

**Gonzaga University
Department of Nursing**

**Family Nurse Practitioner Practicum Experiences
Frequently Asked Questions**

This document provides answers to frequently asked questions about the practicum experiences that are required for completion of the Family Nurse Practitioner Option of the Master of Science in Nursing program at Gonzaga University. Topics this document covers include the following (Control+Click on any one of these topic titles to move to that part of the document that addresses each question).

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What are the values that provide a foundation for practicum experiences in the Department of Nursing at Gonzaga University?

The Department of Nursing faculty and students are guided by the set of values named below. These values describe our intention to work together in ways that honor the Ignatian tradition and that complement our Vision and Mission while serving as an important foundation for the development of programs and courses as well as for the care we provide to individuals in a variety of practice settings.

Details about these values can be found on the Department of Nursing website and in the Student Handbook.:

- *Magis*
- *Men and Women with and for Others/Whole Persons of Solidarity for the Real World*
- *Cura Personalis*
- *Discernment*

- *Finding God/the good in all things*
- *Service of Faith and Promotion of Justice*

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What is the purpose of the practicum experiences in the Department of Nursing at Gonzaga University?

The practicum experiences in the Family Nurse Practitioner option provide students with hands-on learning as the transition from the Registered Nurse role to the role of Advanced Practice Nurse in primary care. Fulfilling practicum experience requirements helps students to comply with requirements of the program's accrediting body, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE - <http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Accreditation/>). Gonzaga University's nursing programs are fully accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), an autonomous accrediting agency that helps to ensure the quality and integrity of baccalaureate and graduate education programs preparing effective nurses.

In part, the practicum experiences required for the Family Nurse Practitioner program help students and faculty to engage in promoting the mission of Ignatian education at Gonzaga University. To this end, students are encouraged to seek practicum experiences that provide exposure to helping the underserved and vulnerable as part of their experience of serving others.

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What are the goals of the FNP practicum experiences?

The primary goal of the FNP practicum experiences is that students learn to provide holistic nursing care to individuals and families in the Advanced Practice role. This includes learning to work at the Advanced Practice level to obtain detailed health histories, perform physical examinations, establish appropriate and accurate diagnoses, and develop comprehensive nursing-based plans of care for individuals based on assessment data and diagnoses.

Throughout MSN courses, students will gain understanding about the health needs of underserved populations in a wide variety of urban and rural settings. Because each of you has unique past experiences and specific interests and goals, students are able to individualize *some aspects* of the required practicum experiences for all FNP courses within the framework that these goals provide.

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What are the requirements for precepted practicum experiences?

- Over the course of *all* the FNP courses, students must complete 660 clock hours of practicum experience – 60 clock hours per completed credit of practicum experience.

- Direct practicum supervision by a nurse practitioner, physician, or physician's assistant, with current licensure and certification; Master's degree preferred
 - Over the course of the program, one half (1/2) of all practicum hours must be spent with a nurse practitioner
- Practicum experiences in keeping with the objectives of specific courses to include (but not limited to):
 - Care of well and ill children and adults across the lifespan
 - Provision of care directed toward wellness promotion, risk reduction, disease prevention, and maintenance of health status
 - Development of knowledge and abilities in the areas of critical thinking, diagnostic reasoning, and therapeutic intervention
- Submission of documents at the end of each completed semester of practicum experiences, including:
 - Written preceptor evaluation(s) – submission of this document is a requirement for the student
 - Practicum log documentation using an online service
 - Student self-evaluations
 - Practicum site evaluations

Option for Professional Development

- **A minimum of 15%** of a student's practicum hours may be spent in pre-approved professional development activities, to include advanced-practice level conferences, observation of a working physician and/or other related activities, or completion of continuing education experiences at the advanced practice level.

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What documentation is required before students can begin practicum experiences?

Students must provide certain documentation to the Department of Nursing *by the end of the semester preceding* enrollment in Nursing 600, the first practicum course.

Required documentation includes:

- Photocopy of current nursing license for the state(s) where students will complete practicum experiences. (If students want to take advantage of any of the many practicum experiences that might be available in the Spokane area while on campus, you must have a Washington license.)
- Request for criminal history information (WA state patrol record) – must be updated every two years; GU will obtain this information but students must sign a form giving permission – form will be provided by GU
- Copy of student's current resume or *curriculum vitae*

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How are practicum experiences arranged?

It is the responsibility of each FNP student to arrange for practicum experiences. This means that students should begin early to identify individuals within their home communities with whom they would like to work.

Students should plan to meet with prospective preceptors well in advance of the beginning of the first practicum course to discuss particulars such as learning objectives, scheduling, and other aspects of the practicum experience. It may be helpful for students to meet with certain individuals within the practice, such as the Office Manager, receptionist, scheduler, etc. because these individuals could play important roles in your practicum experience.

Clinical Coordinator Role

The Clinical Coordinator is a faculty member on the staff at Gonzaga University, whose responsibilities include coordinating practicum experiences, guiding students in creating individualized practicum placements, networking with rural placement projects and other practicum programs, and facilitating collaboration among preceptors and practicum faculty.

What are the FNP Option's requirements for preceptor qualifications?

If possible, students should select Nurse Practitioners to serve as preceptors throughout the program. If this is not possible, at least one half of the practicum hours required for the FNP option must be completed with a nurse practitioner. The remainder of the hours can be with a physician or physician's assistant. Students may not complete practicum experiences with chiropractors or naturopathic physicians.

Once students have identified a preceptor and negotiated with them for the completing a practicum experience in their practice, students must complete a "Practicum Site Placement Request" (provided by GU) to notify the Clinical Coordinator or Nursing Department Secretary of practicum plans. This allows the Department to begin formal communications with a preceptor on the student's behalf.

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Can FNP students participate in practicum experiences during semester breaks?

There are two circumstances in which students can complete practicum experiences between semesters and some conditions must be met:

1. Students who are unable to complete the required number of practicum hours during a semester may be eligible to receive the grade of "Incomplete" for their practicum rotation. This grade may be awarded *at the faculty member's discretion* to those students who have completed all written and evaluative practicum experiences but who need to complete the required number of practicum hours. If a grade of Incomplete is awarded, all University policies apply and the student will have 30 calendar days from the first day of the following regular semester (Fall and Spring) to complete the required

hours. Students will not be eligible to participate in any subsequent practicum course until the Incomplete is changed to a regular grade. All other Department of Nursing standards and policies apply.

2. Students who are in good standing may apply to the FNP Clinical Coordinator for permission to begin practicum experiences scheduled for the following semester beginning as early as the first day following completion of the previous semester. Students may not accumulate any more than forty (40) practicum hours before the beginning of the semester in which the course is going to be taken. Students who do not obtain written (email) permission to begin practicum experiences early may not count any completed hours toward the semester's total. The decision to grant permission will be based on a review of the student's clinical file.

These conditions must be met:

1. Student in good standing - the student may not be on academic probation or be involved in any disciplinary action.
2. The student must be continuously enrolled (i.e., semester-to-semester) in appropriate practicum courses.

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When must the Practicum Site Placement Request be submitted to the Department of Nursing?

It is helpful for the Department of Nursing if the student can submit the Practicum Site Placement Request at least four to six (4-6) weeks before the start of the semester during which the rotation will occur.

The FNP Option Program Assistant **must** receive the student's Practicum Site Placement Request **no later than one week before the start of the semester** during which the student will participate in that practicum rotation.

Exceptions will be made only on a student-by-student basis. Please contact the FNP Clinical Coordinator to discuss the need for an exception.

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Can students complete practicum rotations with a preceptor for whom they work or at an office or hospital where they are employed?

Under **no** circumstances may any NP student complete a practicum rotation in which they are supervised by an employing physician, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant.

Students may not complete any practicum rotation at a hospital, clinic, or private health care office or service where they are employed. Exceptions may be requested of the FNP Clinical Coordinator in writing no later than one month prior to the requested start date. Exceptions will be granted only if the student can provide evidence that the practicum rotation will occur in another department or area, and with non-coworker staff.

How does Gonzaga University establish a contractual relationship with agencies and preceptors?

Before students can work with any preceptor, Gonzaga University must establish a contract with that individual and/or with the agency that employs that individual. Students must notify the Department of Nursing Program Assistant or the Clinical Coordinator *in writing* (on a Practicum Site Placement Request) as soon as they have permission to work at a particular agency or with a particular preceptor. The Department of Nursing Program Assistant will send a contract to the agency and/or preceptor. It is the student's responsibility to be certain that the contract is on file in the Department of Nursing before beginning to working at any site.

What else should students know about participating in practicum experiences?

Clothing

Students should wear appropriate clothing that conveys a professional appearance during practicum experiences. If specific agency standards or requirements exist, students must follow them.

Name pins

Students must wear Gonzaga name badges in practicum settings. The Department of Nursing Secretary will order name badges with the University logo on them before the student enrolls in the first practicum course. It is the student's responsibility to replace a lost name badge by requesting that the Program Assistant order a replacement. The first name badge is provided at no cost to the student; however, students must pay to replace lost badges.

Signing documents

When signing documents in practicum agencies, students sign first initial or name and last name, RN, FNP Student, Gonzaga University. Students who are legally entitled use other initials behind their names (designating advanced degrees, additional licensure, or certifications you have earned) may also use those initials as part of the official student signature. It is NEVER appropriate to use the title MSN(c) following the student's signature.

What are the requirements for satisfactory progress in the FNP option?

Satisfactory progress in the practicum setting is a requirement for passing all courses in the FNP option.

Preceptors are responsible for the evaluation of a student's progress in each practicum experience. If a Preceptor communicates any concern about the student's progress, the

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Clinical Coordinator will notify the student. If a student is failing to progress satisfactorily, the Clinical Coordinator may require that the student to complete additional practicum hours to pass the course.

A student may receive a failing grade for any course with a practicum component, regardless of the student's grade in the didactic portion of the course.