



STATE OF IOWA

Governor Kim Reynolds
Lt. Governor Adam Gregg

BOARD OF NURSING
Kathleen R. Weinberg, MSN, RN
Executive Director

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Preceptor Documentation Guidelines for Nursing Educators and Licensees

As of 1/1/2018, the new Nursing Board 655 Iowa Administrative Code (IAC) – Chapter 5 Continuing Education rules became effective. Included in the new rules is the ability of a licensee who has served as a preceptor to use documented hours towards their continuing education requirements. The rule reads as follows:

655-5.2(5)d. Participation as a preceptor for a nursing student or employee transitioning into a new clinical practice area, for a minimum of 120 hours in a one-to-one relationship as part of an organized preceptorship program. A licensee shall maintain documentation issued by the institution supervising the student or employee demonstrating the objectives of the preceptorship and the hours completed. A preceptorship shall be recognized as 12 contact hours of continuing education.

To provide guidance to Iowa's approved providers, the following information is being sent to you to assist nurse licensees with their required documentation. Keep in mind, the already-existing 655 IAC Chapter 2 rules regarding preceptorships that still apply and provide guidance to participants in formal education programs. See the following:

655—2.15(152) Preceptorship.

2.15(1) A preceptor shall be selected by the nursing program in collaboration with a clinical facility to provide supportive learning experiences consistent with program outcomes.

2.15(2) The qualifications of a preceptor shall be appropriate to support the philosophy/mission and outcomes of the program.

a. The preceptor shall be employed by or maintain a current written agreement with the clinical facility in which a preceptorship experience occurs.

b. The preceptor shall be currently licensed as a registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, or advanced registered nurse practitioner according to the laws of the state in which the preceptor practices.

c. The preceptor shall function according to written policies for selection, evaluation and reappointment developed by the program. Written qualifications shall address educational preparation, experience, and clinical competence.

d. The program shall be responsible for informing the preceptor of the responsibilities

of the preceptor, faculty and students. The program shall retain ultimate responsibility for student learning and evaluation.

2.15(3) The program shall inform the board of preceptorship learning experiences.

a. Written preceptorship agreements shall be reviewed annually by the program.

b. The board may conduct a site visit to settings in which preceptorship experiences occur.

c. The rationale for the ratio of students to preceptors shall be documented by the program.

2.15(4) An individual who is not a registered nurse or a licensed practical nurse may serve as a preceptor when appropriate to the philosophy/mission and outcomes of the program.

[ARC 3497C, IAB 12/6/17, effective 1/10/18]

A few of the common questions board staff have received about the preceptor continuing education equivalency are included here with the answers.

Question: What is the definition of an organized preceptor program? Can what constitutes “an organized preceptorship program” be clarified?

Answer: An organized preceptor program is one that includes a formal agreement between the student, the school the student is enrolled in, and the preceptor; OR the employee, preceptor, and employer of the employee and preceptor. (See 655 IAC 2.15 for the formal preceptor requirements between the schools of nursing and preceptors.)

Question: When can the licensees start counting the hours they have been preceptors?

Answer: Hours documented after 1/1/2018, may be counted towards the 120 hour minimum. All preceptor hours must occur within the three year renewal period of a licensee (e.g.. Jan. 16, 2018 – Jan. 15, 2021). Rationale: Like other continuing education hours, activities must occur within the three-year licensee renewal period.

Question: Whose responsibility is it to keep track of the preceptor hours that licensees can use towards their continuing education requirements?

Answer: It is the **licensee’s** responsibility to keep track of their hours and documentation. Iowa Approved Providers may be asked to assist with ways to keep track of the hours, but the ultimate responsibility lies with the licensee.

Question: What should be on the forms where a licensee keeps track of the hours they serve as a preceptor?

Answer:

Requirements to demonstrate organized preceptor activities for each nursing student(s):

- Student name (may include initials to maintain privacy)
- Name of school
- Program
- Year of expected graduation
- Preceptor experience objectives
- Precepted hours (minimum of 120)

- Signature of school of nursing faculty confirming completed precepted hours, and a signature from the employee's supervisor.

Requirements to demonstrate organized preceptor activities for each employee(s):

- Employee name
- Employee former specialty area (or "new grad" for new grad)
- Employee new specialty area
- Preceptor experience objectives
- Precepted hours (minimum of 120 hours)
- Signature from supervisor, facility clinical educator, or CNO/DON

Question: Is there a form the licensees should use to submit their hours?

Answer: An example of an acceptable form may be found on the Board's website.

Question: Can the preceptor count hours *among* individuals they precept to reach the 120 hour minimum?

Answer: No. The minimum number of hours, one-on-one, with the same individual, must be 120 hours. Once the preceptor (nurse licensee) reaches 120 hours and has the documentation in-hand, they may count it as 12 contact hours of continuing education (CE) towards their license renewal requirements.

Question: May a licensee earn all of their CE hours by serving as a preceptor?

Answer: Yes, as long as a licensee has the appropriate documentation to prove their preceptorship experiences, they may earn all of their required CE following this rule.

Question: What does a licensee need to turn in if they are audited and have counted a preceptorship towards their CE requirements?

Answer: The licensee must turn in a form (as described above) that demonstrates they took part in a formal preceptorship and includes the items listed in the checklist.

Question: Do Iowa approved providers need to award credit in the preceptorship experiences?

Answer: No, unless providers have planned a class to offer for credit that *prepares* a preceptor for their role. In that case, providers go through the normal class planning process and notify the Board by sending the brochure/announcement to ibon.brochures@iowa.gov. Providers award credit for the preceptor class, based on their planning.

Please contact Laura Hudson at laura.hudson@iowa.gov or by phone at 515.201.2509, for additional assistance.