

Clinical Placement Guide for PNP-AC Students Outside the Middle TN Area

Welcome to the PNP-AC program at VUSN!

For students who live more than two hours away from Vanderbilt, VUSN is excited to work with you to secure clinical placement outside the Middle TN area. There are many advantages to placement outside of Middle TN such as staying in your hometown and/or making contacts in the area in which you hope to one day be employed. VUSN views clinical placement as a collaborative endeavor, and we are here to support you throughout the process of securing your site. Note that it takes approximately 3-4 months to secure a contract with any hospital or clinic where you would like to do your clinicals, so it is important that we start the process now.

PNP-AC students complete 3 clinical rotations:

| Clinical Course | Start date | End date | Total hours |
|-----------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| 7045 | January 3 | February 28 | 140 |
| 7045 | March 1 | April 21 | 140 |
| 7095 | May 1 | August 4 | 280 |
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Preceptors may be:

- A PNP-AC is preferred. A PNP-AC can provide learning experiences addressing both patient care as well as the role of the PNP-AC.
- An MD or DO may be used with faculty approval if an NP preceptor is unavailable. The MD or DO needs to be supportive of the philosophy of a PNP-AC.

Appropriate sites include:

- Children's hospitals with service lines that provide either a specialty focus, such as cardiology, orthopedics or trauma, hematology/oncology, an ICU, an emergency department or a hospitalist service.

Note that PNP-AC's manage acutely ill and critically ill Children, so the clinical sites need to focus on the management of children. In order to be well-prepared for the national certification exam, it is recommended that at least one semester should be more of a hospitalist or a generalist/hospitalist practice within a hospital setting (a rotation in the emergency department is also a good choice). As soon as possible we need you to begin thinking about and contacting preceptors whom you think would be great mentors for the Spring semester and identify the hospital where they practice so we can begin the contracting process. Note that you may complete clinicals in your own hospital, if your hospital permits, but you cannot use your staff RN (or current employment as a NP if you are a Postmaster's certificate student) work hours as clinical hours for the PNP-AC program.

Getting started:

1. Be sure that you have filled out your Student Profile Form (SPF form) as soon as you are given access to the form and enter this information into the Exxat system. Exxat is the platform VUSN uses for loading both your personal information as well as your preceptor's information.
2. Think about personal contacts in your area. If your hospital will permit you to practice in their facility, think about either a NP or MD that you either know or currently work with who would be a good preceptor. Then ask them if they would be willing to precept you for approximately 20 hours per week in the Spring semester. I typically tell preceptors who are physicians that they should consider your role similar to that of a "first year intern", with the focus on performing appropriate histories and physicals, developing a list of differential diagnoses, and then developing appropriate treatment plans. If your preceptor is an experienced NP, let them know this is your first clinical rotation, and that you are focusing on the same learning experiences including histories and physicals, lists of differentials and treatment plans.
3. For the Spring be sure you have an active, unencumbered RN license in the state where you intend to complete clinicals. If you are in a compact state, you must have a "multistate" license issued by a compact state.
4. Assemble information including:
 - Preceptor packet including course objectives and updated student CV/resume/cover letter (see "Sample Preceptor Packet" online for more information)
 - Develop a personalized script for emails or direct conversations with a potential preceptor.
5. On your SPF Form, if you have checked the box requesting to receive a list of sites that other students have previously used in your area, your faculty/or the clinical placement department will contact you with that information as soon as it is available. It has been our experience that personal connections and/or knowledge of your local area are most useful, but this list may give you some additional ideas for potential sites.

Next steps:

1. Begin making contact with potential preceptors. If possible, try to meet them in person and explain that you are a Vanderbilt graduate student in your first clinical rotation, and you are interested in knowing if they would be a preceptor. If they decline the opportunity to be a preceptor, then you might ask who they would recommend. If you can't reach them personally, then an email might be another alternative. Again, let them know why you are contacting them, that you are a Vanderbilt graduate student in the PNP-AC program, and what your interest and

focus is. It would also be helpful for you to briefly tell them what your current clinical experience is, and then also provide a CV for them to review.

2. If the individual you contacted agrees to be a preceptor then make an appointment to meet with them personally, and provide them with a copy of the syllabus, and include your clinical objectives. Dress professionally and wear your VUSN nametag.

3. Other talking points for this conversation include:
 - Ask your potential preceptor about their clinical practice and background
 - Discuss clinical needs/objectives (e.g., “Will need to do approximately 20 hours of clinical per week starting January 3rd through February 28th).
 - It may also be useful to mention that you intend to stay in the local area after graduation.
 - There are benefits to precepting, primarily that preceptors may become adjunct VUSN faculty which will provide them access to our digital library, and for PNP-AC’s, hours spent precepting students may count toward their recertification requirements.
 - If you don’t know the answer to their question, tell them you or your faculty member will be happy to get back to them. If they have never been a preceptor before, let them know that your faculty will follow up with them to talk to them about your clinical objectives and answer any questions about what your clinical rotation will entail.
 - If they are willing to precept, ask them for a copy of their CV/resume and license (can be electronic or paper).

4. It often requires multiple contacts and follow-ups to receive a firm answer for a site. Be prepared for multiple contacts prior to an official “yes” or “no.”

5. Once a preceptor says “yes,” you will go the Exxat system to enter preceptor information for your clinical faculty to review. This starts the process of the clinical contract. Again clinical contracts with large health systems typically take 3 to 4 months to secure. Contracts with independently owned/operated sites may be a little faster, but you can’t start your clinical rotation until we have contracts cleared on both the preceptor and the hospital or clinic site.

6. If your preceptor has privileges at more than one hospital, we can try to get a contract for a second facility, but we limit the number of contracts to no more than two clinical sites per student. Also, in some cases students will stay at the same hospital but have a different preceptor for the summer rotation. If that is the case the contracting process for the summer semester becomes much easier.

7. If you are having trouble finding a site, your clinical placement faculty member is always available to talk, troubleshoot and assist in any way that might be helpful. This

is a team effort but note that we really need your help in identifying any given preceptor.

We are always available to talk if you have questions or concerns. We are looking forward to working with you during this school year!

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