader and change agent to promote holistic patient-centered care and population health   |
| Communication     | Express self professionally both orally and in writing, and with clarity, persuasiveness, and coherence using standard conventions of communication |
| Teaching/Learning | Integrate scholarship, a spirit of inquiry, and innovation to support healthcare organizations and nursing excellence.                              |
| Professionalism   | Exemplify professional values and standards, best practices, and the commitment to lifelong learning in the role of the master's prepared nurse.    |

### **Definitions**

Practicum - a selected experience wherein a designated professional nurse collaborates with faculty to supervise, teach, and evaluate student performance.

Practicum Preceptor - a professional nurse employed by a health care agency who agrees to collaborate with faculty to supervise, teach, and evaluate student performance in a selected practicum experience.

Professional nurse\_– a nurse with a master's degree or higher degree prepared to care for individuals, families, and communities in a variety of settings.

## **Practicum Guidelines**

### **Practicum Purpose**

The faculty believes that involvement of professional nurses in health care agencies supports and enhances the quality of learning and strengthens the link between nursing education and nursing practice. Courses that require practicum hours are identified

under Practicum Courses with a course description and student learning outcomes for each practicum experience.

The practicum experience is expected to provide the student an opportunity to:

1. translate theory into practice through a collaborative relationship with an expert in nursing practice.
2. develop effective practicum judgments based on interactions with a professional who has demonstrated success in nursing practice.
3. increase competence and confidence under the guidance of an expert.
4. professionally benefit from the relationship between nursing education and nursing practice.

### **Practicum Expectations**

Students are expected to be familiar with the following practice and competency standards as applicable to practice:

The ANA Scope and Standards of Practice (American Nurses Association, 2021)

The ANA Guide to the Code of Ethics for Nurses (ANA, 2015)

The Joint Commission National Patient Safety Goals

Agency Policies and Procedures

Public Health Code of Ethics (American Public Health Association)

Public Health Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice (American Nurses Association)

Graduate QSEN Competencies (QSEN Institute, 2012)

### **Preceptor Qualifications**

Graduate students work closely with preceptors for guided practice. Positive learning experiences are best assured when students select their own preceptors and sites. This fosters development of networking skills in the student and assures preceptor availability at a time and geographic location suitable to the student's needs. Student preceptors should be prepared at the master's level or above. Preceptors should be experientially prepared to guide students in the respective area of practicum course focus.

#### **Preceptor Qualifications**

- Must be master's prepared or higher
- Must hold an unencumbered license to practice in the state in which he/she practices
- Must submit license, credentials, and curriculum vita to UAMSON
- Must have at least two years of experience in the clinical practice area

Practicum experiences, sites, and preceptors will be negotiated between the student, preceptor, course faculty, and MSN Program Coordinator.



## **Participant Responsibilities to Graduate Practicum**

In order to assure quality in the learning experiences of students in the professional program of studies, assignments are designed to facilitate development of advanced nursing roles. The student, preceptor, and faculty have an equal responsibility for providing a quality learning experience during practicum. However, there are specific responsibilities for each participant to facilitate student progress in meeting learning outcomes. A pre-practicum meeting with the student and preceptor encourages mutual understanding of the responsibilities of all parties. The responsibilities are identified as follows:

### **Faculty Responsibilities**

- Assume responsibility for understanding course requirements and outcomes.
- Ensure overall coordination of the experience.
- Provide student with orientation to course expectations/requirements.
- Establish and maintain communication with preceptor and student.
- Maintain on call availability by telephone with the practicum preceptor and student. No weekend practicum unless approved by course faculty.
- Meet (virtually or face-to-face) with the student according to an arranged schedule to review progress in meeting course outcomes and goals for personal and professional growth.
- Evaluate student practicum performance utilizing data provided by preceptor and student.
- Provide overall evaluation of the practicum experience through collaboration with the agency, preceptor, and student.

### **Preceptor Responsibilities**

- Review the UAM SON Preceptor Handbook for orientation to the preceptor role.
- Complete the electronic UAM SON Practicum Preceptor Form and Contract Agreement to Precept prior to the start of the practicum experience.
- Provide the Graduate Program Coordinator with a current curriculum vitae which reflects affiliation with the practicum site.
- Assume responsibility for understanding course/practicum requirements and learning outcomes.
- Meet with the student to determine the practicum schedule. Required practicum hours vary by course.
- Orient the student to practicum site and staff including identification of facility policies, procedures, and protocols during the first practicum week.
- Review the course and student learning outcomes provided by the student and indicate acceptance of student learning outcomes.
- Collaborate with student to develop learning experiences to achieve course and student learning outcomes.
- Facilitate a learning environment that promotes critical thinking and

- decision making in the graduate nurse role.
- Assume the teaching, supervisory, and evaluative function of the preceptor role to facilitate achievement of course and student learning outcomes.
  - Communicate ongoing student progress to the student and practicum faculty.
  - Demonstrates professional roles and practice responsibilities in public health.
  - Contact practicum faculty as needed to clarify any issues or concerns.
  - Complete and submit preceptor feedback of the student performance and validation of student practicum hours using the electronic feedback form.

**Please note:** A copy of the preceptor agreement, preceptor form, preceptor vitae, credentials, site agreement, and proof of preceptor orientation must be on file in the UAMSON before the practicum experience can commence on site.

### **Student Responsibilities**

- Assume responsibility for securing preceptors and sites for experiences and ensure valid preceptor and site agreements are attained. For each experience, students should obtain a signed Preceptor Agreement, Preceptor Form, and a current curriculum vita from each preceptor which reflects the preceptor's affiliation with the clinical site.
- Assume responsibility for understanding course requirements and outcomes.
- Develop personal practicum objectives in collaboration with preceptor and communicate personal practicum objectives to course faculty.
- Obtain course faculty approval prior to beginning practicum experience.
- Assume responsibility for accomplishing personal practicum objectives.
- Maintain open communication with practicum preceptor and faculty to promote achievement of practicum objectives.
- Complete practicum site required orientation and confidentiality/HIPAA compliance requirements prior to beginning practicum experience.
- Adhere to the Professional Appearance policy as found in the "Professional Appearance/Dress Code Guidelines" section of this handbook, including any specific practicum site requirements related to appropriate dress during the practicum experience.
- Maintain punctuality and adhere to established practicum calendar as predetermined with preceptor; notify preceptor and course faculty at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled experience when schedule cannot be met.
- Maintain practicum journal and review with faculty on a scheduled basis.
- Complete self-evaluation at the end of each course.
- Complete a practicum preceptor feedback.

### **Professional Appearance/Dress Code Guidelines**

Professional behavior and dress are expected. Students will comply with the dress code of the agencies in which practicum will occur. Questions regarding dress code should be discussed and clarified with the practicum preceptor prior to participation.

**Business Attire** – Professional business attire is expected whenever the student is representing UAMSON. Some practicum situations and activities may require the student to wear business attire with or without wearing a lab coat.

**Lab Coat** – Unless otherwise specified by the practicum site, a clean, white lab coat should be worn when the student is engaged in UAM practicum activities.

**Name Badge** - The UAM name badge must be worn during practicum hours.

## **Practicum Courses**

### **NURS 6104 Public Health Policy and Economics (135 practicum hours)**

In this course, students will continue to develop specialized knowledge and skills in advanced nursing and the delivery of public healthcare within the context of inter-professional practice. Assessment, planning, and interventions for health promotion and maintenance, illness and disease prevention, health restoration, and health policy and economics are explored. Students will gain a greater understanding of the use of data in planning interventions, evidence-based public health, and the role of advocacy for policy and social change. Students will learn how healthcare resources are allocated among alternative uses for the care of sickness and the promotion, maintenance and improvement of health, including the study of how health care and health-related services, their costs and benefits, and health itself are distributed among individuals. The master's prepared nurse role will be analyzed and applied in collaboration with a master's or doctoral prepared nurse preceptor with experience in the specialty area of public health policy development. The student will work with the preceptor to develop/revise a public health policy, create a webinar over public health policy, or complete an extensive Review of Literature over public health policy. This four-credit course consists of 135 hours of practicum.

### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

By the conclusion of the course, students should be able to:

1. Verbalize the importance of health economics and its relevance to more general analysis of health policy issues.
2. Understand how to evaluate descriptive, explanatory, and evaluative economics in a systematic way.
3. Identify the basic processes, approaches, and interventions that identify and address the major health-related needs and concerns of populations.
4. Relate the underlying science of human health and disease to opportunities for promoting and protecting health across the life course.
5. Identify the socio-economic, behavioral, biological, environmental, and other factors that impact human health and contribute to health disparities.
6. Apply the principles of project implementation, including planning, assessment, and evaluation in organizational and community initiatives.

**Student Practicum Outcomes:**

By the conclusion of the practicum, students should be able to:

1. Select an established organization or agency that has a focus on the population.
2. Describe the precepting organization's mission, hierarchy and practices, as well as the challenges faced (funding, politics, efficiency, etc.) in achieving desired organization goals.

**NURS 6204 Public Healthcare and Education (135 practicum hours)**

This course addresses the roles of the school nurse, public health nurse, and nurse case managers across all healthcare organizations. The profession of nursing, development of preschool-adolescent students, evidence-based care, care of children with common conditions, intellectual disabilities, and high-risk behavior will be examined, with respect to cultural and legal considerations. The role of the school nurse, public health nurse, and nursing case manager with regards to disaster planning will also be discussed. A foundation in case management strategies and interventions for individuals and targeted populations is addressed. The leadership roles of these nurses are explored considering the impact of political, economic, social, environmental, and cultural concerns on the health of the population. These nurse's role will be analyzed and applied in collaboration with a master's or doctoral prepared nurse preceptor with experience in the specialty area of school nursing, public health, and/or case management. The student will work with the preceptor to develop a comprehensive activity or teaching plan to engage learners in active learning and implemented to meet mutually determined outcomes. Activities might include but are not limited to creating toolkit of resource references, creating a survey to measure satisfaction with activity, attending professional meetings over course topics, writing a publishable article over course topics, presenting a course topic to patients, delivering a training module to staff nurses, or proposing a change in process or procedure. This four-credit course consists of 135 hours of practicum.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

By the conclusion of the course, students should be able to:

1. analyze the roles of the school nurse, public health nurse, and nurse case managers across all healthcare organizations
2. evaluate cultural and legal considerations for populations with intellectual disabilities and high-risk behaviors
3. assess the need for case management and factors influencing the case management situation
4. analyze legal and ethical issues related to case management
5. identify type of health and safety hazards encounter in work settings
6. describe areas of emphasis in health education, illness and injury prevention, resolution of existing health problems, and health restoration in work settings and analyze the role of the public health nurse with respect for each

7. describe the influence of biological, psychological, environmental, sociocultural, behavioral, and health system determinants on communicable disease incidence and prevalence
8. analyze the role of the public health nurse in strategies to prevent mental health problems

### **NURS 6306 CAPSTONE Public Health Leadership, Management, and Evaluation (180 practicum hours)**

This capstone is a culminating experience designed to provide the student knowledge and skills focusing on public health leadership, management, and evaluation duties in supporting safe, high quality, cost-effective patient care within interprofessional, dynamic health care environments. Students explore various organizational relationships within health care systems and prepare to participate in the design of cost-effective, innovative models of care delivery and practice change proposals. Professional leadership theories and how they shape the public health nurse leader in such things as collaboration, conflict resolution, decision making, negotiation, and evaluations are introduced. Students discuss change management theories and evaluate the ethical, social, legal, economic, and political implications of practice change and public health care along with strategies for managing and evaluating human, fiscal, and public health care resources in a variety of organizational systems. Students also examine the uses of patient care, information system, and communication technologies and discuss the design, implementation, and evaluation of electronic health record systems and clinical decision support systems. The student will work with a master's or doctoral prepared nurse preceptor to develop an original comprehensive nursing research project on a topic of professional or personal interest as it relates to public health. This six-credit course consists of 180 hours of practicum.

#### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

By the conclusion of the course, students should be able to:

1. approach management challenges in health care settings with core knowledge and skills in economic, organizational, and management theory as a guide;
2. pose meaningful questions about what constitutes effective management and leadership in different cultural and organizational contexts;
3. make decisions that weigh practical needs and conditions with ethical, legal, and compliance considerations;
4. use core principles and tools from human resources and finance to address challenges and solve problems;
5. translate insights from self-assessment into personal plans for improving leadership and management skills;
6. identify and consult appropriate sources of data for making sound management decisions;
7. identify monitoring and evaluation methods that answer key questions about programmatic efficiency and effectiveness

**Practicum Forms**

All preceptor and feedback forms can be accessed via the UAM website on the School of Nursing page by clicking the Preceptors link. The preceptor feedback forms are course specific.

## References

- American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2022). *Master's education*.  
<https://www.aacnnursing.org/Nursing-Education-Programs/Masters-Education>.
- National League for Nursing. (2012). *Outcomes and competencies for graduates of practical/vocational, diploma, baccalaureate, master's practice doctorate, and research doctorate programs in nursing*. Wolters Kluwer.