

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Nursing Student Clinical Experiences

1. What Skills/tasks are the nursing students allowed to perform?

The nursing students that complete their clinical experiences at Allina sites are at many different levels and stages in their nursing education. Nursing curricula are designed to have students engage in primarily classroom and laboratory learning in the earlier semesters (e.g., the first year) with more clinical experiences in their junior or senior year. Nursing students depend on the clinical experience to apply theory and concepts learned in the classroom to the actual practice of professional nursing.

The list below are the only tasks a nursing student **CANNOT** perform because the task requires a licensed professional:

- Administer Controlled Substances
- Administer Blood
- Program a PCA pump
- Manage Epidural Infusion, Tubing or Pump Settings
- Do EKG or Fetal Monitoring Interpretation
- Take Verbal or Telephone Orders
- Verify Informed Consent
- Advance the plan of care (must be licensed professional)
- Blood Glucose Monitoring (student would require education and competency verification)

There may be additional site/unit specific limitations. All other tasks and skills are at the discretion of the clinical instructor or the preceptor assigned to work with the nursing students. All nursing programs have different curricula for teaching basic nursing skills. Use your own judgment to determine a nursing student's readiness to perform a new skill by asking if the skill has been practiced in a lab setting and reviewing the students cognitive understanding of the intervention with rationale.

2. What are the different education levels of nursing students?

- ***Sophomore nursing students*** – some schools are beginning to admit students to the nursing program for their sophomore year. Sophomore students will likely be in a clinical group with an instructor on-site. Nursing skills and knowledge are at a beginner's level.
- ***Junior nursing students*** – the majority of nursing programs in Minnesota admit nursing students in their junior year. Therefore, clinical groups of junior nursing students are at the beginning stages of their nursing education. Nursing skills and knowledge are at a beginner's level.
- ***Senior nursing students*** – Some senior students have clinical experiences in clinical groups with the instructor on site. Senior students in their final experience prior to graduation will be in a preceptorship or capstone experience.

3. What are the differences between Clinical Groups and Preceptorships?

- **Clinical Groups** – Groups of 8 or less nursing students have a clinical experience with an on-site clinical instructor. The students may be sophomore, junior, or senior level nursing students and therefore, the skills they perform will vary greatly. **The clinical instructor should provide the unit with a list of skills/tasks the nursing students will be focusing on for each clinical experience.** The clinical instructor will observe/supervise students completing meds and skills, especially for each student's first time. The clinical instructor is not always available to observe all students performing skills or administering medications. As the RN assigned to the patient with a nursing student, you may be asked to observe/assist/supervise the student performing a skill or administer a medication. You may refuse to assist, however, you, as the RN assigned to the patient, will be required to perform the skill or administer the medication if the instructor is unavailable.
- **Preceptorships** – as an RN, you frequently will be asked to serve as a preceptor for a nursing student. Nursing students can perform any skill or task you permit under your supervision. **(Exception: tasks listed above that require licensure for completion).** You, as the licensed RN, must retain evaluation of the patient's condition, and therefore, must be present and supervising all nursing interventions. You may delegate nursing assistant functions to the nursing student which do not require direct supervision. Your goal is **not** to 'orient them to become independently competent' – but rather to identify opportunities for them to safely practice and refine nursing skills they have learned up to this time, under the safety of your supervision. The students have had education and training in basic and some higher level skills, but they have not had the clinical experience or time to develop proficiency in the skills.
- ***** If you agree to be a preceptor for a nursing student, PLEASE FREQUENTLY CHECK YOUR ALLINA EMAIL FOR MESSAGES FROM UPCOMING STUDENTS.**

4. What do nursing students document?

The nursing students MUST document all medications and any cares/interventions they provide/perform. Each student has successfully completed an on-line clin.doc Excellian course to provide them with sufficient knowledge to navigate the basic flowsheets and the MAR in Excellian. They have also been given a password to Excellian. Any password issues should be directed to the Allina TSC at 612-262-1900.

You, as the RN assigned to the patient, must document each medication as double checked and enter a note that states you have reviewed the students charting and agree (A Smart Phrase has been created in Excellian with this verbiage).

5. What does the assigned nurse document?

The staff RN retains the assessment, supervision of care and evaluation for each patient assigned to a student. The RN assigned to the patient will be responsible for documenting an assessment on the patient. The RN assigned to the patient will document per the update group that they agree with the student's charting or document their own additional assessment. Use the SmartPhrase **.Student** to concur with the documentation of the student.

6. What if the preceptor is required to float to another unit? Does the student float with her/him?

This decision requires the judgment call of the preceptor. Issues to be considered:

- How comfortable/competent does the RN feel on new unit?
- How comfortable is the student with their basic nursing skills?
- How long has the student been working with the preceptor?
- Is there another available preceptor on the home unit that could work with the student for the shift?

The preceptor and charge nurse should ultimately make the decision together based on the above criteria.

7. What if something adverse happens?

The MN Board of Nursing will ask how the RN retained the assessment, the supervision of care, treatment or task, and the evaluation of the patient for whatever was authorized to be performed by the student.

Keep in mind that nursing students can learn a great deal by observing experienced RNs carry out the restricted activities listed on the first page. Students can enhance learning by following up their observations in a variety of ways such as reviewing the agency policies and procedures related to the activity, reviewing the risks associated with the activity, asking questions to clarify why the activity was carried out in a particular manner, etc.

If you are unclear about the activities that the student nurse may perform – please check with their instructor for guidelines.

8. Social Networking and Cell Phone Usage

Social Networking

Students must be extremely careful what they post on social networking sites. A general rule of thumb is that students NEVER post any information regarding their clinical experience.

Students need to remember to treat all social networking sites as public domain.

- Do not discuss patient information
- Do not post any pictures of patients
- Do not discuss patient cases with classmates
- Do not badmouth classmates
- Do not badmouth healthcare facilities or employees

If you see a posting of unacceptable information on a social networking site by a student, please print a copy of the posting and send to the site Academic Coordinator. The Academic Coordinator will dismiss the student from their clinical experience immediately. The school may request a copy of the posting from the site – this would be used to support the schools' decision regarding the student's future academic career.

Cell Phones

- Cell phones are strictly prohibited from being used in the clinical area, except by faculty for student management.
- Smart phones may not be used for reference material during the clinical shift.
- Absolutely **NO PHOTOGRAPHS** may be taken on Allina Health campuses.
- No photos of self, patients, families, or images of the patient record can be taken.
- No Excellian screen-shots may be utilized even if they are blank and contain no patient information.
- Absolutely **NO RECORDING** conversations that occur with patients.
- Failure to comply with the above guidelines is a violation of HIPAA and Allina Health policy.
- If a student is found in violation of the policy, disciplinary action and possible legal action may be taken.