

## **Clinical Placement Department**

### **Contacting Preceptors Outside of the Middle Tennessee Region**

#### **Tips for Approaching a Potential Preceptor**

**1) Prior to contacting a potential preceptor:**

- Discuss clinical and preceptor needs with clinical placement team before approaching new preceptor.
- Gather information to give the potential preceptor, which may include:
  - Course Overview
  - Clinical Objectives
  - Student CV or Introductory Letter
  - Preceptor Benefits (listed at the bottom of this form)

**2) Who to contact:**

- Use personal contacts (family, friends, acquaintances, work contacts) to get information on established, credible practitioner (Nurse Practitioner or Physician)
- LinkedIn, Facebook groups, your state board of nursing website, and APNA (you can join as a student for \$25) can all be additional resources.

**3) After initial contact:**

- Introduce yourself to the office personnel (office manager), and if possible the Nurse Practitioner and/or Physician.
- Ask if they would be interested in serving as a clinical preceptor. Ask them if they have a few minutes that you could discuss this possibility.

**4) If you have been referred by someone:**

- Call and ask to speak to the Nurse Practitioner/Physician.
- If you are unable to speak with the potential preceptor, leave a message to include referral information by (name of friend/family/acquaintance). For example: “\_\_\_\_\_said you are an excellent practitioner and would be a good preceptor. I am a student in the MSN program at Vanderbilt, studying to be a PMHNP. Would you be interested in being a preceptor during these dates:\_\_\_\_\_? I could come in and talk to you (or I could send you some information) about our program.”

**5) If you are calling a potential preceptor without a referral:**

- Utilize the same information above – Instead of talking about being referred by someone, mention that you are from that area, or are planning to work in that area and wanted an opportunity to meet them / discuss the possibility of doing your clinical placement under them.

**6) Having trouble connecting with the Nurse Practitioner/Physician:**

- If you have tried at least 4 times without making a connection please do not give up or take it personally that they do not respond right away – we often have to call them 4 + times to make a connection). You may try asking for the office manager to leave your message if the practitioner has not responded or is not available. If possible, it is best to leave a message or a voice mail for the practitioner. You can also check for an email address.
- Contact the clinical placement office if you have exhausted your resources and not had any solid leads. Please have your call log completed to share with the clinical placement team.

## **7) Meeting or Talking to Preceptor:**

- Give short introduction of yourself
- Ask physician/practitioner about their practice and background
- Discuss clinical needs or objectives and let them know that your faculty will call them to also discuss your objectives.
- Inform them of the # of clinical hours you will need and approximate time frame. It is always good to say that you will need 3 days for 7 weeks or 35-40 hours for 7 weeks. Whenever your clinical needs are broken down by weeks – this sounds more manageable than 210 hours.
- An active Affiliation Agreement (contract) is required by Vanderbilt University and the National League for Nursing for all student clinical placements. The clinical placement office will contact their office to get that in place with confirmation of a clinical site. The student is to complete Preceptor Information Form (in Exxat) and submit to obtain faculty signature and approval, which will begin the contract process. An evaluation of your clinical performance will be completed by the preceptor at mid-semester and the end of each semester.
- Preceptor Benefits:
  - VUSN offers a Clinical Faculty Adjunct Faculty title to preceptors.
  - Benefits include: access to library online, preceptor workshops at VUSN at no charge.
- Never try to answer questions that you are unsure of the answer. Defer any of these questions to faculty or the clinical placement office. Tell preceptor we will call to discuss these issues.