



Nursing Clinical Handbook
for
Students, Preceptors, and Faculty

AY 2024-25



*The baccalaureate degree program in nursing at Heidelberg University is
accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing
Education (<http://www.ccneaccreditation.org>).*

UNIVERSITY MISSION

Heidelberg University is a community of learning that promotes and nurtures intellectual, personal and professional development, leading to a life of purpose with distinction.

NURSING MISSION

The mission of the nursing program is to cultivate a community of learning that nurtures intellectual, personal, and professional development. This development of individuals promotes lifelong learning and preparation for living a life of purpose and distinction.

NURSING PHILOSOPHY AND CORE VALUES

The philosophy of the nursing program aligns with the mission and goals expressed by Heidelberg University. The nursing program integrates the liberal arts education tradition to equip nurses with skills needed to lead professional and interprofessional teams, and organizations in a variety of settings. Based on trust, promoted through **integrity** and demonstrated as acts of **advocacy**, an expectation of caring and compassion for human existence is valued.

Advancing the science of nursing improves the health of all individuals. Through **innovation** and creativity, the program goal is to educate individuals to become **agile leaders** in nursing who easily adapt and promote health for individuals, families, and populations of the world. The nursing program is committed to offering opportunities that prepare students to become global citizens who communicate effectively, think critically, serve thoughtfully, and champion social justice.

Nursing is an academic discipline, a practice profession, and a champion of interprofessional **collaboration**. Professional nursing incorporates the nursing metaparadigms that include person, environment, health, and nursing. The metaparadigm of person focuses on the individuality of the recipient of care. The metaparadigm of health refers to the person's level of wellness or quality of life. The environment is simply the point of care.

Professional values to be conveyed include patient **confidentiality** to respect privacy and self-determination, **punctuality** to build trust, **personal appearance** to display professionalism, and **projected sense of service** through use of self to address the whole person with physical, psychological, social, or spiritual needs. These core values are consistent with the AACN. Nursing references the creative, knowledgeable, willing, service-oriented caregiver.

Core and Professional Values Groupings

Core Program Values

Innovation
Collaboration
Leadership
Integrity
Agility Advocacy

Professional Values

Confidentiality
Punctuality
Personal appearance
Projected sense of service

RN-BSN CLINICAL POLICY

The post-licensure pathway demonstrates quality clinical practice experiences, demonstrated through hands-on clinical experiences as part of two curriculum courses: NRS 440 and NRS 470.

NRS 440: Community and Population Health Nursing

Clinical time is calculated in a 1:3 ratio. For a 3-credit hour course, 32 hours of hands-on clinical practice in a public or alternative healthcare site is required. Clinical sites may include, but are not limited to outpatient clinics, home care, hospice, schools or health departments.

NRS 470: Leading and Managing Healthcare Teams

Clinical time is calculated in a 1:3 ratio. For a 3-credit hour course, 32 hours of hands-on clinical practice in a public or alternative healthcare setting is required. Clinical sites may include, but are not limited to hospitals, outpatient centers, clinics, etc.

Preceptorships are required as well as signed contracts with agencies once the site is approved by the program director or designee. Eight (8) hours are to be used to complete and submit a project that assists the preceptor, unit, or organization in the delivery of care.

CLINICAL SITE SELECTION

It is the individual **student's responsibility** to find a site and potential preceptor. (See p. 5.) The site, manager's, and preceptor's contact information are then submitted within the signed preceptor form to the course faculty for review. Once the site is deemed acceptable, the program director or designee emails a copy of a site contract for completion and signatures.

Clinicals are **not** an observation experience. It is favorable to avoid clinicals in the organization in which the nurse is employed to broaden the learning experience and expose the student to new environments. The general area in which a nurse is employed is not allowable because a different setting allows the nurse to grow and learn different healthcare settings to provide population care and to manage and lead within an organization. This also provides the opportunity to serve as an outside innovator when working in a different clinical setting in the community.

NRS 440 CLINICAL OUTCOMES

Upon completion of the clinical experience the student will:

1. Synthesize physical, cultural, developmental, spiritual, psychosocial, and environmental variations to determine healthcare needs of a person, group, or population.
2. Develop appropriate nursing interventions for persons, groups, or populations across the lifespan in various settings, based on recognized health alterations and lifestyle.
3. Incorporate effective communication techniques to produce positive professional working relationships in the clinical setting.
4. Implement a plan of care based on authenticated needs of a person, group, or population, using interprofessional and accessible healthcare resources.

NRS 470 CLINICAL OUTCOMES

Upon completion of the clinical experience the student will:

1. Establish collaborative relationships within the healthcare organization system.
2. Identify best practices for applicability in directing change within the healthcare organizations.
3. Determine learning needs within a health care system.
4. Provide education to meet identified quality improvement or identified continuing education need.

continued...

5. Apply management/leadership principles to identify areas to improve or enhance nursing practice.
6. Analyze nursing leadership and management roles in advocating for social justice in regard to policy, technology, finance, regulation, equity of care.

CLINICAL EXPECTATIONS POLICY

Expectations of the Clinical Site

1. Commits to planning and implementing a quality learning experience for BSN students.
2. Offers opportunities for BSN students to provide hands-on patient or population care.
3. Provides a safe environment for practice so students may meet the course clinical outcomes.
4. Communicates with faculty at regular intervals and as needed.

Director Responsibilities

Responsibilities to the Preceptor and Site:

1. Assure that the site contract is completed and signed; may use a contract by the school or the site.
2. Assure that all necessary preceptor forms and licenses are verified.

Responsibilities to the Student:

1. Assure that the clinical site and preceptor are acceptable and approved.
2. Communicate when the site and preceptor are approved for the clinical experience.

Course Faculty Responsibilities

1. Assure that each preceptor receives a course overview and clinical objectives.
2. Provide regular contact with each preceptor during the course.
3. Share faculty contact information; be available to preceptor and student for guidance.
4. Assist in identifying clinical hands-on experiences pertinent to meet objectives.
5. Evaluate the student's clinical performance by collaborating with the preceptor.
6. Evaluate clinical experiences and assignments. Review clinical paperwork by students and preceptors.
7. Ensure that clinical outcomes are met and measured through appropriate assignments.

Preceptor Qualifications

The preceptor shall:

1. Hold an unencumbered Registered Nurse license.
2. Possess a preferred BSN degree or >3 years of expertise in the clinical site area.
3. Have a minimum of two years as a licensed nurse with clinical experience.

Preceptor Responsibilities

The preceptor shall:

1. Complete all areas and sign the Heidelberg University Preceptor Form.
2. Submit resume information to the Nursing Program Director or designee.
3. Be supportive of the student's learning experience; act as a role model.
4. Orient the student to the clinical site and priority policies/procedures.
5. Acknowledge course/clinical objectives in the planning of clinical experiences.
6. Provide student opportunities that promote critical thinking and clinical reasoning.
7. Challenge the student to apply evidence-based practice to improve the practice area.
8. Provide feedback to the student.
9. Notify the faculty and participating agency of any incident requiring a formal report.
10. Complete the preceptor evaluation of clinical experience and return to Wendy Kelbley at wkelbley@heidelberg.edu by the end the clinical term. Please ensure that you CC your course instructor.

Nursing Student Responsibilities

The student must be registered/licensed in the state of the student's residence. Clinical sites must be located in the state in which the student resides. The process follows:

1. Obtain form completion of all clinical paperwork as presented in the course syllabus. *The **student** is to ascertain the contact person within the organization to which the contract is sent.*
2. Submit the completed, signed preceptor form to the Director or designee.
3. Verify with course faculty and Program Director that all clinical paperwork is submitted and approved prior to starting the clinical experience; includes preceptor and site contract.
4. Exchange contact information with the preceptor. (If either should need to cancel the day's experience, the planned clinical day will be rescheduled.)
5. If the preceptor is unable to work with the student on a particularly needed date, the student may not be placed with another nurse as a preceptor without prior permission of faculty and a completed, submitted and approved preceptor form.
6. Ensure scheduling clinical hours (32) and maintain a clinical log for submission.
7. Verify all course paperwork is submitted at the completion of the clinical experience with the course faculty. This includes the preceptor evaluation.
8. Develop a clinical project with the assistance of the preceptor and/or course faculty.

Expected Student Clinical Experience Behaviors

Students participating in the clinical experience shall:

1. Demonstrate knowledge, safety and confidentiality in the provision of patient care.
2. Demonstrate a positive attitude that will enhance patient care, foster collaborative interprofessional work and positive interpersonal relations with the healthcare team.
3. Apply nursing judgments in new situations with agility (timely actions).
4. Demonstrate accountability, organizational skills, and critical thinking during clinicals.
5. Demonstrate ethical behaviors of integrity to patients, families, and agency staff.
6. Perform clinical activities under the supervision of the clinical preceptor, offering ideas of innovation and potential changes for quality improvement.
7. Initiate discussions of clinical performance with the preceptor at regular intervals; confer with the preceptor for mutual evaluation of clinical objectives.
8. Students must receive a satisfactory grade on the final clinical evaluation in order to successfully complete the course.

Student Evaluation of Clinical Site, Preceptor, and Course Faculty

Student evaluations of the course, preceptor, and faculty are to be submitted to Wendy Kelbley at wkelbley@heidelberg.edu. The student will use forms from the course syllabus.

CLINICAL EXPERIENCES

Function for Clinical Site

Students must be able to function properly and safely at a clinical site: physically, emotionally, and mentally, especially when dealing with stressful patient situations. Students must possess the senses needed for assessment such as vision, hearing, smell, and touch; and have fine motor and gross motor skills necessary for providing care. Critical thinking, decision-making, and communication skills increase effectiveness in the nurse role to perform duties necessary for providing care as a member of the interdisciplinary care team. Clinical sites may have additional requirements to be followed.

Student Health Policy: Post-licensure Return of 1-2-1 Students

Health requirements for students: health insurance, immunization titers, must meet clinical agency requirements, and may include additional health-related responsibilities. Students are responsible for the expenses incurred for tests, vaccines, and documentation listed below.

RN-BSN and Post-licensure Clinical Requirements

Prior to attending clinicals in courses NRS 440 and NRS 470, students must satisfactorily complete specific documentation:

- FBI/ BCI check within 1 year of the clinical experiences (a copy from employer HR accepted)
- Current BLS for healthcare providers by the American Heart Association is to be maintained throughout the post-licensure pathway.
- Physical health examination results current to within 3 years
- Hepatitis B: 3-immunization series or lab evidence of immunity
- MMR: vaccine or evidence of immunity; if history of known positive, evidence of a baseline negative chest X-ray and TB questionnaire every 12 months
- Varicella Zoster: immunization, evidence of history of chicken pox, or lab evidence of immunity
- DPT vaccine within the past 10 years
- Influenza: evidence of annual immunization with the most current vaccine
- Drug screen of usual drugs of abuse (9 or 10 panel sets accepted)
- Title IX pregnancy requirements are in effect. If restrictions exist, such must be noted by the physician and documentation submitted for the student's file (Program Director).
- *Some clinical sites may require additional vaccinations, lab tests, and/or legal clearance.*

Clinical site contracts will outline site requirements at the time a site and preceptor are identified by the student. It is recommended these checks be completed the semester prior to the two aforementioned clinical courses because delays in results may occur.

The above clinical requirements will be submitted to the Program Director or designee, likely the administrative assistant.

Signed Consent to Release Health Records

Nursing students may be required to share health records with other institutions, (health facilities). In such cases, students must sign the consent form to release health records. The consent form is available at the Health & Counseling Center on Heidelberg Campus, where students sign and submit the permission to share their health records. A request for the electronic form from the Center as well as signed, scanned document submission is sufficient.

CLINICAL SITE INFORMATION

1. Clinical forms and signatures of students, preceptor or site coordinator and faculty are required. Refer to specific course syllabi for clinical assignments and objectives as shared by the course faculty.
2. Appropriate tools must be brought to the clinical site (e.g., stethoscope) so the student is ready to perform the identified and pre-planned role.
3. Timeliness, punctuality, and adherence to clinical site practices and policies are expected.

Required BLS Certification for Clinical Sites

American Heart Association - Basic Life Support (BLS) for the healthcare provider is to be maintained throughout the post-licensure pathway of the Nursing program. Healthcare provider BLS from the American Heart Association is the only provider accepted for nursing pathways.

Student Files

Student academic and clinical files are confidential and are maintained to protect student and patient privacy/confidentiality. A secure shared drive among the director, faculty, administrative assistant and Registrar is maintained for documentation and communication purposes only.

Student Professional Liability Insurance

Students are strongly encouraged to carry professional liability insurance. Students must not perform procedures for which one lacks educational preparation. For best protection, institutional policies (university and/or healthcare facilities) are to be followed at all times. Adequate supervision is always necessary when working in clinical settings and varies by level of expertise and determined by the site preceptor.

CLINICAL GUIDELINES

Clinical experiences will be allowable at a student's employment but may NOT be precepted by the student's immediate supervisor, peer or on the student's unit/department of employment. It is suggested that students seek clinicals outside of their employment agency to enhance personal and professional growth.

Practice experiences include activities that support health and/or provide care, interacting with a variety of providers and/or with patients and with oversight by a provider designee and Heidelberg nursing faculty. Patients throughout this document are defined as individuals, families, groups, communities, or populations. Practice experiences shall include specific objectives, expected outcomes, outcomes measurement of competencies, and an evaluation provided by a faculty member.

Practice experiences transition the expected competencies at the baccalaureate level of proficiency and include organization/systems understanding, leadership development, evidence-based practice, information management and integration of technologies into practice, interprofessional collaboration and communication, population health, comprehensive assessment, safety and quality improvement strategies.

Didactic and practice (hands-on) experiences are required in order to achieve expected skills and knowledge to integrate into practice. Practice experiences assure that students, upon graduation, have attained end-of-program competencies delineated in the American Association of Colleges of Nursing Baccalaureate Essentials.

Clinical performance expectations include the advancement of clinical reasoning and proficiency in performing psychomotor skills. Psychomotor skill development for the post-licensure student that includes expectations beyond the associate degree. If a student has physical or psychomotor skill deficits, they are to schedule a meeting with the director of the nursing program and the clinical faculty prior to entering the clinical site for the clinical experience.

Clinical Dress Code

Attire must be clean, neat and appropriate. One's work uniform, such as scrubs after a shift of work, is not suitable. The Heidelberg name badge must be worn above the waist when present at the site for clinicals. The student will dress according to the setting in which the clinical is occurring. Thus, required attire may change from site to site.

Student Incidents and Needle Stick Policy

If a patient incident occurs at a clinical site, students must follow the site's chain of command, requirements, and forms, but must also contact the faculty as soon as possible (within 24 hours.) Students must follow proper emergency care if needed. Students must carry their own health insurance. It is the student's responsibility to pay for follow up care regarding the injury.

Occupational Exposure Definition

An occupational exposure is defined by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) as: reasonably anticipated skin, eye, mucous membrane, non-intact skin or parenteral contact with blood and other potentially infectious materials that may result from the performance of an employee's duties. See the Exposure Control Plan of the Heidelberg University Health & Counseling Center for policy details. Note: If a student misses clinical due to a personal Emergency Department visit or hospitalization, he or she must present with written permission prior to return to clinical.

QSEN COMPETENCIES

QSEN is an acronym that represents an initiative in the nursing field to align nursing education and nursing best practices in quality and safety standards. The Quality and Safety Education for Nurses (QSEN) project began in 2005. Funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the overall goal of the [QSEN](#) initiative is to address the challenge of preparing future nurses with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to continuously improve the quality and safety of the healthcare systems in which they work. QSEN Competencies in baccalaureate education of registered nurses is assumed in the clinical sites during clinicals and addressed in clinical or course assignments. Each competency involves skills, knowledge and attitudes nurses should possess.

*The guidelines in this handbook are subject to change if new modifications are required for clinical compliance.

Reviewed and updated 10/2024 ke mp