



RUTGERS HEALTH
School of Nursing

Entry to Baccalaureate Practice Division
Clinical Resource Guide

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Introduction

This Clinical Resource Guide aims to help you succeed in your clinical nursing courses at Rutgers School of Nursing. This guide supplements our policies, catalog, and Baccalaureate Student Handbook. As always, faculty, staff, and administration are here to help you should you have any questions or concerns during your journey toward becoming a Rutgers School of Nursing nurse. We share your excitement and passion as you work towards joining us in the most trusted profession.



--Your Rutgers School of Nursing Faculty

Expectations in the Clinical and Lab Setting

Nursing clinicals are both exciting and challenging. It's a pivotal point in your education where you transition from classroom learning to real-world patient care. Clinical experiences aren't just about learning the skills required to be a professional nurse, but it is also about assuming the role of a nurse. This includes following the [Nursing Code of Ethics](#), which provides a moral compass and framework for ethical decision-making in your professional life, ensuring patient safety and well-being, and showing respect for the rights of patients and colleagues.

1. Contractual

Clinical agencies sign a contract that guides your clinical experience. It states that “The Facility shall provide clinical instruction and supervision of the students by personnel qualified in Nursing who meet the standards of recognized professional accrediting agencies or state agencies and the stated objectives of the University.” The instruction provided by the clinical faculty is guided by your didactic instructor and faculty course leaders and follows your syllabus.

General expectations. As in any professional environment, your conduct and demeanor must be professional and safe (“safe” refers to your own safety as well as that of your patients and colleagues). The clinical agency has the right to dismiss any student who is not following the rules and regulations of the facility. This will, in turn, warrant an immediate course failure.

Hours and breaks. You might be wondering if you’re going to get a break during your clinical rotations. Student nurses are expected to comply with agency rules regarding breaks for employed nurses. The industry standard is as follows:

- Students who work a 6–7-hour clinical shift will receive a 15-minute break. If you work a 6–7-hour shift, you will **not** be given a break for lunch.
- Students who work an 8–10-hour clinical shift will receive a 30-minute break.
- Students who work a 12-hour clinical shift will receive a 30-minute meal and a 15-minute break.

2. Responsibilities Before and During Clinicals

To get the most out of your experience, be sure to:

- Prepare for your clinical: review your syllabus, the course materials, and your notes. Study for your clinicals as you would for an exam!
- Never attempt something without adequate orientation, theoretical preparation, or appropriate assistance/supervision.
- When you document client care, your notes should be comprehensive yet brief; ensure accuracy in the preparation, administration, and documentation of medications and other nursing procedures. If you’re not certain, ask for assistance.
- When communicating with your instructors, do your best to be succinct yet accurate and thorough.
- Should you witness a questionable nursing practice that affects client welfare, report it to your instructor.
- And, of course, always be honest.

3. Ethical

Even as a student, you are expected to practice according to the American Nurses Association (ANA) [Nursing Code of Ethics](#), the ANA [Scope and Standards of Practice](#), and the New Jersey [Nursing Rules and Regulations](#). Examples of unethical or unsafe performance might include any of the following:

- Refusing an assignment based on client's race, culture, diagnosis, gender, disability, sexual, or religious preference.
- Making clinical decisions based on stereotypical judgments.
- Behaving inappropriately in clinical practice, such as falsifying documents, signatures, or assignments.
- Discussing personal and/or professional information in public places.
- Ignoring a clinical error.
- Ignoring the unethical behaviors of other healthcare workers, particularly if that behavior threatens a client's welfare.

Phone use. Avoid using your phone unless there is an emergency. Never take photos at the clinical site unless it is of another healthcare worker or student and you have their permission. Posting a patient photo – or any other patient-identifiable information – on social media is a serious violation of patient privacy and confidentiality and can result in severe consequences, including legal action.

4. Take Responsibility for Yourself and Your Actions

- Should you make a clinical error, including omission of appropriate care, you are obligated to report it to your instructor immediately and to take necessary measures to ensure subsequent patient safety.
- Should you witness the abuse of a client, whether it is physical, mental, or emotional abuse, notify the agency and/or clinical instructor immediately.
- Communicate nonjudgmentally and clearly. Ensure that your interpersonal relationships with agency staff, co-workers, peers, and faculty do not result in miscommunication or a disruption of client care and/or functioning.
- Take care of yourself!
 - Never ever report for clinical under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.
 - Should you need treatment for a mental/emotional or physical issue that might affect the safety/well-being of others, seek help immediately.
 - If you've been given a referral to treat a mental/emotional or physical issue, follow through immediately. Putting the safety or well-being of others at risk will end your nursing career before it has begun!
 - Get enough sleep! According to Patient Safety and Quality: An Evidence-Based Handbook for Nurses (Hughes RG, Editor, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, 2008): "The

evidence is overwhelming that nurses who work longer than 12 consecutive hours or work when they have not obtained sufficient sleep are putting their patients' health at risk; risk damaging their own health; and if they drive home when they are drowsy, also put the health of the general public at risk."

5. HIPAA

Patient privacy is outlined in the [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act](#) (HIPAA). HIPAA is a federal law that protects patients' health information. HIPAA gives patients the right to see and obtain copies of their health records and regulates how healthcare providers and agencies use and disclose patient information. HIPAA forbids any agency employee or anyone affiliated with that agency (including students) from discussing patients or their care unless medically necessary for that person's care. On a personal level, it means that you cannot talk about your patients using their names or any identifying information with friends, family, or even other healthcare workers (unless you need to for the sake of their care). You certainly cannot post videos or photos of any patient or patient identifiers on social media.

Always:

- Ensure the confidentiality of any interaction during which you are talking about a client
- Ensure the confidentiality of patient records
- Ensure you follow the agency's rules and protocols to ensure safe practice.

Clinical Clearance

For your own safety as well as that of patients, there are a number of requirements that must be completed before going to your first clinical. These requirements protect students, promote patient safety, decrease institutional liability, and demonstrate compliance with our clinical affiliation agreements.

[Clinical clearance requirements](#) include the following:

- **Background Check & Student Disclosure Form.** Students are required to comply with the University's policies on "[Criminal Background Checks for Accepted Applicants for Admission to RBHS Schools and Educational Programs and for Currently Enrolled Students](#)." Instructions to help you be fully compliant with the Rutgers Health policy can be found on the School of Nursing [website](#).
- **Drug Testing**
- **Immunizations/Vaccines.** You are required to comply with the Rutgers Health policy on "[Student Immunizations and Health Requirements](#)".
- **CPR (Basic Life Support).** You are required to have a current valid American Heart Association "Basic Life Support for Health Care Providers" CPR certification. These certifications can be completed at a variety of training centers and are valid for two (2) years from the day that you pass the course.

- [Student Notification of Program Requirements Form](#). This form can be found in Canvas.

A note about timing: Some clinical clearance tasks can take months to complete, so start early! Undergraduate students must have their clinical compliance completed no later than June 1st (Fall clinical), November 1st (Spring clinical), and April 1st (Summer clinical):

		Deadline for Submission	Processing Deadline	Semester Start Date 2024-2025	Level
Second Degree	Fall	June 1st	August 1st	First day of classes	Level 2, 3
	Spring	November 1st	December 1st	First day of classes	Level 1, 3, 4
	Summer	April 1st	May 1st	First day of classes	Level 1, 2, 4
Traditional and 2+2	Fall	June 1st	August 1st	First day of classes	Level 1, 3
	Spring	November 1st	December 1st	First day of classes	Level 2, 4

If you do not complete your requirements on time, you will not be eligible to participate in the clinical practicum experience, including simulation and skills lab. You will also receive a clinical warning at the time of a second missed clinical day, and a third absence will result in a clinical failure.

A/B Clinical Model

The School of Nursing has implemented the A/B Clinical Model in all courses. You will find a description of the A/B model in your course syllabus. Under the A/B model, students will have 3 types of clinical placements: off-campus, on-campus, & community. This means that students will rotate through 3 sites following a set schedule.

- **On-campus clinicals** consist of simulated clinical experiences designed to meet course objectives. Simulated clinical experiences allow students to expand their clinical reasoning skills in a safe and controlled environment with the support of faculty and peers.
- **Community clinicals** include placements in community-based organizations, such as soup kitchens, schools, outpatient clinics, etc.
- **Off-campus clinicals** generally occur in a hospital or other inpatient care facility.

Each of these clinical experiences is facilitated by a faculty member, meaning you will likely have 3 clinical faculty members per clinical course.

The on-campus, off-campus, and community coordinators have similar responsibilities but in their respective settings. However, the Community Clinical Instructor role is somewhat different from that of the On-campus and Off-campus Instructor because they are responsible for students at multiple sites, so do not spend the entire day with any one group. Specifically, the Community Clinical Instructor is responsible for:

- Educating students on community site requirements and assignments.
- Reviewing the clinical schedule for any conflicts and confirming the schedule with the community coordinator.
- Making visits or accompanying students to community sites when required.
- Confirming students' attendance at community sites and notifying the course leader of any missed days.
- Planning a remote or in-person pre- or post-conference to determine attendance and that clinical objectives met.
- Ensuring that any additional requirements for community clinical experiences, such as assigned reading, training, and journals, are completed.
- Grading assignments for community clinical days.

Similarly, your responsibilities as a student will be similar in the on-campus, off-campus, and community settings. Your responsibilities in the community setting are listed, in part, below.

Student Responsibilities in the Community Setting

- Attend all community sites assigned, including windshield survey days.
- Notify the clinical instructor and community coordinator when absent from a community site.
- Complete all mandatory orientation training for any community site assigned.
- If required, sign up for community sites in a timely manner (within 1 week of open sign-up forms.)
- Should you need accommodations for community clinical, communicate this need to the course leader and community coordinator within the first week of the semester.
- Monitor the community schedule for any changes.
- Communicate with the community coordinator for any questions related to the community site.
- Complete all assignments related to the community site (journals, readings, etc.)

Dedicated Education Units

- A Dedicated Education Unit (DEU) is a nursing unit developed into an optimal teaching/learning environment through the collaborative efforts of nurses, management, students, and faculty.
- All Level 4 students will be placed on a DEU for their clinical assignment in the Transition to Practice Course.
- In contrast to a traditional off-campus clinical model where faculty work with students in the provision of care, in a DEU, students are integrated into the work environment on a nursing unit whereby select staff nurses serve as preceptors to work directly with students to provide patient care.
- Rutgers School of Nursing faculty work closely with staff nurse preceptors to provide

feedback and evaluate your nursing knowledge and skill development.

- You will receive weekly feedback from staff nurse preceptors. You will also undergo a mid-term and final clinical evaluation by RUSON faculty.

Dosage Calculation

- A dosage calculation quiz will be administered in all clinical/lab courses with the exception of Health Assessment and Nursing Care of Individuals/Populations with Acute and Chronic Mental Health Conditions. You will have 30 minutes for 10 questions and 60 minutes for 20 questions to complete the quiz.
- Students cannot administer medications in the clinical setting until they pass the dosage calculation quiz.
- A score of 90% is needed on the Dosage Calculation quiz in the current course to administer medications in the clinical environment. More about this and the consequences of failing a Dosage Calculation exam can be found in the syllabus.
- Dosage calculations will be incorporated into all simulations.

Evaluation of Clinical Experiences

- To pass any course with a clinical/lab component, you must pass both didactic and clinical/lab components to receive a passing course grade.
- To successfully pass the clinical/lab component of the course, you must demonstrate satisfactory achievement of the clinical/lab course objectives.
- Your performance in the clinical/lab setting will be evaluated weekly by the clinical instructor using the School of Nursing's clinical evaluation tool.
- The clinical instructor will review your evaluation with you at mid-semester and at the end of the clinical rotation.
- Satisfactory performance requires the demonstration of behavior that reflects the achievement of the stated competency.
- Any student deemed unsatisfactory in more than 2 competencies at the final (formative) evaluation will not pass the clinical component and thus will not pass the course.

Clinical Warning

- A clinical warning consists of a written document informing the student of deficient performance with a detailed plan for improvement.
- Any behavior deemed unsafe or unprofessional by the clinical/lab instructor may result in the issuance of a clinical warning.
- Failure to satisfactorily demonstrate a nursing competency/skill consistently may result in a clinical warning.
- More on academic warnings can be found in the School's Progression [policies](#) as well as the [Academic/Scholastic Standing policy](#).

Remediation

- Should you fail a skill test out in Nursing Care of Healthy Populations or Health Assessment or demonstrate difficulty in skills taught during lab, you will be referred to the Division for Simulation and Clinical Learning (DSCL) for remediation.
- Should you have any difficulty demonstrating skills in the clinical setting, you may be remediated by the clinical faculty or referred to the DSCL for remediation.

Logistics

- **Transportation.** You are responsible for your own transportation to and from your assigned clinical sites. Where possible, carpool with other students.
- **Parking.** Your clinical instructors will provide you with information about parking. Always follow the clinical agency's parking policy and practices.

Safety

- Leave valuables at home
- Be alert when walking from the parking deck/lot to the clinical site
- Do not share last names or personal information with patients
- Promptly report any safety concerns to your clinical instructor; instructors will report incidents the appropriate safety and security officers (i.e. hospital security, RU PD)

Rutgers School of Nursing Policies Relevant to Clinicals

1. Clinical Absence Policy

You are required to be present for all clinical experiences; you are expected to be present for the entire experience, beginning to end. You must personally notify the clinical faculty/preceptor and/or clinical site if absence from a clinical day is necessary. Your clinical faculty should have provided specifics on this notification process. More than one unexcused clinical absence may result in a clinical failure.

Exceptions: Even though students are expected to be present for all clinical experiences, they may not attend clinical if sick, including but not limited to fever, respiratory illness, and/or gastrointestinal illness. If your absence is excused, you must provide proof.

Make-up: *All* clinical absences must be made up regardless of the reason for the absence. Please work with your course lead, who will work with you to find a make-up clinical assignment at the same agency, if possible, or with another organization, if necessary.

Punctuality is essential; if you are **tardy** for your clinical – i.e., arriving within 15 minutes of the start time, it may result in a clinical warning. If you arrive at your clinical more than 15 minutes late, you are considered absent (an unexcused absence) and will be dismissed from the clinical site.

More information can be found in the [Classroom and Clinical Attendance Policy](#).

2. Academic Progression Policy

The academic progression policies provide an overview of the midterm warning, course withdrawal, academic probation, academic suspension, academic dismissal, and the academic dismissal appeals processes for both didactic and clinical courses. If you have any questions on any of these topics, go to the School's [policy page](#), scroll down to "Undergraduate Policies," and you will see a total of five progression policies, one for each of our undergraduate programs.

3. Policies and Services to Support Students with Disabilities.

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs, including clinical programs such as nursing. To receive consideration for reasonable accommodations in the clinical or classroom setting, you must contact the appropriate disability service office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation. For more about applying for services, go to the School's [website](#).

See also the School's [Student Technical Standards Policy For Admission And Matriculation](#).

4. Religious Accommodation.

Should you require a religious accommodation to comply with your clinical expectations (e.g., should your clinical coincide with a religious holiday) please see the School's [Religious Accommodation](#) policy for guidance.

5. Academic Advisement

More on our academic advisement process for both the clinical and didactic context can be found in our [Academic Advisement policy](#).

6. Dress Code

The School of Nursing will defer to the dress code policies at the clinical sites. The official uniform consists of black scrub tops with the official embroidered school logo and student name (first name, last initial), black scrub pants, and the regulation uniform lab coat (also embroidered).

- Black long-sleeved t-shirts under the scrub top are permitted. Additional layered clothing is not to be worn with the uniform.
- Uniforms should fit comfortably without undergarments being visible.
- Uniforms should be kept clean and neat.
- **Socks.** Black or neutral-colored socks must be worn.
- **Shoes.** When the uniform is worn, black leather closed shoes or impervious sneakers must be worn.

Additional information about the uniform:

- The uniform, including lab coat, must be purchased as a complete set from the School of Nursing vendor.
- Uniforms are to be worn in clinical areas or at designated community events, such as health fairs. The uniform must be worn to all designated clinical experiences unless otherwise specified.
- **Community/Psychiatric Nursing Practice Settings.** For community health and community-based psychiatric settings, students may be asked to wear alternative clothing such as business or professional attire, including solid or dark pants, a white or colored top, and no open-toe shoes. Jeans are not permitted at a community or psychiatric clinical site.
- **Bring a stethoscope and a pen light!** Students are required to bring a stethoscope and pen light to clinical. Clinical faculty may ask students to come to clinical with other items in addition to the stethoscope and pen light.

Other guidelines related to dress and appearance:

The School of Nursing will defer to guidelines or policies related to dress and appearance at the clinical sites.

- **Jewelry.** Jewelry must be minimal (i.e., a wedding band, small post earrings, and a watch with a secondhand).
- **Body Jewelry/Tattoos.** Body jewelry and tattoos should comply with agency policy.
- **Cosmetics.** Perfumes, perfumed lotions, and aftershaves are prohibited because of potential allergic reactions or respiratory difficulties in patients.
- **Personal cleanliness and hygiene.** Personal cleanliness and hygiene, including oral hygiene, must always be maintained.
- **Hair and Nails.** Hair must be neat and clean. Men must be clean-shaven or have a neatly trimmed beard and/or mustache. Fingernails should be kept short. For cultural or religious purposes, hair may be covered with a solid-color scarf to match the color of the uniform.

Uniform Exceptions, for Religious or other reasons

- Exemptions to the uniform based on religious observation or other reasons should be discussed with the Program Director. For example, the black pants may be swapped for a black skirt. Other necessary modifications can be made where requested.
- Clothing worn in addition to the uniform as part of religious or customary dress, such as a turban, hijab, or other head covering, should be solid black to match the uniform.

7. Other Policies

See the [website](#), Student Handbook and course syllabus for information about other policies and expectations related to clinicals.