

Guide to Selecting a Practicum Site and Preceptor

Thoughtful selection of a practicum site and preceptor is critical to a successful practicum experience. The type of site and preceptor that you select will depend on which program you are enrolled in and on which practicum course you are preparing for. This guide is designed to answer as many questions as possible and help you during the process of choosing and coordinating your practicum experience.

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Where do I start?

It is recommended that **your first step be finding and securing a preceptor** using the guidelines provided herein. Your practicum site will most likely depend on where your preceptor works, though each site has its own procedure.

What do I bring?

So you got a meeting with a potential preceptor. What should you bring?

- Your PROGRAM description, including program objectives.
- A description of your COURSE, including course objectives.
- Practicum dates & hours required.
- The PRECEPTOR AGREEMENT FORM, which can be found on the [SON Resources](#) webpage.
- The PRACTICUM PLAN FORM, which can be found on the [SON Resources](#) webpage.
- YOUR contact information, both phone and email if possible.
- LOYOLA's contact information:
 - Main Phone: 504-865-3142
 - AA Email: sonaa@loyno.edu
- Anything else requested by your preceptor OR anything you think might be useful.

Who should I contact if my question isn't answered here?

If you have reviewed the sections that apply to you and require additional assistance or have specific questions about your preceptor choice, please contact **your faculty advisor**. Faculty advisor information can be found in your LORA account. If you need help determining who your faculty advisor is, contact your program's administrative assistant.

Tips for Finding & Approaching Potential Preceptors

Be professional and courteous in all of your interactions with potential preceptors and practicum sites. Always be sure to introduce yourself by name as a local online nursing student with Loyola University New Orleans. Be respectful of people's time and always be prepared with your own contact information AND contact information for the School of Nursing in case they have any questions!

Do not just talk to the potential preceptor. Make sure you speak with the person at the site who manages student placements or another member of site leadership.

Start with the people you know. Ask both professional and personal contacts if they know anyone willing to precept students.

Check online. Some sites offer an online process to apply for a practicum experience. Check to see if there is a specific window of time during which your application can be submitted. Make sure you complete everything correctly to ensure your application is processed.

Go in person. Unless a site advises otherwise, it's usually a good idea to introduce yourself to your preceptor and/or site administrators in person. Putting a face to a name makes a more impactful impression on those assisting you!

Contact site administration. If you can't connect directly with a potential preceptor, try choosing a site first. Call or email the education department, contracts manager, affiliations manager, director, clinical manager, etc. This will likely be the person who handles student placements. Ask if they generally participate in clinical rotations.

Try the general line. If all else fails, try a site's main contact information. Politely explain that you are a nursing student seeking a preceptor and ask whether there is a department that handles clinical placements. Be prepared to answer any potential questions.

Key Phrases...

Organizations do not always use the same terminology. These terms may help the person taking your call guide you to the correct department: clinical experiences, practicum, preceptor, nursing students, contracts, affiliation agreements, office manager, observations.

BSN-DNP & MSN-FNP

BSN-DNP & MSN-FNP Preceptor Requirements:

Preceptors are expected to assist you, the student, in perfecting the art of taking a patient's history and physical examination skills while applying theory to practice.

- Must be a nurse practitioner or physician with certification applicable to state of practice.
- Must hold an unencumbered license.
- Must have greater than one (1) year of practice experience.
- Must be present in the clinical site at all times to directly supervise your clinical hours.
- Must be able to give corrective feedback.
- Cannot be your direct report or supervisor.
- Cannot be a member of your family- immediate OR extended.

BSN-DNP & MSN-FNP Distribution of Practicum Hours:

- **NURS 812 Advanced Health Assessment Practicum**
Focuses on mastering a comprehensive health history of adults and performing an integrated head-to-toe physical exam
- **NURS 830 Primary Care of Pediatrics Practicum**
Focuses on the management of infants, toddlers, school, age, and adolescent children in the primary care setting
- **NURS 845 Primary Care of Adults Practicum**
Management of a variety of episodic and chronic primary care patients with illnesses that present across the adult age continuum
- **NURS 855 Primary Care of Adults & Women's Health Practicum**
Management of a variety of episodic and chronic primary care patients with illnesses that present across the adult age continuum with 90 hours focused on ob/gyn care
- **NURS 930 DNP Advanced Practicum I**
Focus is on refining physical assessment skills with diagnostic, management, and reasoning skills
- **NURS 945 DNP Advanced Practicum II**
Focus is on refining physical assessment skills with diagnostic, management, and reasoning skills
- **NURS 960 Scholarly Project Practicum**
Focus is on refining physical assessment skills with diagnostic, management, and reasoning skills

Healthcare Systems Administration and Leadership – N752

During the HSAL practicum, you will perform activities related to an education or leadership role. This practicum serves as your clinical capstone and is typically completed in the last term of the program.

You should select a preceptor that is in a role or area that you would like to learn more about and who can facilitate the accomplishment of your goals. The area or role that you select should challenge you and introduce new concepts, systems, functions, theories, and skills. Consider how the preceptor's responsibilities, activities, and decisions are impacted by internal (within the organization) and external (outside of the organization) departments, entities, policies, professions, regulating bodies, etc.

HSAL Preceptor Requirements:

- Must hold a leadership position in health care and allow direct involvement in leadership activities.
- Must not be in a strictly clinical role.
- Must hold a master's degree or above. It does NOT need to be in nursing.
- Must hold a position that does NOT have the same roles and responsibilities as your current position.
- Does not need to be a registered nurse.
- Cannot be your direct report or supervisor.
- Cannot be a member of your family- immediate OR extended.