RN-BSN Program
Practicum Handbook

Roles and Responsibilities
for
Students, Faculty, and Mentors

2015-2017
Effective May 2, 2016
# Table of Contents

**Welcome** 3  
**Overview of the Nursing Program** 4  
  Mission 4  
  Philosophy of the Department of Nursing 4  
  BSN Program Goals and Outcomes 4  
  Curriculum 5  
  Practicum Learning Process 7  
  Learning Activities 7  
  Confidentiality, Ethics and Professional Behavior 7  
**Roles and Responsibilities** 9  
  Nursing Department 9  
    Director of Nursing Education/Chair, Department of Nursing 9  
    Nursing Program Faculty 9  
    Administrative Assistant 9  
  RN-BSN Student 10  
    Preparation 10  
    Required Documents 10  
    Selection of Practicum Learning Experiences and Mentors 11  
    Practicum Site Affiliation Contracts 11  
    General Information for the Student 11  
    Policies 12  
**NUR 340 Community Health Nursing** 13  
  Faculty Guided Practicum Experience Activities 13  
**NUR 450 and NUR 455 Nursing Concepts Capstone, Parts I & II** 19  
  Faculty Guided Practicum Experience Activities 19  
**UIU RN-BSN Program Contact Information** 24  

**Appendix**  
  A UIU RN-BSN Course Descriptions 25
Welcome

Welcome to the practicum component of the Upper Iowa University RN-BSN Program. Our faculty and mentors join other nurses and health care professionals to facilitate the continuing education of Upper Iowa University RN-BSN students. We appreciate the willingness of health care leaders to lend their expertise as instructors, liaisons, and mentors to our students seeking to advance their knowledge, skills and careers. In partnership with program faculty, they are making a most valuable contribution to the next generation of BSN nurses.

The practicum courses of the RN-BSN curriculum build on foundational coursework to provide learning opportunities across settings and to enhance health care quality through the design and implementation of a process improvement project. Their experiences in these courses will distinguish them among their peers as professional nurses who possess excellent knowledge and skills in their chosen role. We look forward to our graduates taking a leadership role in providing better nursing care and services for diverse populations across the healthcare continuum.

The purpose of the Practicum Handbook is to provide an orientation to the roles and responsibilities of the student, mentor, instructor and staff in practicum courses. Please read the Practicum Handbook carefully to understand each of these roles and the collaboration required for successful learning in practicum courses.
OVERVIEW OF THE NURSING PROGRAM

Department of Nursing
The Department of Nursing embraces the mission and vision of Upper Iowa University by providing student-centered educational programs through flexible, multiple delivery systems in an environment where diversity is respected, encouraged and nurtured. Upper Iowa University and the Department of Nursing will be recognized and respected as an exceptional and ascending institution of higher learning.

The Mission of the Department of Nursing
The mission of the Upper Iowa University Department of Nursing is to provide a collaborative learning experience which develops transformative nurse leaders and global citizens.

The Philosophy of the Department of Nursing
We believe:

- nursing is both an art and a science
- in the integration of nursing science and general education components to strengthen understanding of society as a whole
- education is a collaborative partnership between students, faculty, support staff, and practice partners
- faculty supports the learning needs of a diverse community of students
- students and faculty actively engage in learning experiences to advance the practice of nursing
- curriculum fosters and cultivates creativity, transformative learning, professional accountability and academic integrity
- nursing faculty serve as role models who guide, mentor and develop leadership skills, cultural awareness, safe and ethical practice, and life-long learning

BSN Program Goals and Outcomes
The purpose of Upper Iowa University’s RN-BSN program is to enhance the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the registered nurse practicing in a rapidly changing health care environment.

Goal 1. Integrate theoretical knowledge and evidence-based practice in a collaborative healthcare delivery environment.

1. Outcome: Utilize health history and assessment to provide evidence-based and patient-centered care.
2. Outcome: Apply the principles of pathology in managing safe and effective patient-centered care.
3. Outcome: Promote optimal health, healing and disease prevention through effective utilization of teaching and learning principles.
4. Outcome: Demonstrate the ability to utilize research to advance nursing practice and improve patient outcomes.
5. **Outcome**: Collaborate with members of the health care team to improve care processes leading to enhanced patient outcomes.

**Goal 2.** Demonstrate leadership and teamwork to improve outcomes in a variety of settings.

1. **Outcome**: Utilize an understanding of health care organizations and the environment in which health care is provided to support quality health care delivery.
2. **Outcome**: Demonstrate the professional skills and personal qualities that characterize effective nurse leaders and managers.
3. **Outcome**: Investigate the multiple and varied roles of the nurse in issues of health care and nursing.
4. **Outcome**: Value different styles of communication used by patients, families, and health care providers.
5. **Outcome**: Recognize the unique and varied contributions of self and others in developing an effective health care team.

**Goal 3.** Manage technology and resources to communicate, support and provide quality care across the health care continuum.

1. **Outcome**: Appreciate that information and technology skills are essential for safe patient care.
2. **Outcome**: Utilize technology to access information that supports decision making.
3. **Outcome**: Identify the application of technology and information management tools to coordinate and support the quality and safety of patient care.

**Goal 4.** Develop practices of life-long learning through seeking knowledge and assimilating professional standards, ethical principles, and legal accountability in nursing practice.

1. **Outcome**: Demonstrate ethical principles, legal implications, and professional behaviors that guide nursing practice.
2. **Outcome**: Incorporate professional standards of practice while assuming personal responsibility for lifelong learning.
3. **Outcome**: Value the need for continuous improvement in clinical practice based on evolving knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the professional nurse.

**Curriculum**

The curriculum is composed of didactic courses and practice-based or practicum courses (Appendix A). Each course is comprised of specific learning outcomes, activities, and evaluation measures. The didactic courses present the nursing knowledge, theoretical concepts, models, and research that inform patient care and evidence-based practice. The practicum courses provide opportunities for students to expand and apply knowledge; practice leadership skills; plan, implement and evaluate
interventions or programs; and develop skills needed for nursing leaders today and in the future.

The curriculum is delivered in two modalities - a hybrid of classroom-based and online (web-based) learning or as fully online learning. Class size varies depending on the nature of the course, but is typically less than 20 in a section. In these courses, the faculty guide students in the accomplishment of course objectives through group and individual projects, assignments and experiences. Students, in groups or as individuals, collaborate with faculty and mentors to define learning needs, establish learning goals, design learning activities, and evaluate the learning outcomes.

The UIU RN-BSN Program maintains affiliations with a wide variety of healthcare agencies. The sites for practicum vary according to the course requirements, and may include hospitals, medical centers, home health agencies, public health departments, primary care clinics, specialty clinics or facilities, long term care facilities, schools, workplace wellness centers, health maintenance organizations, homeless shelters, and other community-based programs. Students take an active part in choosing a site for practicum work that is located within their community or convenient for travel from work or home. The program faculty and staff take responsibility for the necessary approvals of mentors and sites.
Practicum Learning Process
Students develop learning contracts together with the instructor and the mentor. Part of this process involves students identifying individual or group goals and learning needs, as well as preferred learning styles. Students combine the required course goals and competencies with individual goals to develop a unique educational experience. Students then collaborate with the instructor and mentor to articulate and design the learning activities that will lead to achievement of goals and outcomes. The student conducts a self-assessment to evaluate the achievement of goals. This includes a description of what was or was not accomplished as planned, and the student’s satisfaction with what was achieved.

At the conclusion of the practicum experience, faculty evaluates student accomplishment of course competencies and specific practicum expectations. Students also evaluate the practicum experience, including a self-evaluation process. Evaluation of the process and student delivered product will be sought from the practicum mentor.

Students are encouraged to improve their learning experience by using the following strategies:
• Develop supportive relationships (personal, professional and academic)
• Find others with different learning styles to form a study group
• Improve the fit between individual learning style and lifestyle or situation
• Become a more adaptable and flexible learner
• Strengthen areas of weakness
• Develop a long term plan and set short term goals
• Seek safe opportunities to practice new skills
• Reward themselves each step along the way
• Keep their eye on the prize—graduation!

Learning Activities
Learning activities must fit with the course outcomes, faculty developed learning experiences, practicum resources and opportunities, and the specific role that the student is studying. The instructor and mentor or cooperating agency contact must approve the student learning activities that take place for practicum hours. Specific guidelines for each practicum course are provided.

Confidentiality, Ethics and Professional Behavior
Confidentiality is of paramount importance to protect the privacy of patients, families, staff and agencies. Students must adhere to agency policies regarding protection of patient privacy. When students are given access to patients’ records and reports, these must be treated as confidential. HIPAA regulations must be followed and no personal identifying information such as names, initials, birthdates or dates of service may be recorded and removed from the agency.

Students must practice in practicum courses according to the ANA’s Code for Nurses with Interpretive Statements (2010). The Code states the ethical ideals for which
nurses should be accountable, including but not limited to: fully respecting patients, safeguarding patients’ right to privacy, advocating for safe, ethical and legal care, and maintaining their own practicum competence.

Students are expected to present themselves as professional nurses in the practice settings at all times. They are required to dress in a manner that is appropriate to the practice setting. They must assume responsibility for their actions and be accountable for their behavior. They should take safety precautions to protect themselves and their patients. A UIU identification card, available from the Office of Student Development, is to be placed in a badge holder and used as the official name pin.

Standards of academic integrity must be followed at all times and are detailed in the University Catalog and RN-BSN Student Handbook. Disciplinary actions will be taken against students who do not abide by these standards.

Iowa students must have current Iowa RN licensure. The Administrative Rules (chapter 2) of the Iowa Board of Nursing states that nursing courses with a practicum component may not be taken by a person:

a. Who has been denied licensure by the board.
b. Whose license is currently suspended, surrendered or revoked in any United States jurisdiction.
c. Whose license/registration is currently suspended, surrendered or revoked in another country due to disciplinary action.
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

NURSING DEPARTMENT

Director of Nursing Education/Chair, Department of Nursing
The Chair of the Nursing Department administers the program. The Chair is responsible for scheduling courses and overseeing the educational arrangements with the affiliated practicum sites. Together with the course faculty, the Chair implements and interprets policies and procedures pertaining to the practicum component of the program.

Nursing Program Faculty
UIU RN-BSN Program faculty has doctoral and/or master's degrees related to their field of nursing practice. They serve as master educators and professional mentors for students and colleagues, as well as facilitators, instructors, role models and resource persons in their particular area of expertise. The full-time faculty role encompasses teaching, scholarship, and service, including practice in a particular field. Part-time adjunct faculty teaches courses in their area of practice, according to the needs of the program.

Faculty guides and facilitates the learning process and evaluates students according to the course outcomes and student performance of the learning activities for a particular course. Faculty communicates directly with students and mentors to collaboratively establish the student’s learning contract, facilitate learning experiences and evaluate the student’s performance.

Faculty develops working relationships with practicum mentors to facilitate the accomplishment of practicum projects and assignments. They also assist with obtaining educational contracts, contact key personnel within each site, help conduct site visits, and communicate with the Chair, Department of Nursing.

Administrative Assistant
The Administrative Assistant collects all documents related to practicum contracts. The Administrative Assistant coordinates the completion of practicum education contracts with partnering agencies, maintains a list of current partnering agencies and facilitates renewal of contracts. The Administrative Assistant also monitors student compliance with practicum requirements such as CPR training, health and immunization records, and criminal background checks.
RN-BSN STUDENT

RN-BSN Program students are adult learners who lead very full lives. They are seeking educational opportunities to meet their own goals and build on their previous personal and professional experience.

Students who are adult learners need to be self-directed and internally motivated. We recognize that as learners, RN-BSN students represent increasing diversity and a wide variety in learning styles, motivation, prior experience and patterns of participation in educational programs. Therefore, our program uses learning strategies that meet the adult learner’s need to participate in defining needs, goals, activities, and outcome evaluation.

Faculty and mentors work to respond to and build upon the assumptions that the adult learner has accumulated experiences that serve as a resource for learning and has a need to relate learning to real-life situations. Adult learners want to apply newly acquired knowledge and skills immediately. The incorporation of these assumptions into the educational experience facilitates and enhances learning and satisfaction.

Preparation
Advance planning is necessary to ensure a smooth entry into a practicum course. Prior to taking the course, the student must satisfy all prerequisites, assure that all requirements in Certified Background.com are current, and complete advance planning documents as required. The prerequisites for each course are listed in the University Catalog and in the course syllabi.

The number of credits for practicum courses varies. NUR 340 Community Health Nursing has one credit of practicum time (one credit = 38 clock hours), NUR 450 and NUR 455, Nursing Concepts Capstone I and Nursing Concepts Capstone II each have one credit of practicum time. The student spends additional hours studying and preparing and completing assignments, usually double the time spent in actual class or practicum activities.

Required Documents
Students must produce evidence of these important documents for each practicum course. Documentation is submitted and verified through Certified Background.com

- Current and active RN license
- Current CPR certification that meets American Heart Association Health-care Provider guidelines
- Immunity status (including annual influenza vaccine)
- Blood borne pathogen training
- Understanding of HIPAA compliance standards
- Any additional documents and/or tests required by the practicum agency where a student is completing their practicum experience.
All students, regardless of academic goal or geographic area, **must obtain this documentation prior to beginning the nursing major** and are responsible for keeping requirements current through their Certified Background.com account. No student will be allowed to participate in a practicum course without current requirements met.

**Selection of Practicum Learning Experiences and Mentors**
Each practicum course has specific objectives and learning activities. Nursing program faculty has developed practicum activities that are appropriate to each of the distinct practicum courses in the curriculum. Mentor relationships have been developed with selected practicum partners to guide students in process improvement practicum projects.

**Practicum Site Affiliation Contracts**
Practicum sites require either an educational contract or a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the University and the agency. The UIU administrative team and nursing faculty work with the partner agency to obtain the signed agreements. Students may not begin the practicum experience until the official start of class, and must follow faculty guidelines regarding access to practicum agencies.

**General Information for the Student**
UIU RN-BSN faculty manages the practicum experiences. Each practicum course has specific instructions for student communication with partnering agencies and/or practicum mentors. The UIU RN-BSN faculty has prepared practicum mentors for the practicum partnerships through advance communication and planning. Specific details are shared with students as course planning proceeds.

1. You may need to meet several times with your agency mentor to discuss progress toward completing your group or individual practicum projects and experiences. Either you or your mentor can initiate these conferences.

2. Faculty will monitor your accomplishment of practicum objectives during the course and provide constructive feedback to facilitate goal completion. When appropriate, feedback from practicum mentors and group members will also be considered when determining grades for practicum work.

3. Your instructor will schedule conferences with you as necessary to evaluate attainment of course outcomes. You may also initiate these conferences, which may take place in person, by phone, email or the web-based course.

4. The number of hours you spend each week meeting practicum expectations and hours may be flexible. However, you must complete a minimum number of hours of learning activities for each practicum course as specified in the syllabus. The number of hours is determined by the number of credits allocated to the practicum portion of the course. **The time you spend meeting course requirements cannot be paid time as an employee.**
5. You are expected to present yourself as a professional nurse at all times when in the practicum setting. Students dress in attire that is appropriate to the specific agency or practicum site. Students assume responsibility and accountability for their actions and behavior. An Upper Iowa University identification card, available from the Office of Student Development, is to be placed in a badge holder and used as the form of identification whenever in practicum settings.

**Policies**

Students must purchase professional liability insurance through Upper Iowa University when enrolled in a course with practicum experiences. The fee for this insurance will be automatically billed for the applicable course.

Mentors cannot be a personal friend, peer or relative of the student. When the student and mentor have a personal relationship, the mentor cannot evaluate the student's performance objectively and fairly.

Students who fail to complete requirements and planning guidelines of the Nursing Program will not be allowed to register for a practicum course. Failure to complete all planning requirements may result in administrative withdrawal from a practicum course.

A grade of I is given only under extreme circumstances and is determined by the faculty member involved. After the grade of I is given, the work must be completed by the end of the following academic semester.
NUR 340 Community Health Nursing  
Faculty Guided Practicum Experience Activities

Course Description
This course focuses on care of the community as client. Emphasis is placed on the role of the nurse in addressing the preventative health needs of populations at risk and other community groups in various community practice settings. Current public health problems, trends in health care delivery and community resources are examined. Students analyze the socio-cultural, political, economic, ethical and environmental factors that influence community and global health. Students will implement a practicum project to meet the needs of an identified population.

Course Outcomes
1. Define the role of the nurse in various community settings.
2. Discuss the use of key health planning concepts in community health practice.
3. Apply the nursing process to the community.
4. Examine the impact of culture, socioeconomic status, lifestyle, environment and violence on the health of the community.
5. Analyze the health of the community based on data from a community assessment.
6. Identify appropriate primary, secondary and tertiary prevention strategies in working with populations at risk and other groups within the community.
7. Apply basic epidemiological concepts to community health practice nursing.
8. Summarize health, welfare and environmental policy and legislation in the United States.
9. Utilize research findings in the discussion of community health nursing.

Community Assessment (16 hours)
Communities develop health patterns. In some practice settings the community is the primary client. In other cases an individual client or a family may have, or be predisposed to, certain problems that require an assessment of certain community patterns. Each student will complete a community assessment using a windshield survey as one method of data collection. The assignment is completed in three parts.

Community Assessment (Part 1)-Windshield Survey
Students will tour their community and collect relevant data to complete a windshield survey. Ideally, the windshield survey is conducted at different times of the day (during the day when people are at work or school, and in the evening when different activities are occurring) and even repeated on different days of the week to gather a more comprehensive view of the community. This initial information will help students focus on specific concerns or community groups for a more comprehensive assessment later in this course. Students will use the data collected during the windshield survey in conjunction with additional research data gathered by the student to complete a community assessment using Gordon’s Functional Health Patterns in the second part of
this assignment. A total of four practicum hours is allocated to part one of this assignment.

Community Assessment (Part 2)-Community Health Needs and Health Improvement plan
Every state is required to conduct a CHNA and determine Health Improvement plans for the identified needs. Students will conduct a web search of their states Department of Public Health and other websites that will supply information pertaining to the health needs and health improvement plans for their chosen community. Using the Windshield survey and this web search, students will identify a specific health need for their community and a health improvement plan for this health need. A total of six practicum hours is allocated to this part of the assignment.

Community Assessment (Part 3)-Intervention Paper
For the third and final installment of this practicum experience, students will propose an intervention for the health need or focus identified in their FHP assignment. Six hours of practicum time is allocated to this experience. The student will submit a 5-6 page paper detailing the identified problem and solution using the following template:

- Assessment
  - Community and population (include demographic information)
  - Problem or health need
  - Population health outcomes
  - Is there any current or pending legislation, policy, or initiatives that support the potential solution you have identified?

- Planning
  - Describe your intervention/solution to the problem you have identified
  - Identify resources needed to implement your plan (time, money, personnel)
  - Describe the timeline to complete your plan from assessment to evaluation

- Evaluation
  - Describe your plan for evaluation of your solution, how will you know it worked?
  - Were your health outcomes met? How will you measure them?

- Conclusion
  - Summarize your findings and what you learned from this project
  - Has your perspective on public/community health initiatives changed since the beginning of this project?

- Resources
  - Describe the support you found for your solution from scholarly resources (at least 5)

Students will give a 7-10 minute presentation of their community assessment findings and intervention plan during week 8. Hybrid students will present to their peers during
the final class period. Online students will record their presentation and upload it to the course for their peers and instructor to view.

**Teaching Plan (6 hours)**
For this practicum experience, students will use the information from their functional health patterns assessment to develop a written plan for an educational activity to address a health need in their community. Each student will execute the teaching plan by delivering the content to an appropriate audience within the community. Each student will choose a location for their presentation and coordinate with the facility for delivery.

Using the nursing process as a guide, students will create a document describing the educational activity as follows:

- **Assessment**
  - Population
  - Health need

- **Diagnosis**
  - What is the knowledge deficit related to?

- **Planning**
  - Title of the educational program
  - Target audience
  - Learning activity outcomes
  - Healthy People 2020 related goals
  - Interventions used from the Intervention Wheel
  - Teaching strategies to be used
  - The plan for the educational activity

- **Implementation**
  - Plan for delivery of the educational activity (length, location...)
  - Provide a detailed outline of the presentation
  - Audio-visual materials to be used (must develop at least one supplemental item to be gifted to the community organization you present to)
    - attach a copy of anything developed

- **Evaluation**
  - How will you know the learning outcomes were met?

- **Resources**
  - List the resources used that support your educational activity plan (a minimum of two references *not including your textbook*)

*Each student will present their teaching plan to an appropriate audience within the community and return a completed Presentation Validation Form to the course instructor.*
The Role of the Nurse in the Community (6 hours)
Nurses have traditionally taken health care to the people where they live, work and go to school. In this practicum experience, each student is asked to research the role of a nurse who works in the community to improve the health of the people living there. Each student will then interview a nurse in the role of interest.

This experience is meant to give each student a perspective on community-oriented, population-oriented nursing care provided in the community. Opportunities for health promotion and health education in the community may occur in many locations including senior living areas, local college communities, the county jail, public or parochial schools, preschool settings, churches, industrial sites or many other locations.

Once each student has identified a nursing role they wish to examine more closely, additional research should include readings in professional journals and public documents, online websites and professional organizations, local or national newspaper articles, and culminate by interviewing a nurse in their community about the role.

Each student will summarize their findings in a formal paper (minimum of 3 pages). This paper should reflect the following information from their research and include a reference of the resources used:

Description of the Role
- Describe the nurse’s role in the community and give examples of what he/she does on a daily basis.
- Identify how and who the nurses would work with for coordination of services to provide a comprehensive health program in the community.

Role in Population-Based Care
- How would the nurse utilize a population-based approach in her role?
- What levels of prevention would be provided in this role?
- What interventions from the Intervention Wheel would a nurse in this role use on a daily basis?
- Does this role include assessment and screening of individuals, families, or groups? If yes, please include examples.
- What health education responsibilities does the nurse have in the community?
- How important would record keeping and documentation, including computerization and ethical implications, be for a nurse in this role?

Advantages and Disadvantages of the Role
- If you were offered a position as a nurse in the role you have described, what advantages and disadvantages would you find in assuming this role?

Disaster Simulation (4 hours)
Natural or man-made disasters can occur at any time under many circumstances. For this practicum experience, students will complete the computer-based disaster simulation, Disaster in Franklin County. The simulation will allow students to explore
the roles of key figures in the management of a natural disaster. Each student will also complete the following readings that accompany the simulation.

Required Practicum Readings
- Complete the Disaster Simulation at [Disaster in Franklin County Simulation](#)
- The University Of Minnesota School Of Public Health provides this free Disaster Simulation. Each student will need to open an account (free) and receive a password to complete the simulation.

Following the simulation, each student will create a document addressing the following points:
1. Reflect on and describe what you learned from the [Franklin County Disaster Simulation](#).
2. Reflect on and describe what aspect of the disaster simulation surprised you the most?
3. How does this experience reflect the stages of disaster management cycle described in the textbook (prevention-preparedness-response-recovery)?
4. How could you relate what you learned to the website Ready.gov (Be Informed -- Make a plan – Build a Kit)?
5. What could you apply from the [Franklin County Disaster Simulation](#) to a disaster in the community where you live?
6. What could families do to prepare for potential disasters in their community?

**Family Assessment Case Study (6 hours)**
For this practicum assignment students will assume the role of a home health nurse caring for a family dealing with the premature birth of a set of twins.

Students will complete the “Double the Challenges, Double the Joy” case study in Module 9 of the Community Public Health Nursing Online modules for the course text.

Students will address the following points regarding their care of the family in an APA paper:
- Give an example of how you might fill each of roles of the Nine-Star Family Nurse caring for the Jackson family
- Based on the information in the case study, identify 3 health care issues you would include in planning interventions for the family
- Using the Friedman Family Assessment Model, what additional information would you need to plan and implement specific interventions for the needs you have identified? (You do not need to do the whole Friedman Assessment, just those sections that pertain to the health care issues you have identified)
- Are there any Healthy People 2020 objectives that address the care of families in this situation?
- What are some community resources available to families in this situation?
The paper should include headings, an introduction, conclusion, and at least 2 references outside of the text. There is no minimum length for this assignment but it should be no more than 5 pages in length.
NUR 450: Nursing Concepts Capstone I  
NUR 455: Nursing Concepts Capstone II  
Faculty Guided Practicum Experience Activities and RN-BSN Nursing Student e-Portfolio Information

Course Descriptions:
In this course, students apply the concepts and skills acquired in the RN-BSN program to demonstrate growth as a competent, caring, professional nurse. Students' research and design a capstone project intended to demonstrate scholarly inquiry, nursing excellence, leadership and communication skills that integrate the general education learning outcomes with the learning outcomes in the major. Demonstration of baccalaureate level achievement is required.

NUR 450: Nursing Concepts Capstone I Course Outcomes:
Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:
1. Integrate theoretical knowledge and evidence-based practice in a collaborative healthcare delivery environment.
2. Demonstrate leadership and teamwork to improve outcomes in a selected health care setting.
3. Manage technology and resources to communicate, support and provide quality care within the health care continuum.
4. Develop practices of life-long learning through seeking knowledge and assimilating professional standards, ethical principles, and legal accountability in nursing practice.

NUR 455: Nursing Concepts Capstone II Course Outcomes:
Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:
1. Integrate theoretical knowledge and evidence-based practice in a collaborative healthcare delivery environment.
2. Demonstrate leadership and teamwork to improve outcomes in a selected health care setting.
3. Manage technology and resources to communicate, support and provide quality care within the health care continuum.
4. Develop practices of life-long learning through seeking knowledge and assimilating professional standards, ethical principles, and legal accountability in nursing practice.
5. Demonstrate personal accomplishment of the RN-BSN program goals and outcomes in a portfolio presentation.

Background
The Upper Iowa University RN-BSN program aims to develop students' foundational skills in Quality Improvement (QI) and Patient Safety (PS) through education and practical experience.

QI projects provide students with opportunities to improve patient care across various healthcare settings, under the collaborative guidance of University faculty and agency...
mentors. The aim is to foster students’ interests and strengthen skills in quality improvement and patient safety, motivating them to take initiative in recognizing, supporting and participating in QI in their future careers.

**Project-Based Learning**
Through project-based learning (PBL), students will apply the concepts and skills acquired in the RN-BSN program to demonstrate growth as a competent, caring, professional nurse. Students research and design a capstone project intended to demonstrate scholarly inquiry, nursing excellence, leadership and communication skills that integrate the general education learning outcomes with the learning outcomes in the major. Demonstration of baccalaureate level achievement is required.

Project-based learning is a model that organizes learning around complex tasks, based on challenging questions or problems, that involves students in design, problem-solving, decision making, or investigative activities that culminate in realistic products or conclusions. To guide each student project, the nursing process will serve as the conceptual framework.

Prior to starting the capstone courses (NUR 450 and NUR 455), students will be required to meet specific criteria in order to complete the practicum. These requirements include:

- Meeting stated deadlines
- Turn in the completed mentor form.
- Having all information in Certified Background up to date and remain current throughout the practicum experience
- Complete all paperwork required by the healthcare organization

Failure to complete any of these requirements will result in the student not being able to take the capstone courses and may result in their progression to graduation being altered.

Students will be required to find a mentor to work with to complete a quality improvement (QI) project within a healthcare organization. The project work will take place over two successive terms in the NUR 450: Nursing Concepts Capstone I (38 hours) and NUR 455: Nursing Concepts Capstone II (38 hours) courses, respectively. The overall goal is for students to understand the quality improvement process and how this process is applied to a project.

**Project Structure and Hours**
Quality improvement projects will be selected by students and mentors involved in different health care settings such as hospital, long-term care facilities and community health. QI teams will

- Consist of the RN-BSN students enrolled in the final, capstone course sequence at Upper Iowa University
- Have a designated faculty leader, who will act as the supervising and education representative; and
- Be facilitated by the mentor and faculty by presenting project parameters, receiving work and progress reports, providing feedback to the student and accepting the final project on behalf of the agency.

Students are responsible for logging a total of 76 project hours (38 hours in NUR 450: Nursing Concepts Capstone I and 38 hours in NUR 455: Nursing Concepts Capstone II). This time is spent in individual tasks and completing work related to the project. Questions regarding credit for activities not listed should be directed to your instructor.

- Individual research for project advancement
- Assignments completed for progression of the Project collaboration and designated meetings with agency mentor

**Defined Roles and Responsibilities**

As a representative of Upper Iowa University (UIU), it is essential that each faculty member and student function in a capacity congruent with the mission and goals of UIU and the RN-BSN Program. To guide this process the following roles have been defined, and are applied to both NUR 450 and NUR 455, or the duration of the project.

*The Course Coordinator will do the following.*

- Send the student an email containing information, approximately 6-8 weeks ahead of time, on finding a mentor. The student will fill out a Mentor Information Tracking Sheet with information about the mentor, the mentor’s email and phone number, the mentor’s department, agency information, and information about the student.
- Confirm with the mentor’s agency that the mentor has agreed to working with the student (as appropriate or per agency request).
- Fill out any paperwork per agency request.

*The student will do the following.*

- Find a mentor to work with on a quality improvement (QI) project. Read and comply with any agency orientation or requirements to be completed prior to the start of NUR 450 and remain in compliance throughout NUR 450 and NUR 455.
- Comply with providing any updated information to the Upper Iowa University RN-BSN Program prior to the start of NUR 450.
- Maintain a professional relationship with the agency mentor and other agency personnel, including wearing their UIU name badge when in the agency or community.
- Maintain a professional appearance when representing Upper Iowa University within the community.
- Take ownership, initiative, and be a team player.
Commit on average 3-4 hours per week to the project, over the two-term (16 week) timeframe. Time in facility will vary based on the project, with research and writing typically occurring off site.

Complete project tasks within the agreed timelines and within defined quality parameters (scope, implemented PDSA, evidence based support, QI product).

Maintain regular updates with mentor and course faculty to address these three key questions.
  o What have you done since the last update?
  o What are you planning to do next?
  o Are you experiencing any issues/difficulties?

Read and comply with all pertinent Upper Iowa University RN-BSN Student Handbook and agency policies.

Be responsible for meeting course and assignment objectives that pertain to the learning experience.

Maintain open lines of communication with the course instructor and agency mentor.

**The faculty instructor will do the following.**

  - Facilitate solution of any problems which may arise at the clinical agency.
  - Follow up with the agency mentor regarding student performance.
  - Provide a copy of the healthcare agency evaluation to the student.
  - Monitor progress via weekly documentation and monitoring, conducting student meetings as necessary.
  - Proactively address any agency, mentor or student concerns.
  - Provide continual support and guidance to the student in definition and completion of project deliverables, especially: scope, goals and measurement of change.
  - Coach the students in QI concepts.
  - Help students obtain resources and support the learning process.

**For the duration of the project, the QI project mentor will do the following.**

  - Collaborate with UIU RN-BSN faculty to identify mutually acceptable QI projects that support the program learning outcomes and contribute to quality improvement goals of the agency.
  - Facilitate timely communication with students and key university personnel throughout the duration of the QI project.
  - Provide support and guidance to the student in definition and completion of project deliverables, especially: scope, goals and measurement of change.
  - Contribute to student understanding of QI concepts.
  - Help students obtain relevant resources (e.g. data, interviews, etc.).
  - Engage key nursing and support staff to support the QI project.
  - Proactively work with university faculty and nursing program leadership to resolve any project difficulties.
• Serve as a resource person at the healthcare agency for Upper Iowa University faculty and the student.
• Appoint an alternate mentor, if needed.
• Maintain communication with Upper Iowa University regarding student performance.
• Complete an evaluation of student’s performance.

RN-BSN Nursing Student e-Portfolio Information
Another important part of the capstone courses is the completion of an e-Portfolio. The student portfolio is used to showcase professional role development, values, core competencies and critical thinking. The portfolio is a product that demonstrates student achievement of individual goals and BSN Program Goals and Outcomes. It provides a framework to demonstrate the process of growth and achievement over the duration of the RN-BSN program. The e-Portfolio contains examples of student accomplishments, academic work, and feedback or evaluations from faculty and self. The completed portfolio is an integral portion of the student and program assessment process.

The e-Portfolio is an integral component of the capstone courses, a culmination of the RN-BSN educational process. Students are encouraged to keep all completed assignments, graded or ungraded, to use as potential artifacts in the e-Portfolio. It is recommended that students create an electronic folder on their personal computer or an external storage device where all assignments and feedback can be stored, with a backup plan implemented as well.
UIU RN-BSN Program Contact Information

Contact information for each location and for full time nursing faculty are located on the Nursing Program website, www.uiu.edu/nursing

Virginia Wangerin, PhD, MSN, RN, CNE
Director of Nursing Education; Chair, Department of Nursing
   E-mail: wangerinv@uiu.edu
   Phone: 515-225-1800

Su Hazelton
Administrative Assistant, Nursing Program
   E-mail: hazeltons58@uiu.edu
   Phone: 515-225-1800
   Fax: 515-225-1919

Program Administration Mailing Address:

Upper Iowa University, Suite 200
RN-BSN Program
5000 Westown Parkway
West Des Moines, IA 50266
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NUR 305 Professional Communication for Nurses</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>This course focuses on concepts related to professional communication in the delivery of health care, both individual and collaborative. Students will explore verbal, written and electronic communications as applied to the nursing profession and interprofessional teams, including legal and ethical considerations. The impact and integration of information technology in health care will be explored. Health literacy and effective teaching/learning strategies across the life span will be included.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prerequisites: Admission to the nursing program.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NUR 315 Professional Nursing Practice</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>This course focuses on the identification, exploration and analysis of concepts that influence professional nursing practice. Historical, social, political, professional, legal and ethical factors will be examined. Traditional and emerging roles of the nurse will be analyzed to identify the present and future state of professional practice in the rapidly expanding field of nursing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prerequisites: Admission to the nursing program.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NUR 325 Integrated Concepts I</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Concepts related to health assessment, understanding of pathophysiology and effective nursing management of health care are presented. The interrelationships among concepts are explored as well as strategies to promote optimal restoration of health while providing safe, client centered and quality driven health care. This is the first of a two-course sequence that must be completed to fully meet the competencies related to all body systems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prerequisites: Admission to the nursing program and NUR 305</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NUR 335 Integrated Concepts II</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Concepts related to health assessment, understanding of pathophysiology and effective nursing management of health care are presented. The interrelationships among concepts are explored as well as strategies to promote optimal restoration of health while providing safe, client centered and quality driven health care. This is the second of a two-course sequence that must be completed to fully meet the competencies related to all body systems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prerequisites: Admission to the nursing program and NUR 325</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NUR 340 Community Health Nursing</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>This course focuses on care of the community as client. Emphasis is on the role of the nurse in addressing the preventive health needs of populations at risk and other community groups in various community practice settings. Current public health problems, trends in health care delivery and community resources are examined. Students analyze the sociocultural, political, economic, ethical and environmental factors that influence community and global health. Students will implement a practicum project to meet the needs of an identified population.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prerequisites: NUR 335</td>
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<td>NUR 400</td>
<td>Evidence-Based Practice in Nursing</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>NUR 420</td>
<td>Nursing Leadership and Management</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>NUR 450</td>
<td>Nursing Concepts Capstone I</td>
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<tr>
<td>NUR 455</td>
<td>Nursing Concepts Capstone II</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>NUR 430</td>
<td>History of Nursing</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>NUR 432</td>
<td>Honoring Self-care: Balancing Mind, Body and Spirit</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>NUR 434</td>
<td>Introduction to Global Health</td>
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<td>NUR 436</td>
<td>Understanding Nursing Theory</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>NUR 438</td>
<td>Our Image: The Image of Nursing</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>NUR 440</td>
<td>Service Learning</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>NUR 442</td>
<td>Understanding Healthcare Policy</td>
<td>2</td>
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