General Information

Although prerequisites for all clinical courses must be completed before registering for clinical, it is never too soon to start looking for preceptors/clinical sites.

Be sure to review the document titled “Clinical Courses – Recommended Clinical Settings and Preceptor Selections” before you begin. This document identifies preceptor qualifications and recommended clinical settings for each clinical course. Also, review the document “Clinical Student Requirements” for time-sensitive items that must be completed before attending your first clinical (some of these items should be documented now, and others cannot be documented until 30 days [example] before you begin your first clinical.

At the end of this document is information regarding the electronic clinical tracking system (Medatrax) utilized for preceptor requests and student documentation of clinical experiences.

Students should anticipate where they would like to do their clinical preceptorship several semesters before they plan to take the clinical course. You can submit preceptor requests early (if the option is available in Medatrax), but requests should be submitted during the following timeframes to process them for the stated semester.

- Spring Semester: August 17 – September 17
- Summer Semester: February 17 – March 17
- Fall Semester: April 17 – May 17

Deadlines for submission are noted above, and in many instances, as already indicated, processing may take up to twelve weeks or longer (especially if new affiliation agreements are required). Late submissions will be processed in order of receipt and are not guaranteed to be approved and finalized in time for students to register for courses.

Once the semester begins, preceptorship requests will NOT be accepted without permission of one of the clinical coordinators (Dr. Angela Morehead or Dr. Leigh Ann McInnis).

Remember when selecting a preceptor that first one of the clinical coordinators [during the preceptor approval process], and then the faculty instructor [at the beginning of the course] provide final approval of preceptors.

Students are prohibited from starting clinical in advance of the semester. The course faculty instructor must provide written approval to the student regarding the selection of...
the preceptor and the clinical site before the student may begin the clinical experience. If the student attempts to submit clinical hours completed before given approval by the faculty of record in the clinical course, those hours will not be included in the total clinical hours for the semester. Also, beginning clinical without approval is considered an act of academic misconduct and will be reported (as per the student handbook).

Initiation of preceptor requests and submission of forms does not imply approval.

Initiation of a clinical affiliation agreement associated with a student request does not imply approval of the site for any clinical/practicum requirement.

There are several processes related to finding a preceptor and being approved to begin clinical. Let’s look at a few of these.

**How to Find A Preceptor**

The following process should begin well in advance of clinical.

1. Review the document identified above ("Clinical Courses – Recommended Clinical Settings and Preceptor Selections") regarding recommended clinical sites, preceptors, and preceptor qualifications.
2. Consider asking your faculty advisor to review your resume and cover letter before you begin your search. They may also have preceptor ideas for you and suggestions regarding how to approach prospective preceptors.
3. Brainstorm and collaborate with colleagues, friends and fellow students. Think about your professional and personal contacts (not family members). Call and ask them if they know any great providers that might be willing to precept. Think about the providers you know in your current nursing practice and if they would be willing to precept you, or know someone else that has the time or interest.
4. If you are having trouble finding a preceptor, begin your search by exploring Medatrax. Clinical sites and preceptors with active affiliation agreements can be identified in the Medatrax system. **Important**: The presence of a preceptor or clinical site in the Medatrax system does not guarantee approval of the preceptor or site for any clinical rotation. For instructions regarding how to locate preceptors and sites using the Medatrax system, see the tutorial located @ http://np.medatrax.com/help/default.aspx - titled “Student Preceptor Request Video Training”.
5. As you begin calling, emailing, or visiting clinics and preceptors, start a list that includes the names of the clinics, the individuals you spoke with and their role in the clinic (office manager, preceptor, receptionist, etc.).
6. Be willing to explore sites and preceptors beyond your immediate vicinity. To locate a preceptor/clinical site, students may need to travel (generally 1 – 1 ½ hours is considered reasonable).
7. If, after exhausting all the above, you still have not identified a preceptor/clinical site, circle back around to your faculty advisor. Share the list you have created of the preceptors/sites you have called (be sure to include all the information noted in #4). At this time, your faculty advisor will review your search criteria and may provide a few additional ideas for you or perhaps some suggestions of providers you should contact.

8. Once you have followed-up with any additional recommendations made by the faculty advisor, communicate with them regarding the outcome.

9. If at this time, you still do not have a potential preceptor/clinical site, your faculty advisor will consult with one of the clinical coordinators for additional assistance.

10. If you speak to or have a meeting with, a potential preceptor, follow-up promptly. Your follow-up can include an email or handwritten note to thank them for considering being a preceptor.