

Preceptor development guide: Working with newly licensed nurses

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Preceptor Development Program

The preceptor development resources are designed to assist when orienting preceptors who will work with nurse residents. The preceptor plays a crucial role in the professional development and transition to practice of the nurse resident. Many of the nurses who act as preceptors for nurse residents have extensive experience and knowledge and have previously precepted many new employees. For both experienced nurses and new preceptors, the preceptor orientation program examines the unique characteristics and needs of the newly licensed nurse. The preceptor education and orientation curriculum is outlined below. In addition to covering this content, it is helpful to schedule regular meetings for preceptors to network, solve problems and share experiences. It is suggested to include nurse resident facilitators in at least one of these meetings. Ongoing communication between nurse resident facilitators and preceptors has proven to be very valuable to the program and to the newly licensed nurses. Finally, it is beneficial to provide a mentor for new preceptors to shadow and consult with when issues arise.

Purpose

To provide preceptors with the knowledge and skills needed to help nurse residents satisfactorily complete the onboarding process and progress in their ability to provide safe patient care.

Objectives

At the end of the training, the preceptor will be able to do the following:

- Understand the unique characteristics and needs of the newly licensed nurse
- Accurately assess the nurse resident's skill level and plan appropriate learning opportunities
- Facilitate the socialization of the nurse resident into the work environment and profession
- Evaluate the nurse resident's competency and provide effective feedback to the nurse resident

Definition of a Preceptor

A preceptor, as defined in the Vizient/AACN Nurse Residency Program (NRP)[™], is an experienced, competent staff nurse who functions as a teacher, advocate and role model in guiding, directing and overseeing the clinical practice of the newly licensed nurse. The preceptor is also responsible for facilitating the socialization of the nurse resident into the work environment and the profession of nursing.

The components of the preceptor's role and requirements for preceptor training are outlined in this Preceptor Development Program. Preceptors are selected by the manager/educator/advanced practice nurse or as directed by organizational policy. It is recommended nurse preceptors meet the following guidelines:

- Completion of a preceptor training course focused on the needs of the newly licensed nurse
- Fulfillment of the preceptor competencies as defined by the organization
- Two years of professional nursing experience, preferably

Components of the Preceptor Role

The components of the preceptor's role are outlined below, along with the behaviors and skills that are specific to each component. These components can be used to evaluate and select preceptors for nurse residents and should be covered in the preceptor orientation and education.

- **Acts as a staff nurse role model**
 - Demonstrates and applies evidence-based nursing practice to ensure high-quality patient care and safe outcomes
 - Participates in continuous quality improvement related to patient care outcomes

- Demonstrates effective communication with the healthcare team, including all clinicians, providers, patients and families
- Advocates for patients and families
- Advocates for nursing and self
- Appropriately uses available resources
- **Helps facilitate the nurse resident's social entry into the work environment and profession**
 - Promotes a healthy work environment
 - Introduces the nurse resident to members of the team and includes them in activities
 - Orients the nurse resident to the organization, the nursing unit, resources, policies and procedures
 - Models lifelong learning
 - Discusses the advantages of joining a professional organization
 - Encourages subscribing to professional journals
 - Encourages the pursuit of professional certification
 - Participates in organizational initiatives (e.g., quality projects, committees and shared governance)
 - Strives to meet the requirements of clinical ladder progression
- **Serves as an educator and a coach**
 - Assesses the nurse resident's readiness to learn, identifying the nurse resident's:
 - Learning needs and styles
 - Academic preparation
 - Nursing experience and knowledge
 - Readiness to learn and level of self-direction
 - Anxiety level
 - Cultural and generational differences
 - Sets short- and long-term goals in conjunction with the nurse resident
 - Validates the nurse resident's clinical nursing skills, including the following:
 - Interpersonal skills
 - Effective use of the nursing process
 - Technical skills
 - Documentation
 - Organization and time management
 - Critical thinking and clinical judgment
- **Gives the nurse resident feedback on her progress**
 - Provides regular, objective, clear, formal documented performance evaluations and shares evaluations with the facilitator and manager
 - Provides ongoing, informal feedback, progress reports and competency evaluations
 - Solicits feedback on self-evaluation from the nurse resident
 - Investigates and remedies unmet goals and develops a remedial plan
 - Solicits feedback on his or her own performance as preceptor
 - Sets goals and expectations jointly with the nurse resident and regularly reinforces the plan

- Makes recommendations about the length of preceptorship (i.e., when it can end and when it needs to be extended)
- **Facilitates critical thinking and evidence-based learning**
 - Encourages reflection
 - Continually questions the nurse resident about the rationale for nursing practice decisions to help clarify the basis for the decisions
 - “What is the plan for the patient?”
 - “What patient outcomes are expected?”

NRP preceptor qualifications and expectations

Preceptor selection process

Introduction

The NRP advisory council or organizational policy outlines criteria about who is eligible to act as a preceptor to nurse residents. These decisions are based on the Vizient/AACN NRP™ model and the institution’s policies and resources. The specific qualifications and competencies of prospective candidates should be evaluated. This section includes the following sample forms: the NRP preceptor qualifications and expectations and a preceptor competency form. These can be used in the selection and evaluation of preceptors.

Description of the role

Nurse resident preceptors are experienced, clinically competent nurses who function as a teacher, advocate, socializer and role model. They are responsible for guiding, directing and supervising a nurse resident.

Role requirements

The preceptor should meet the following guidelines:

- Completion of a preceptor training course that focuses on the needs of the newly licensed nurse
- Fulfillment of the preceptor competencies as defined by the organization
- Two years of professional nursing experience
- Acts as a staff nurse role model
- Serves as an educator and coach
- Helps facilitate the nurse resident’s socialization into the work environment and the profession
- Provides ongoing feedback to the nurse resident on progress
- Facilitates critical thinking and evidence-based learning

Sample preceptor competencies form

Competence	The preceptor is able to	Rating			
Assessment intervention skills	Care for assigned patients while providing a safe environment	1	2	3	4
	Assess and monitor patients and interpret findings accurately	1	2	3	4
	Implement appropriate therapeutic treatments and procedures	1	2	3	4
Communication- oral	Verbally express ideas in a way that is understood by other caregivers	1	2	3	4
	Obtain pertinent information in taking a patient's history	1	2	3	4
	Interact well in discussions within groups	1	2	3	4
	Present information effectively				
Communication- written	Compose concise, clear, and focused progress notes	1	2	3	4
	Complete necessary forms accurately	1	2	3	4
	Author articles and written materials	1	2	3	4
Communication- computing	Use the computer in patient care delivery	1	2	3	4
	Use the computer to perform information searches and inquiries	1	2	3	4
	Use the computer as a tool for professional responsibilities	1	2	3	4
Critical thinking skills	Integrate information from multiple sources and evaluate it	1	2	3	4
	Solve problems by creating solutions and analyzing them	1	2	3	4
	Identify priorities and make decisions	1	2	3	4
	Understand and demonstrate the use of scientific inquiry and research	1	2	3	4
Human caring and relationships	Serve as a role model for ethical and legal professional behaviors in caring for patients	1	2	3	4
	Engage in cooperative interpersonal relationships	1	2	3	4
	Show cultural respect in interactions with others	1	2	3	4
	Act as a patient/family advocate	1	2	3	4
Management skills	Provide coordination of unit activities	1	2	3	4
	Plan, delegate and supervise others	1	2	3	4
	Use human and material resources efficiently	1	2	3	4

	Be accountable and responsible in the performance of work tasks	1	2	3	4
Leadership skills	Be assertive in collaboration with others	1	2	3	4
	Take risks when warranted	1	2	3	4
	Plan and anticipate changes in health care	1	2	3	4
Teaching skills	Teach others individually and in group seminars	1	2	3	4
	Teach with a focus on health promotion and restoration	1	2	3	4
Knowledge integration skills	Articulate the relationships between basic science and healthcare disciplines	1	2	3	4
	Use available resources to remain aware of changes in healthcare practice	1	2	3	4

Preceptor orientation

Preceptor orientation to the Vizient/AACN NRP™

Orienting both new and experienced preceptors to work with nurse residents is essential to the success of the nurse resident on-boarding process. The orientation content addresses the characteristics of newly licensed nurse, as well as their unique needs as the newest members of the profession. The preceptor orientation class materials include the following:

An agenda for preceptor orientation for the NRP

- PowerPoint™ slides that cover the topics outlined on the agenda
- Sample nurse resident unit orientation plan Additional orientation materials include
- The Daily Rewind
- Preceptor enrichment discussion scenarios
- Preceptor development program pre-reflection questions
- Sample agenda for an orientation class
- PowerPoint™ presentations for each of the topics on the agenda, including:
 - NRP overview
 - The nurse resident–preceptor relationship
 - Essentials of communication
 - Creating a culture of empowerment, learning and evaluation
 - Supporting our young

Preceptor recognition

The preceptors' contributions should be publicly recognized and appreciated. The following are some suggestions for recognition:

- Providing a pin or name badge designation to identify preceptors
- Holding regular celebrations
- Distributing awards for outstanding achievement

- Providing a paid shift differential
- Offering advanced preceptor enrichment programs

Sample preceptor orientation schedule

NRP preceptor orientation (Include time, date and location of the class) Sample class schedule

Time	Topic
08:00-8:30 a.m.	Overview of NRP
08:30-9:30 a.m.	The nurse resident and preceptor relationship
9:30-9:45 a.m.	First 3 weeks of orientation (see next page for example)
9:45-10:15 a.m.	Reality shock
10:15-10:30 a.m.	Break
10:30-11:30 a.m.	Essentials of communication
11:30- noon	Creating a culture of empowerment, continuous learning and feedback
12:00-12:30 p.m.	Group work with preceptor enrichment discussion scenarios
12:30-12:45 p.m.	Wrap-up, evaluation and questions

Sample nurse resident orientation plan

Week 1

- New employee orientation

Week 2 schedule

Upon arrival:

- Introduce to colleagues and staff
- Complete a scavenger hunt of the department/practice
- Complete tour of facility
- Review orientation plan with nurse resident
- Set goals and provide measurable outcomes that will be reviewed weekly.
- Review time sheets or time in/time out procedures

Before taking a patient assignment, the nurse resident needs to complete the following:

- Shadow the preceptor.
- Spend time with the unit secretary.
- Understand the unit/practice organizational flow (e.g., change-of-shift report, morning huddles, patient acuity system, rooming process, etc).
- Discuss the role of the primary nurse with the patient and family.
- Review procedure for emergencies and, where applicable, the location and use of emergency equipment.
- Understand the MD/provider chain of command.
- Demonstrate how to locate policies/procedures
- Demonstrate how to reach providers.
- Outline the job description for each level of nurses (i.e., CNI, CNII, CNIII, ANII).
- Obtain access codes for practice/unit.

Patient physical assessment

- The preceptor must assess nurse resident's ability to conduct a complete patient assessment specific to the unit/practice and specialty area (e.g., cardiac or oncology patients).
- Assess the need for further observation of the physical assessment.
- Discuss what constitutes abnormal assessment findings and how to report.
- Allow the nurse resident to independently conduct assessments.

Medication administration

- The preceptor reviews the nurse resident's self-assessment of medication administration and outlines a plan based on skills and experience.
- Demonstrate how to locate organizational policies/procedures around medication administration
- Observe the nurse resident administering medications for every route commonly used in the unit/practice (e.g., po, IV push, drip, IM, NG and SubQ).
 - Discuss how to determine safe administration dosage with a sliding scale.
- Discuss how to determine safe administration dosage for PRN medications.
- Discuss how to titrate IV medication infusions.
- Discuss the assessment of medication side effects.
- Discuss reportable lab values.
- Discuss when a provider needs to be notified of drug side effects or ineffectiveness.
- Refer the nurse resident to the organizations resource for training in various routes of medication administration (e.g., rectal, NG medications).
- Discuss blood sugar assessment, including the timing of food with insulin administration and blood sugar levels.
- Equipment review
- Review the equipment commonly used in the unit/practice
- Observe the nurse resident using equipment on a patient (e.g., feeding tube pump, glucose machine, bed scale)

- Assess the nurse resident's ability to independently use equipment
- Competencies/learning modules
- Outline a plan for completion of required department and hospital core competencies and learning modules
- Outline a timeline for completion, allowing time for the completion of required unit/practice orientation modules and classes

Week 3 through the end of orientation

- The preceptor and the nurse resident discuss strategies for organizing and prioritizing patient care.
- Outline the plan of care for the patient(s) assignment.
- After successful management of one patient, the nurse resident progresses to the care of a full patient load

Skills check-off

- The preceptor must communicate to the nurse resident which psychomotor skills need to be observed before being done independently (e.g., NG tube insertion, urinary catheter insertion, starting an IV, blood administration)
 - Have the nurse resident verbalize skill procedures prior to entering the patient's room
- Observe the skills being performed by the nurse resident

Intravenous administration

- Assess the nurse resident's experience with IV fluid administration
- Assess the nurse resident's knowledge of blood product administration
- Review the organizations policy and procedure for blood product administration
- Review the use of IV pumps
- Discuss IV titration
- Electronic health record

The preceptor must assess the nurse resident's ability to:

- Review patient list and devise plan of care
- Document administration of scheduled and PRN medications
- Document assessment
- Document intake and output
- Acknowledge providers orders

Laboratory value interpretation and reporting

- Review each assigned patients' labs at the beginning of each shift
- Identify abnormal values that need to be reported to the provider
- Correlate laboratory findings with medications that are ordered on a sliding scale (e.g., potassium, heparin, insulin)
- Evaluate the nurse resident's knowledge of and experience in drawing blood