School of Nursing Practicum Manual

Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Specializations and Post-Master’s Certificate Programs:

• Leadership and Management
• Nursing Education
• Nursing Informatics
• Public Health Nursing

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Section 1. Introduction

Purpose of This Manual

Welcome to the field experience component of Walden University’s Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program. This manual describes the structure and timing of the classroom-based and on-site practicum experiences and the policies students must follow to be successful. For more information about the nursing programs, students should refer to the School of Nursing Handbook.

This manual is intended to provide MSN students with the information they need related to practicum policies and procedures as well as to serve as a reference for practicum preceptors and other practicum personnel.

Special Note to RN to MSN Students: Students in the RN to MSN program complete a portion of their practicum requirements at the undergraduate level. RN to MSN students should also refer to the BSN Practicum Manual for guidance related to their undergraduate practicum experiences. The BSN Practicum Manual can be found at http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/formsanddocuments.

This manual refers to the Walden University Catalog and the Walden University Student Handbook for specific information on university policies and courses. These resources can be accessed at catalog.WaldenU.edu.

Note: Walden University reserves the right to make program changes as needed to help ensure the highest quality program.

Walden University

The MSN program at Walden University is designed to promote Walden University’s vision, mission, and ongoing commitment to social change. These guiding principles serve as a framework for the program curriculum and outcomes and are included here as a reference.

Vision

Walden University envisions a distinctively different 21st-century learning community where knowledge is judged worthy to the degree that it can be applied by its graduates to the immediate solutions of critical societal challenges, thereby advancing the greater global good.

Mission

Walden University provides a diverse community of career professionals with the opportunity to transform themselves as scholar-practitioners so that they can effect positive social change.
Social Change

Walden University defines positive social change as a deliberate process of creating and applying ideas, strategies, and actions to promote the worth, dignity, and development of individuals, communities, organizations, institutions, cultures, and societies. Positive social change results in the improvement of human and social conditions.

School of Nursing

Vision

The School of Nursing envisions recognition as a preeminent 21st-century school of nursing in which the contributions of nursing, health, and related sciences will transform the provision of nursing services along the continuum of care and across the human lifespan to meet the needs of individuals and local and global communities.

Mission

The School of Nursing provides academically rigorous and culturally and contextually relevant educational programs, based on the scholar-practitioner model, for a diverse array of nursing professionals seeking enhancement of critical-thinking skills, abilities to select and implement evidence-based practices, and core and specialty nursing knowledge in order to transform society.

Goals

The goals of the School of Nursing at Walden are to

1. Empower nursing professionals through academic advancement that enhances personal growth, professional development, and academic achievement.
2. Create an educational environment where learners are able to build on their existing transformational and professional nursing knowledge, skills, and integrative abilities.
3. Educate nursing professionals with consideration for the complex needs of the diverse learner while upholding professional nursing standards.
4. Encourage learners to integrate biopsychosocial, nursing and health theories, research, and evidence-based practice that exemplify professional nursing standards.
5. Prepare professional nursing leaders who are empowered to promote social change for individuals, groups, and organizations locally, nationally, and globally.

MSN Program Outcomes

At the end of the MSN program, students will be able to

1. Synthesize organizational/systems leadership for cost-effective specialist nursing practice that contributes to high-quality healthcare delivery, advancement of the nursing profession, and social change.
2. Critique evidence-based literature drawing from diverse theoretical perspectives and pertinent research to guide decision making that demonstrates best practices for specialist nursing practice in a global society.

3. Integratively assess, diagnose, plan, implement, and evaluate cost-effective healthcare strategies that reduce health disparities by patient/population advocacy for access to specialist nursing care.

4. Demonstrate the ability to effectively communicate using audience-specific oral, written, and information technology for professional delivery of specialist nursing care.

5. Evaluate health needs of diverse populations for necessary teaching/coaching functions based on specialist nursing knowledge to restore/promote health and prevent illness/injury.

6. Exhibit ongoing commitment to professional development and value of nursing theories/ethical principles (altruism, autonomy, human dignity, integrity, social justice) in accordance with ethically responsible, legally accountable, specialist nursing practice.

7. Implement specialist nursing roles to promote quality improvement of patient-centered care in accordance with professional practice standards that transform health outcomes for diverse populations.

Field Experience Terms

For the purposes of this manual, the following terms are defined in this way:

Practicum

A practicum is a distinctly defined, supervised, on-site experience in which students develop basic applied skills and integrate professional knowledge.

The MSN practicum consists of online courses that students take at the end of their program of study. In addition to the online classroom component, the practicum includes a site-based (nonvirtual) experience, in which students are required to complete a project. The didactic (classroom) and clinical components of the practicum courses are integrated. Depending on the specialization, students must complete either 144 or 216 hours of supervised experience:

- Students in the Leadership and Management specialization must complete NURS 6600, with a minimum of 144 hours of supervised experience
  - For Post-Master’s Certificate in Leadership and Management students, NURS 6600 is optional and not required for completion of the certificate.

- Students in the Nursing Education specialization must complete NURS 6341 and 6351, with a minimum of 144 hours of supervised experience (72 hours in each course). In NURS 6341, students advance their knowledge and assessments skills within a selected clinical specialty.
  - For Post-Master’s Certificate in Nursing Education students, NURS 6341 is not required for completion of the certificate. NURS 6351 is required for completion of the certificate.

- Students in the Nursing Informatics specialization must complete NURS 6431 (72 hours) and NURS 6600 (144 hours), totaling 216 hours of supervised experience.
For Post-Master’s Certificate in Nursing Informatics students, NURS 6431 is required for completion of the certificate. NURS 6600 is optional and not required for completion of the certificate.

- Students in the Public Health Nursing specialization must complete NURS 6720 (216 hours) and NURS 6730 (144 hours), totaling 360 hours of supervised experience.

**Practicum Site**

A practicum site is a health agency, school, or other appropriate setting at which students have supervised, applied practice experiences that are consistent with their education and training. Officials at practicum sites enter into an Affiliation Agreement with Walden, stating they will provide appropriate support and supervision for students during the practicum experience. Virtual sites are not allowed for practicum courses.

**Supervision**

Supervision by a preceptor is composed of a tutorial and mentoring form of instruction in which practicum preceptors monitor students’ activities in the practicum and facilitate learning and skill-development experiences. Preceptors guide students and provide feedback on their practicum work.

**Field Experience Roles**

**Preceptors**

Preceptors are qualified nurses within a clinical site who are responsible for guiding students’ practicum experiences (see Preceptor Requirements). Preceptors should be employed by the field site. Walden expects preceptors to be accessible to students and to provide guidance and feedback that promotes growth of knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with Walden’s educational goals as well as with best nursing practices. Preceptors provide mentoring and guidance appropriate to students’ roles in their clinical sites, including ongoing feedback about the students’ progress in meeting clinical goals.

**Students**

Students at Walden are adult learners considered to be capable of seeking educational opportunities to meet their personal and professional goals. Walden expects students to collaborate with faculty members and be self-directed to meet educational requirements. Students work with faculty members and preceptors to ensure they obtain a well-rounded educational experience.

**Students are expected to adhere to the following:**

- Develop a learning contract to meet course objectives and outcomes for the practicum.
• Adhere to the learning contract as established by the student, faculty member, and preceptor.
• Comply with the policies and protocols established by the practicum site.
• Seek direct and indirect supervision from the faculty member and preceptor.
• Be appropriately prepared for each practicum experience.
• Incorporate theory and research into practicum practice to provide evidence-based care to patients.
• Provide safe, competent, and quality care under the supervision of the preceptor.
• Maintain an ethical and professional manner at all times.
• Use acquired knowledge and clinical skills for the appropriate practicum setting.
• Use various educational resources to provide evidence-based care to patients.
• Be on time and be prepared for each practicum session.
• Develop a clear and concise plan to meet course outcomes.
• Be respectful and professional.
• Participate in regular conferences with the faculty member.
• Seek regular feedback from the faculty member and preceptor about progress in the practicum setting.
• Adhere to Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) guidelines at all times.
• Maintain a practicum journal, activity log, and other pertinent clinical records as required by the faculty member and/or preceptor.
• Be adaptable and flexible learners.
• Evaluate the course, practicum experience, and preceptor.
• Develop long-term and short-term goals during the program.
• Participate in group and individual conferences.
• Complete the required hours needed for the didactic and practicum portions of the courses.
• Complete all course assignments satisfactorily.
• Contact the faculty member and practicum site if unable to attend a practicum experience.
• Use critical-thinking skills and sound clinical judgment in providing patient care.

**Students With Disabilities**

The School of Nursing at Walden will not discriminate on the basis of disability and is committed to providing all qualified students with disabilities equal access to its programs, services, and activities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

In postsecondary education, it is the students’ responsibility to self-identify disability status and register with the Office of Disability Services prior to requesting accommodations. To register, students should submit documentation of disability along with Walden’s Accommodation Request form to disability@mail.waldenu.edu.
The process and form are available from the Office of Disability Services. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations to access field experiences, such as a practicum and/or internship, should register with the Office of Disability Services prior to registering for those field experiences and clarify their specific accommodation needs. In most cases, field experience sites have their own systems for ensuring equal access for employees/interns with disabilities. The Office of Disability Services will help address any gaps in those systems.

**Practicum Course Faculty Members**

Walden nursing faculty members, who are doctorally prepared, teach the didactic portion of the course, manage the practicum experience, grade student work related to the practicum experience, and bear the responsibility for assigning the final grade for the course and communicating with preceptors regarding the successful mastery of all competencies. Practicum course faculty members collaborate with students and inform specialization coordinators about any difficulties that arise during the practicum experience.

**Specialization Coordinators**

Specialization coordinators are doctorally prepared Walden faculty members whose primary role regarding the MSN practicum is to oversee the experience for a given MSN specialization (i.e., Nursing Education, Leadership and Management, or Nursing Informatics). The specialization coordinators are an important resource for students during the program, especially if any problems arise during the practicum.

**Program Director**

The program director (PD) is a doctorally prepared full-time academic administrator who reports to the dean and supervises the specialization coordinators and faculty members. The PD’s primary role is to maintain the quality and integrity of the degree program and oversee day-to-day program management. While working with specialization coordinators, the PD supports students throughout the specializations in the MSN program (MSN-SP), including during the practicum experience.

**Field Education Coordinators**

Field education coordinators are Walden employees who help students understand the practicum policies and procedures. They answer questions about the practicum application process, review materials to ensure that students have completed all required application and documentation steps, and work collaboratively with the specialization coordinators and the program director throughout the approval process. Once practicum applications have been approved, the field education coordinators ensure that students are enrolled in their appropriate practicum course. Field education coordinators are assigned to students by region and are available to students via e-mail, phone, or appointment. Students can find their field education coordinator online at http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/contactus.
Working Together
Walden’s program directors, specialization coordinators, field education coordinators, and practicum course faculty members are committed to working collaboratively with students and preceptors to support the successful completion of practicum experiences.

Process for Mentoring and Evaluation of Students
The practicum process is collegial, with the recognition that students are adult learners who are capable of critical self-reflection, open to constructive feedback, and responsible for their own learning. Expectations for practica performance correlate with the stage of the students’ learning; i.e., greater practicum expertise is anticipated as students progress through the program.

Once students enroll in a practicum course, they are mentored and evaluated by a preceptor and a Walden practicum course faculty member. Preceptors provide the experiences, supervise students, and provide evaluations to the practicum course faculty members. Practicum course faculty members grade students’ coursework and, in general, return students’ written work within Walden guidelines on returning grades. Students are encouraged to consult with practicum course faculty members by phone or e-mail about their progress throughout the quarter as stipulated in the course syllabus.

Practicum course faculty members also maintain contact with students and preceptors throughout the quarter to determine whether the students’ learning needs are being met at their practicum site and to monitor students’ clinical progress. This culminates in a practicum evaluation that is completed by the preceptor, in Meditrek®, toward the end of the quarter and submitted for review and final grading to the practicum course faculty member.

Field Experience Regulatory Requirements

State Requirements
The ability for students to complete a required practicum in each state depends upon the statutes and regulations of that state. It is the students’ responsibility to know and understand the statutes and regulations of that state and whether completion of the required practicum is permitted. Students should inform the field education office when moving to another state to ensure successful completion of practicum is permitted.

Special Note for MSN Students in Minnesota
Recently, it has come to the attention of Walden’s School of Nursing program that certain Minnesota-based health systems have instituted limits on the number and types of students who may participate in clinical field experiences at their member institutions. Therefore, going forward, students who reside in Minnesota may experience challenges in locating clinical field experiences in their desired location and clinical specialty required for their program. It is important that residents of Minnesota understand their ability to secure a required clinical internship in their area may be affected. Given these limitations, students in Minnesota are encouraged to begin coordinating a practicum site in accordance with the process outlined in the
practicum manual several terms prior to the time of their scheduled field experience, to increase their opportunity to secure the required field experience(s) in their area.

Special Note for MSN Students in Washington
Walden University is approved by the Washington State Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission to provide practice experiences in Washington State for a Bachelor’s of Science in Nursing (RN and BSN tracks), Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) with a specialization in Nursing Education, Nursing Informatics, Leadership and Management, Family Nurse Practitioner, Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner, Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner, and Psychiatric and Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, as well as the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program.

For more information, go to the following website:
http://www.doh.wa.gov/LicensesPermitsandCertificates/NursingCommission/NursingPrograms.aspx

State Board Requirements
Some state boards of nursing have additional approval requirements. Because of these additional state board requirements and approvals, EARLY applications are strongly encouraged for these states as late applications will not be accepted for these states:

- **Alabama:** [http://www.abn.alabama.gov/nursing-programs/#tab-outofstate](http://www.abn.alabama.gov/nursing-programs/#tab-outofstate)
- **Wyoming:** [https://nursing-online.state.wy.us/Default.aspx?page=57](https://nursing-online.state.wy.us/Default.aspx?page=57)
- **Rhode Island:**
  [http://www.health.ri.gov/partners/boards/nurseregistrationandnursingeducation/](http://www.health.ri.gov/partners/boards/nurseregistrationandnursingeducation/)
- **Tennessee:** [https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/health-professional-boards/nursing-board/nursing-board/about.html](https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/health-professional-boards/nursing-board/nursing-board/about.html)
- **Alaska:** [https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/cbpl/ProfessionalLicensing/BoardofNursing/ApplicantInformation.aspx](https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/cbpl/ProfessionalLicensing/BoardofNursing/ApplicantInformation.aspx) (Please be aware that Alaska Board of Nursing requires students to submit a form to the AK Board of Nursing. The School of Nursing Field Office can provide a copy of the Alaska Board of Nursing form.)
- **North Dakota:** [https://www.ndbon.org/](https://www.ndbon.org/)
Non-U.S.-Based Student Requirements

To be approved for the field experience, non-U.S.-based students must adhere to the following:

- Students must choose preceptors who hold a graduate degree from an academic institution recognized or accredited by the competent authorities in the country where students wish to complete their field experience. Preceptors must be experts in the specialization fields students have chosen. Preceptors’ expertise should be documented in the curriculum vitae that students include with their practicum application. Preceptors must be licensed within the country where the practicum experience will occur.

- Students with field sites outside of the U.S. may petition for an exception if it is determined that professional liability insurance is too costly or does not exist in the country where the student will be conducting the practicum. An exception for obtaining professional liability insurance (PLI) can be authorized by completing a Professional Liability Insurance Waiver Request. The waiver request form can be obtained from the field education office and must be submitted to the field education office. The form must be completed by an authorized representative, not the student. Submission of the PLI waiver request does not guarantee an approval.

- Students must provide evidence of current and active nurse licensure in the location where the practicum will take place. The licensure must authorize the student to conduct practice at a level consistent with RN licensure in the U.S. If students encounter issues with obtaining proof of licensure, they should contact the Field Education Office.

- Students must comply with all other requirements required of U.S. students.

- Students should contact nursing field education coordinators early to ensure that they have found an acceptable preceptor and meet all the other requirements.

Licensure Review

The School of Nursing (SON) Field Education Office will conduct a routine professional license verification search and review as part of the practicum application process. This search and review will be completed for all students applying for practicum and for all candidates for preceptorship. Information for this review will be gathered through NURSYS®, state boards of nursing, state medical boards, or any other applicable professional credentialing authority. Any information that is attached to a professional license verification will be reviewed by the SON’s Licensure and Compliance department. The information that will be reviewed includes past and present credentialing information, such as state licensing board orders, consent agreements, letters of reprimand or censure, complaints, malpractice claims, settlements and awards, or other indication of action taken against the license by the professional credentialing authority.

This information will be reviewed as part of the application and preceptor approval process. Practicum applications will not be approved until this review has been completed.
If students have a past or present order, consent agreement, letter of reprimand, censure or complaint, or any other information issued by the professional credentialing authority regarding the student’s professional license, the students will be required to inform the field site and preceptor of this information. The field site and preceptor will need to confirm that the students will be able to complete field experience at the site prior to the approval of their practicum application. Written documentation from the field site and preceptor, which confirms that (a) the field site is aware of the past or present board issued information (as described previously) and (b) the field site has agreed to accommodate the practicum placement, must be submitted to the Walden University SON field office.

Please be aware that preceptor licensure is also reviewed by the SON Field Office for approval. The process is very similar to the student license review and includes review of current and past actions.

*Note:* If the status of a student’s RN license changes at any point after the student is admitted and/or enrolled into a nursing program, it is the student’s responsibility to inform the director of Compliance and Licensure ([nurslicensure@mail.waldenu.edu](mailto:nurslicensure@mail.waldenu.edu)). Status changes, such as actions or restrictions placed on a student’s RN license, can affect the student’s ability to engage in practicum.
Section 2. MSN Practicum Program

Specializations Overview

The practicum experience assists students’ transition from the learner role to that of scholar-practitioner. To achieve this transition, students engage in a relationship with a preceptor, focusing on roles and role functions, the achievement of individualized learning objectives, and the completion of a project conceptualized by them and their preceptor and approved by their practicum course faculty member. Practicum courses are designed to be the capstone experience for students. The practicum experience requires students to apply the knowledge, concepts, and skills that they have acquired in their didactic courses during their program of study (POS) (see Section 8), particularly in relation to their specialization. Therefore, didactic courses should be completed prior to entering practicum courses.

The primary objective of the practicum is to guide students to focus on a role that they are interested in occupying after the completion of the MSN program. Here are some examples:

- **Leadership and Management**: Under the guidance of a preceptor in a leadership role, students apply knowledge, theories, and expertise in leadership and management to the practicum experience.
- **Nursing Education**: Under the guidance of a preceptor in an education role, students apply knowledge, theories, and expertise in a nursing school, community, or staff-development setting. Additionally, students further advance their knowledge in a clinical specialty area of their choice through experiential opportunities related to educating students, patients, and/or staff.
- **Nursing Informatics**: Under the guidance of a preceptor in informatics, students apply their new knowledge and expertise in the nursing informatics role. Examples of appropriate settings include information systems development organizations, hospitals, and clinics.
- **Public Health Nursing**: Under the guidance of a preceptor in the public health nursing role, students apply knowledge, theories, and expertise in the assessment and development of culturally competent interventions targeted at community and population levels. Additionally, students will further develop their management and leadership skills with an emphasis on public health program evaluation.

Required Activities

Students must satisfactorily complete all of the requirements of their practicum courses (Table 1) in accordance with the information provided in the course syllabi. They complete the didactic portion of the track online. Students are not allowed to take multiple practicum courses concurrently. Students must receive a grade of Satisfactory (S) for the clinical components in courses that have integrated didactic (theory) and practicum components to successfully pass the
course. They earn 5 quarter credits and receive a letter grade on a 4.0-grading scale for each course.

*Table 1. MSN Practicum Courses by Specialization.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Leadership and Management</th>
<th>Nursing Education</th>
<th>Nursing Informatics</th>
<th>Public Health Nursing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>NURS 6600 - Capstone Synthesis Practicum (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [144 hours])</td>
<td>NURS 6341 - Specialty in Clinical Nursing (Didactic—4 cr.; Practicum—1 cr. [72 hours])</td>
<td>NURS 6431 - Evaluation Methods for Health Information Technology (Didactic—4 cr.; Practicum—1 cr. [72 hours])</td>
<td>NURS 6720 - Population-based Public Health Nursing Interventions (Didactic—2 cr.; Practicum—3 cr. [216 hours])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>NURS 6351 - Role of the Nurse Educator (Didactic—4 cr.; Practicum—1 cr. [72 hours])</td>
<td>NURS 6600 - Capstone Synthesis Practicum (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [144 hours])</td>
<td>NURS 6730 - Public Health Nursing Leadership (Didactic—3 cr.; Practicum—2 cr. [144 hours])</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Hours Required</th>
<th>144</th>
<th>144</th>
<th>216</th>
<th>360</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Important Information on Course Sequence**

- NURS 6241 - Strategic Planning in Healthcare Organizations must be taken prior to NURS 6600. NURS 6241 has content that can assist the student be successful in NURS 6600. Students must petition through Academic Advising in order to take NURS 6241 and 6600 together.

- In some instances, students may have reason to take NURS 6351 prior to NURS 6341 (this must be petitioned through Academic Advising). However, NURS 6331 - Teaching Learning Strategies: Integrating Technology Into Nursing Education must be successfully completed prior to taking NURS 6351.

- NURS 6431 must be taken and successfully completed prior to taking NURS 6600.

- Prerequisites for NURS 6720 - Population-based Public Health Nursing Interventions: NURS 6710, PUBH 6034, and NURS 6700.

- Prerequisites for NURS 6730 - Public Health Nursing Leadership: PUBH 6475.

- NURS 6720 and NURS 6730 *cannot* be taken together.
Students must complete the required hours of combined role practice and project hours during the 10 weeks allotted to the on-site experience. They may start logging practicum hours during the first week of the course, provided that they have received a practicum approval notice from the field education coordinators. Students may not log any hours before the start of the course or before they receive approval and are registered for the course. They must complete all practicum hours for each course by the end of Week 10.

The practicum project is part of the practicum hours and should not consume more than one-third of the practicum hours. Students cannot log hours on the project until their conference call and learning objectives are approved by the preceptor and course faculty member.

**The following activities count toward required practicum hours:**

- Activities that are directly related to the completion of practicum goals and objectives.
- Shadowing the preceptor (Shadowing should be kept to a minimum [no more than 20% of the time] for NURS 6341; a debriefing session with the preceptor is recommended after each shadowing experience).
- Attendance at meetings.
- Preparation of all materials directly related to completion of the practicum.
- Activities related to the practicum project.

**The following activities are not included as practicum hours:**

- Travel time related to and from practicum activities.
- Communication (e.g., e-mails, phone calls), unless conferencing or doing project-related communications.
- Assignments related to the didactic portion of the course.

**Individualized Learning Objectives**

Walden expects that the practicum experience will allow students to focus on developing and strengthening discrete skills as well as integrating a range of skills into a coherent professional identity. Students set specific goals for the practicum experience that are consistent with their professional preparation and coursework. These goals inform the evaluation of their competencies at the end of the practicum.

In the first week of the practicum, students formulate two to three individualized learning objectives that they want to achieve during their practicum experience; these objectives are based on their previous assignments, practicum experiences, practice setting, and interests. As students approach the practicum, they should reflect on their coursework and identify two to three areas in which they feel the need for further growth or with which they might want application-level experience. In the Nursing Informatics specialization, for example, they might want to experience preparing a request for proposal (RFP); in the Nursing Education specialization, they might want more exposure to the use of simulation in nursing education; and in the Leadership and Management specialization, they might want more experience with the budget-analysis process. There are myriad areas and activities in which students can participate.
Students should discuss the ideas they identify with their preceptors and determine if the necessary resources are available at their placement sites. Then they prepare a set of measurable learning objectives, using Bloom’s taxonomy, that specify what they want to achieve. These objectives must be approved by the practicum course faculty member.

**Conference Call**

In Week 2, students schedule a call with their preceptor and practicum course faculty member to discuss the practicum experience. *(Note: Students are responsible for coordinating and scheduling this call.)* During the call, the practicum learning objectives, practicum project, and required practicum hours will be discussed. This is a collaborative process among the faculty member, preceptor, and student. Before the call, students should talk with their preceptor about potential projects. Students write their practicum learning objectives in Week 1 of the course; practicum course faculty members will approve students’ self-developed learning objectives after the call, by the end of Week 2.

The conference call is intended to ensure that
- The practicum goals are being addressed,
- Students and preceptors understand the key points of the practicum experience,
- An opportunity for questions is provided, and
- Problems are identified and resolved.

**Journal and Time Log**

**Journal**

Students must periodically submit a journal entry showing how theoretical underpinnings may apply to a selected practicum experience and how that one aspect of their practicum is consistent with or different from learned theory.

The purpose of the journal is to identify activities, issues, or problems that show how theory is or is not applied and supported in the nursing practice specialization. Drawing from theoretical constructs learned in this program and the specialization content, learning outcomes, and competencies, students analyze their practicum experience.

In a one-page journal entry (250–300 words), students reflect on their practicum experiences and discuss how practices they observe or conduct differ from (or are in agreement with) substantiated theory. Students focus on one instance of this similarity or gap for each journal entry.

In each journal entry, students do the following:
- Describe a selected observed activity or situation (no more than half of a page).
- Analyze observations in the context of a selected theory.
- State conclusions regarding the fit of the selected theory to the selected event.
- Offer recommendations for improving the fit, if needed.
- Include APA-style citations and references.
Students must submit a journal entry when due, even if they are not on site that week. If they are not on site for a week in which a journal entry is due, they must reflect on experiences from any of the previous weeks of the practicum.

**Time Log**

Using Meditrek®, students keep a log of the time they spend on practicum activities. Each log entry must be linked with an individual practicum learning objective, a project objective, or a graduate program objective. Students should track their hours in Meditrek® as they are completed. Students submit time logs the same weeks that journal entries are required. Preceptors sign off on the time logs at the end of the course after the completion of hours.

The time log must include the following:
- Faculty name(s),
- Preceptor name(s),
- Week,
- Dates,
- Total hours for the week,
- Activities/Comments—a brief description of what students did or observed during each time interval,
- Student Learning Objectives—the objectives that relate to each time interval, and
- Course Outcomes Addressed.

*Note:* Preceptors and field sites are populated in Meditrek® for drop down options in time logs at the end of Week 1 for approved applications. If an application is approved after the course starts, the preceptor and field site will be populated weekly on Fridays. If students are unable to find their preceptor or field site in the dropdown box more than a week after application approval, please email nursingfield@mail.waldenu.edu.

**Practicum Project**

Students do not complete research in their practicum course. Instead, they design and implement a project that they base on research and scholarly literature.

In Week 2 of the practicum course, students begin to formulate project ideas. They work closely with preceptors and practicum course faculty members to identify a topic that meets an organizational need. Students develop three or more project objectives. (*Note that project objectives are separate from learning objectives.*) Final approval for the project must come from practicum course faculty members. Practicum projects may not begin until students receive approval. The practicum project is calculated as part of the practicum hours but cannot constitute for more than one-third of the practicum hours. The practicum project is developed and completed in NURS 6600 for students in the Leadership and Management track and developed and completed in NURS 6351 for students in the Nurse Educator track. Students in the Nursing Informatics track propose and begin development of their project in NURS 6431 and complete the project in NURS 6600.
The items listed below compose the major parts of the project:

- Introduction;
- Goal statement that identifies what students expect to accomplish, a focus area, and the population;
- Background about the real-world problem and topic area;
- Three to five measurable project objectives (using Bloom’s taxonomy as a guide);
- Evidence-based review of the literature;
- Methodology (i.e., how students will accomplish the objectives);
- Resources needed;
- Formative evaluation;
- Summative evaluation;
- Timeline; and
- Conclusion

At the end of the practicum course, students create a PowerPoint presentation of their practicum project. Students give a summary presentation of the entire experience to their class and practicum course faculty member. Students also present the project to selected individuals at their practicum site. More detailed presentation guidelines are provided in the practicum course.

**Practicum Project Guidelines**

Major practicum project guidelines are as follows:

- Determine if a project is a real-world problem and scan the practicum setting environment.
  - What are the issues related to the specialization that are recognized as serious?
  - In addition, consider Walden’s mission of positive social change.
  - How does the project promote improvement of the human and social condition by creating and applying ideas to promote the development of individuals, communities, and/or organizations as well as society as a whole?
  - Consult the literature as well as the preceptor and leaders within the field.
  - Review current professional practice standards to determine if the standards are being met in the practicum setting.
  - Plan the scope of the project so that it is possible to complete the project during the practicum time frame.
  - Organize the project into sections so that it can be implemented and evaluated, when feasible.
  - Develop a product that can be shared in the practice setting and other professional venues.

**Portfolio**

Students submit the final portfolio in the practicum course. They update any portfolio items that need editing or revision based on faculty comments. Assignments from the practicum course are
added to the portfolio, and students may add other items as well. The final portfolio will be examined for content and format to ensure it is a professional representation of accomplishments. Students then have a comprehensive professional portfolio to use as they start the next phase of their career.

For more information about creating a successful portfolio, students can refer to the School of Nursing Handbook.

**Performance Evaluation**

Preceptors provide a formal evaluation to communicate students’ performance.

At the end of each practicum course, students and preceptors are required to complete an online evaluation of their performance and experience. By Week 8, both students and preceptors will receive an e-mail from Meditrek® with directions on how to log in and complete an evaluation. Students will use the same user name and password provided to them for the application submission. Preceptors will receive new login information or be reminded of their login information if they had a previous student. Evaluations are due Week 10.

This evaluation will not only provide information about the progress of individual students but also help program leadership to continuously work on the course review and improvements. Students receive an Incomplete (I) grade if evaluations are not received by the posted deadlines.
Section 3. Preceptor and Field Site Information

Finding Practicum Sites and Preceptors

Students should read this manual and refer to the practicum application resources to begin the practicum process. Walden provides guidelines for how to choose a preceptor as well as a practicum site; however, because Walden students are located around the world, they have the flexibility to secure their own sites based on their region/location. Students will select a practicum site and initiate contact with a potential preceptor who meets the qualifications and may be interested in working with them.

Students are encouraged to start the search process for a field site and preceptor early in the program as it takes time to secure a field site. Students should have a preceptor nominee and a practicum site identified early in their specialization. For most students, this will be during NURS 6321, NURS 6221, NURS 6411, or NURS 6700.

A completed application must be submitted via Meditrek® by the practicum application deadline date (refer to Application Deadlines—Table 2.) The student must submit the application in Meditrek® for the application to be reviewed and processed. Applications in incomplete status will not be reviewed.

Tips for Practicum Site and Preceptor Search

Securing a practicum site and preceptor can be as intensive as a job search. The following tips are recommended for students when they are beginning the search process. Students should

- Review the tutorial, which includes tips to market themselves to potential preceptors and field sites: http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/ld.php?content_id=10419574.

- Contact Career Services to update their résumés and cover letters with a focus on finding a practicum field site. Career Services can also arrange mock interviews to prepare students for speaking with potential preceptors. The Career Services website can be found at: http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/careerservices/home.

- Contact the education department of possible field sites within their area or region.

- Review the field site list on the Field Education website: http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/formsanddocuments. This is a list of field sites that Walden University School of Nursing students have used in the past. It doesn’t necessarily mean that the site will be able to accommodate students or that there is an active Affiliation Agreement on file, but it is a good place to start.
• Use their professional and personal network to make connections. Develop a profile on professional networks (e.g., LinkedIn) to network; research field sites; connect with colleagues, alumni of Walden, and a variety of other professional nursing related groups.

• Research professional nursing associations and organizations to find preceptor resources.

• Contact their state board of nursing to see if they have a list of available preceptors or resources.

• Schedule an appointment with their regional nurse field education coordinator or field education coordinator to discuss other tips and ideas for securing a preceptor and field site. Students can schedule an appointment online at http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/contactus. Please keep in mind that a field education coordinator cannot place students at a site, but the coordinator may have further advice for students.

• Schedule an appointment with the specialization coordinator (Nursing Education, Nursing Informatics, Leadership and Management, or Public Health Nursing—contact information is listed in Section 7). Specialization coordinators are experts in their field and are significant resources for students. They cannot place students at a site, but they may be able to offer suggestions or advice on potential preceptors or practicum experiences.

Choosing a Site

Students should consider their career goals after graduation when they are choosing a practicum site. They must match their practicum setting and the preceptor that they nominate with their goals. To finalize their education, students must have an opportunity to apply their acquired knowledge, concepts, and skills. To do this, students may need to travel to a setting other than their own practice setting.

Students may complete the practicum where they work (e.g., hospital, nursing home, health organization, public health department, college, or university health department). However, their practicum experience must be

• In a different setting than their usual assigned employment role or work, and
• Completed outside of their normal working hours.

Students should follow the appropriate procedure at the field site to secure a practicum rotation and to understand the field site requirements prior to beginning the practicum.

Choosing a Preceptor

Students must identify a potential preceptor and determine if the individual is interested in working with them. If so, they must find out whether this individual meets the qualifications to serve as preceptor. Instructions on how to nominate a preceptor are provided later in this section.
in the instructions on how to complete the application. Students can contact their nursing field education coordinator to obtain feedback about whether the chosen preceptor is an acceptable candidate. Nursing field education coordinators can be contacted via e-mail at nursingfield@mail.waldenu.edu.

**Preceptor Requirements**

Prior to approval, the preceptor’s license and certification (if applicable) is verified and the curriculum vitae is evaluated by the nursing field education office, with final approval by the specialization coordinator. Walden’s approval of the preceptor candidate is based on several criteria. The preceptor candidate

- Holds a master’s or doctoral degree in nursing;
- Is currently a registered nurse with an unencumbered license to practice professional nursing in the state;
- Has a minimum of 1 year of postgraduate experience and a current job role relevant to the MSN specialization;
- Is able and willing to commit to the preceptor role for the practicum experience;
- Is employed at the field site where the practicum takes place;
- Must not be a relative or significant other; and
- Must not be the student’s direct or immediate supervisor.

**Attention students completing practicum in Washington State:** Per WAC 246-840-533(6), the WA State Board of Nursing requires that a preceptor in graduate nursing programs must

(a) Be experienced in the specialty area for at least 2 years; and

(b) Not be related to, or a personal friend of, the student.

A routine professional license verification will be obtained by Walden for all preceptor candidates. Any negative information, both past and present, that is part of the license verification will be reviewed by the School of Nursing’s Licensure and Compliance department. Some examples of negative information are disciplinary orders issued by a professional licensing board, malpractice information and letters of complaint, censure, or reprimand. This information will be reviewed as part of the preceptor approval process and could lead to a determination that the preceptor does not meet the university’s requirements. Students will have the opportunity to appeal the decision or to nominate a replacement preceptor who will undergo the same review. Please be aware that the practicum application will not be approved until an acceptable preceptor is approved.

Many students find it helpful to review their preceptor’s license information prior to submitting their practicum application. If they choose to review this information, it can be found online through NURSYS® or the corresponding state board of nursing website if the preceptor is a nurse, or by reviewing the preceptor’s license information provided by their professional licensing authority (medical board, Department of Health, etc.). If students have any questions about this process or any possible negative information regarding a potential preceptor, please contact nurslicensure@mail.waldenu.edu.
Note: Approval of the preceptor must occur prior to the student starting the practicum course and logging hours. Students cannot begin logging practicum hours until their practicum application is fully approved and have been registered for the course.

Co-Preceptor/Mentor Option

In some cases, there may be someone who would be an ideal preceptor, but he or she does not meet all of the requirements. For instance, an individual may be a nurse but not have a master’s degree in nursing. A preceptor candidate may be a healthcare informatics specialist but not a nurse. If students find themselves in this situation, then they have an option to nominate this person as their co-preceptor or mentor, provided they also nominate a preceptor who fulfills the requirements of being an MSN-prepared nurse. The mentor or co-preceptor assists the partner preceptor; both ensure that the quality of the practicum work is at the master’s level and relevant to nursing. When students complete their practicum application, as described later in this section, they must provide a fully completed application for both their preceptor and their co-preceptor.

Course-Specific Requirements

Following are suggestions, listed by specialization, for students to consider when choosing a preceptor and site for each required practicum course. Students can also consult the course descriptions in the Walden University Catalog as a guide.

Leadership and Management

NURS 6600 - Capstone Synthesis Practicum

- Possible Preceptor Choices: Registered nurse with a PhD, DNP, MSN (Leadership and Management), MHA, MBA, and/or MPH degree.
- Possible Site Choices: Hospital, clinics, health department, school of nursing.

Nursing Education

NURS 6341 - Specialty in Clinical Nursing

The purpose of NURS 6341 - Specialty in Clinical Nursing is to provide nurse educator students with an opportunity to apply the knowledge gained in the science-driven courses of pathopharmacology (NURS 6301) and advanced health assessment (NURS 6512). The course, through online classroom discussions and on-site practicum experiences, provides students with the opportunity to apply these sciences to advanced direct patient care. Preceptors are required to have been prepared at an advanced level in the application of these sciences and must be engaged in delivering advanced patient care in a specialized field. Advanced patient care is defined as the management of complex disease processes in a specialty beyond the basic bedside nursing care to a specific group of patients. For example, students might select to learn more about the pain management of oncology patients or the management of hypertensive patients. Other examples of student experiences may be learning the management of complex nursing care delivery involving the work of a clinical nurse specialist, experiences with a wound specialist, or hospice care. To achieve these learning experiences, students must propose a practicum site that allows them direct contact with patients. Acceptable preceptor and site choices include the following:
• **Possible Preceptor Choices:** (Clinician) clinical nurse specialist, nurse practitioner, physician, or physician assistant who provides advanced direct care (not bedside nursing).

• **Possible Site Choices:** Community clinic, emergent care clinic or hospital, and/or nursing home or hospice that provides direct contact with patients.

The focus of this course is not on educating patients, students, or staff. A college, university, or staff development department is not an appropriate site and will not help students achieve the objectives of this course. Also, supervising nursing students in a clinical setting would not be an appropriate activity for this course. In addition, individuals in educator roles are not appropriate preceptors for this practicum unless they have expertise as clinicians and can provide students with access to direct patient contact.

**NURS 6351 - Role of the Nurse Educator**

• **Possible Preceptor Choices:** Nurse educator in an academic setting, hospital, or clinic in the role of academician, staff developer, or patient educator.

• **Possible Site Choices:** Academic setting that educates nursing students or allied health staff. Hospital, clinic, or other community-based facility that has health education needs for patients and staff.

**Nursing Informatics**

**NURS 6431 - Evaluation Methods for Health Information Technology**

• **Possible Preceptor Choices:** Registered nurses employed in an informatics role with a PhD, DNP, or MSN (e.g., Senior Nursing Informatics Officer [SNIO], Chief Information Officer [CIO], Chief Medical Information Officer [CMIO]). Nominated preceptors who have a nursing informatics role but who do not have an advanced degree in nursing may be acceptable if students have a co-preceptor or mentor. During this course, students propose and develop a practicum project, which is then implemented in NURS 6600. Because the project proposal is developed in this course and implemented in NURS 6600, the preceptor for NURS 6431 and 6600 must be the same. NURS 6431 must be successfully completed prior to taking NURS 6600.

• **Possible Site Choices:** Hospital, clinic, health department, or organization providing support for electronic health record systems.

**NURS 6600 - Capstone Synthesis Practicum**

• **Possible Preceptor Choices:** Registered nurse employed in an informatics role with a Ph.D., DNP, or MSN in nursing informatics (e.g., Senior Nursing Informatics Officer [SNIO], Chief Information Officer [CIO], Chief Medical Information Officer [CMIO]). The preceptor for NURS 6431 and 6600 must be the same.

• **Possible Site Choices:** Hospital, clinic, health department, or organization providing support for electronic health record systems.
Public Health Nursing

NURS 6720 - Population-based Public Health Nursing Interventions
- **Possible Preceptor Choices**: Registered nurses employed in a public health role with a PhD, DNP, MSN, or MPH.
- **Possible Site Choices**: Local, state, or national public health departments; community centers or agencies (including voluntary, nonprofit and/or nongovernmental organizations) focused on population care, environmental health, disaster management, and health education; public schools (school nursing).

NURS 6730 - Public Health Nursing Leadership
- **Possible Preceptor Choices**: Registered nurses employed in a leadership role in the public health or community health environment with a PhD, DNP, MSN, or MPH.
- **Possible Site Choices**: Local, state, or national public health departments; community centers or agencies (including voluntary, nonprofit and/or nongovernmental organizations) focused on population care, environmental health, disaster management, and health education.

Change of Preceptor

Because circumstances change, sometimes students need to change preceptors before their practicum experience begins or during their practicum experience.

**For Students Who Need to Change Their Preceptor Before the Practicum Course Begins:** Students will need to **notify the field education office** as soon as possible if a preceptor changes before the practicum begins so that a new application can be opened by the field education office and submitted by the student. If the new preceptor involves a new practicum site, then a new Affiliation Agreement will also be needed, which may delay the practicum experience until a later term.

**For Students Who Need to Change Their Preceptor After the Practicum Course Begins:** Students will need to **notify the field education office and the faculty member** who is teaching the practicum course so that the faculty member can contact the specialization coordinator. The specialization coordinator will contact the field office to open a new application. Students must submit a new replacement application for the new preceptor to be approved. If the new preceptor involves a new practicum site, then it is likely the practicum experience will be delayed.
Section 4. Application Process

Application Deadlines

The deadline for submitting a practicum application is the first day of the quarter preceding the quarter the students wish to begin the practicum, as shown in Table 2. Students must be sure that they understand the deadline. For example, if students plan to enroll in a practicum course in the fall quarter, their practicum application is due by the first day of the summer quarter.

Students must submit a separate application for each field site and preceptor every quarter, even if the field site and preceptor remain the same. Students will not be registered for practicum courses if there is not an approved application on file.

Students should be aware of their program of study and anticipate when they will be ready to begin the practicum. Students are encouraged to contact their academic advisor with any questions about their program of study. It is the students’ responsibility to know what quarter they will begin their practicum courses.

Walden advises students to submit their application via Meditrek® as early as possible. Students may submit an application for practicum at least two quarters prior to the practicum start. Experience has shown that the applications that are completed in haste and submitted near the deadline are most frequently those that are missing items, have errors, or have other problems that can lead to delays or the denial of approval.

If an application is submitted late or after the application deadline, there is no guarantee that staff will be able to review the application in a timely manner prior to the term start. Submitting an application by the application deadline is strongly advised to allow enough time for processing and increase the likelihood of an application getting reviewed and potentially approved. There are many factors that can significantly impact whether or not an application can be approved in the time it takes for Walden to process and negotiate an Affiliation Agreement, to process and review the application, and for the student to complete the onboarding requirements. The field experience staff will work diligently to review and process late applications to the best of our ability, but there are no guarantees. Late applications are processed in the order they are submitted in Meditrek®. If an application is unable to be approved for the requested quarter, it will be closed, and students must resubmit a new application for the next quarter.

Late applications will not be accepted at a certain point before the term begins due to the time it takes to process applications. Students need to be sure they are submitting applications by the application deadline.

Exception: Because of some state board requirements and approvals, late applications will not be accepted from students who will perform their clinical practicum experience in Alabama, Alaska, North Dakota, Rhode Island, Wyoming, or Tennessee.
Table 2a. Deadlines for Practicum Applications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If students plan to enroll in a clinical course in this quarter:</th>
<th>Their application is due the FIRST day of this quarter.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>Fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Winter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Spring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2b. Deadlines for Practicum Applications (2018–2019 School Year)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Term start Dates</th>
<th>Application Deadline Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2018</td>
<td>May 29, 2018</td>
<td>February 26, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2018</td>
<td>August 27, 2018</td>
<td>May 29, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter 2018</td>
<td>November 26, 2018</td>
<td>August 27, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2019</td>
<td>February 25, 2019</td>
<td>November 26, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2019</td>
<td>May 28&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, 2019</td>
<td>February 25, 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Application Submission

Students need to be sure to submit an application in Meditrek® by the application deadline to ensure enough time for application processing and course registration.

Each practicum course requires a separate application. This is necessary because each practicum course has distinct requirements. Students must also submit a new and separate application each time they wish to change preceptors and/or practicum sites. If a student is using multiple preceptors for one course, separate applications must be submitted for each preceptor. If students are using multiple field sites to complete practicum hours, separate applications must be submitted for each field site.

Meditrek®

The practicum application consists of multiple parts that students must submit via Meditrek®. Students must submit their practicum application via Meditrek® by the application deadline. Application instructions for Meditrek® can be found on the field office website. There are webinars, tutorials, and FAQs on how to guide students on submitting an application in Meditrek®.

Meditrek® is the online clinical rotation management system used to track, monitor, and manage the practicum experience. Students will receive Meditrek® login and password information, directly from Meditrek®, for the entirety of their use with Meditrek®.

- Students will receive one user name and password to utilize Meditrek® for submitting practicum applications, completing practicum logs and practicum evaluations.
- Students should login information prior to their first practicum course, approximately 6 months prior to the practicum start. If students have not received their password 1 month at least before their application is due, they should complete a request form online at: http://www.emailmeform.com/builder/emf/Walden/RequestMeditrek®_Credentials.
• Students can utilize Meditrek® to monitor the status and progress of their applications each term.
• Students can access Meditrek® here: https://edu.meditrek.com/Default.html.

Starting an Application
1. Students must log in to their Meditrek® account to open a new application.
2. Students must select the application type to start a new application. The application types are as follows:
   • Primary Application: The application is the primary application for the preceptor and field site for the quarter and course.
   • Supplemental Application: The application is for an additional preceptor and/or field site, which is needed to supplement the primary application for the quarter and course. Supplemental applications are often needed to complete course requirements or to log the required hours.
   • Replacement Application: The application is replacing a previously submitted application for a different preceptor and/or field site for the quarter and course. Replacement applications are often needed if a previously nominated preceptor is no longer able to precept or does not meet the requirements.
   • Remedial Application: The application will be used to complete course requirements after the term has been completed for the prior term (e.g., for students who received an incomplete grade in the course during the prior term and need to log hours during the next quarter).
3. Students must select the correct course number and correct term when opening a new application. Applications will not be reviewed if the incorrect term is selected. It is the students’ responsibility to ensure they are selecting the correct quarter for the application submission. The term of the application cannot be changed.

Policy on Electronic Signatures
Walden manages the clinical application processes in a nearly paperless environment, which requires reliance on verifiable electronic signatures, as regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Legally, an electronic signature can be the person’s typed name, e-mail address, or any other identifying marker. An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically.

Practicum Requirements
License—Student and Preceptor
Students and preceptors must maintain an active, unencumbered license in the state/country where students plan to complete their practicum experience. License verification will be reviewed as part of the application and preceptor approval process. Practicum applications will not be approved until this review has been completed.
Licensure Review of Students. The Field Education Office will conduct a routine professional license verification search and review as part of the practicum application process. This search and review will be completed for all students applying for practicum and all candidates for preceptorship. Information for this review will be gathered through NURSYS, state boards of nursing, state medical boards, or any other applicable professional credentialing authority. Any information that is attached to a professional license verification will be reviewed by the School of Nursing’s Licensure and Compliance department. The information that will be reviewed includes past and present credentialing information, such as state licensing board orders, consent agreements, letters of reprimand or censure, complaints, malpractice claims, settlements, and awards or other indication of action taken against the license by the professional credentialing authority.

If students have a past or present order, consent agreement, letter of reprimand, censure or complaint, or any other information issued by the professional credentialing authority regarding the students’ professional license, the students will be required to inform their field site and preceptor of this information. The field site and preceptor will need to confirm that the students will be able to complete field experience at the site prior to the approval of the students’ practicum application. Written documentation from the field site and preceptor, which confirms that (a) the field site is aware of the past or present board issued information (as described previously) and (b) the field site has agreed to accommodate the practicum placement, must be submitted to the Walden University SON field office. After the review of the license information, the field education staff will send instructions to students to request acknowledgment forms from their preceptor(s) and field site administrator(s).

Licensure Review of Preceptors. A routine professional license verification will be obtained by Walden for all preceptor candidates. Any negative information, both past and present, that is part of the license verification will be reviewed by the School of Nursing’s Licensure and Compliance department. Some examples of negative information are disciplinary orders issued by a professional licensing board, malpractice information and letters of complaint, censure, or reprimand. This information will be reviewed as part of the preceptor approval process and could lead to a determination that the preceptor does not meet the university’s requirements. Students will have the opportunity to appeal the decision or to nominate a replacement preceptor who will undergo the same review. Please be aware that your practicum application will not be approved until an acceptable preceptor is approved.

Many students find it helpful to review their preceptor’s license information prior to submitting their practicum application. If they choose to review this information, it can be found online through NURSYS® or the corresponding state board of nursing website if the preceptor is a nurse, or by reviewing the preceptor’s license information provided by their professional licensing authority (medical board, Department of Health, etc.). If students have any questions about this process or any possible negative information regarding a potential preceptor, they should contact nurslicensure@mail.waldenu.edu.

Professional Liability Insurance (PLI)

Students must obtain and maintain professional liability insurance (PLI). Students must have their own professional liability policy even if their employer or practicum site has a policy that
covers students. A memorandum of certificate of insurance coverage for the active policy will need to be uploaded to the Meditrek® application and the CastleBranch profile. The PLI must meet the following requirements:

a. Coverage dates: The insurance plan must cover the entire time of the quarter in which practicum will occur. The dates must cover the duration of the practicum course(s).

b. Memorandum or certificate of insurance coverage must contain your name, address, date of the policy, coverage amounts, coverage type and expiration date.

c. Coverage Amounts: Must be a minimum of $1 million per incident and $3 million aggregate.

d. Coverage Type: The coverage type must be clearly stated in the memorandum or certificate of insurance coverage. Insurance coverage as a RN will not be accepted. The following coverage type is required:

i. Students in the MSN - Nurse Practitioner Program: Must be coverage for a nurse practitioner student.

ii. Students in the MSN - Specialization programs to include Education, Informatics, Public Health, and Leadership Management: Must be coverage for a general nursing student.

iii. Students in the DNP program: Must be coverage for a general nursing student.

Most insurance companies offer student nursing coverage. Walden University does not endorse any specific insurance company, and students are free to shop for a policy that fits the practicum liability insurance requirements. However, from reviewing student applications, the most commonly used insurance providers include Nurses Service Organization (NSO), Healthcare Providers Service Organization (HPSO), March, and Mercer.

The field experience staff will work with students to resolve issues with their insurance if students provide early notification with a clear explanation. Students should contact the nursing Field Experience Office at nursingfield@mail.waldenu.edu.

Onboarding Requirements

Walden University School of Nursing’s Onboarding Policy requires practicum students to obtain specific verifications such as health screenings and background checks in order to be approved for practicum (“Onboarding Requirements”). Onboarding requirements are defined as a specific set of prepracticum requirements established by the Walden University School of Nursing based on the most common field site requirements, which will enable students to potentially qualify for a wide range of field sites. These onboarding requirements vary from state to state; however, they generally include the passing of a background check and drug screening, health requirements, required training and professional liability insurance, and any additional onboarding requirements that may be required by the field site. This requirement aligns Walden University with field site expectations and practices that have become standard in the healthcare industry. Because some health systems and field sites mandate Onboarding Requirements that are not detailed in the Affiliation Agreement, it is beneficial to Walden students to have these requirements in place prior to term start. This policy will require all MSN and DNP students to proactively complete onboarding requirements to avoid practicum delays.
This is a Walden University requirement that applies to all nursing practicum students. Being an employee of the field site does not exempt students from this requirement.

Requirements, including health screenings and background checks, will only be approved if submitted through Walden University’s designated provider, CastleBranch. The School of Nursing Field Education Office Staff will confirm submission of all requirements in CastleBranch to approve practicum applications. Please be aware that students are responsible for all expenses incurred for onboarding requirements. **Students WILL NOT be permitted to start their field experience until Onboarding Requirements are complete.**

Onboarding requirement results will be managed, stored, and tracked by CastleBranch. When required, Walden University will communicate the satisfactory completion of these requirements to field sites.

Students who do not meet these requirements prior to term start will not be permitted to begin their field experience until the Onboarding Requirements have been completed. In situations such as this, failure to complete the Requirements prior to term start may result in students not being able to start field experience until the next term.

If an approved field site requires something in addition to what is required by Walden University, an additional package can be obtained through CastleBranch, at the request of Walden’s Field Education Office, to fulfill those requirements.

See the Frequently Asked Questions for Onboarding in the FAQ section for more information.

**CastleBranch**

CastleBranch, Walden’s designated vendor for onboarding requirements, provides a secure platform to complete onboarding requirements. Onboarding requirements include, but are not limited to, the following items: background screenings, a drug test, health requirements, trainings, professional liability insurance, and any additional onboarding requirements that may be required by the field site. Students must complete onboarding requirements online at http://walden.castlebranch.com. Students must complete ALL the requirements listed in the CastleBranch portal to begin their practicum. The practicum application will not be approved until ALL the requirements are complete.

When ordering the background screening, students will be provided a Disclosure and Authorization form by CastleBranch, which all students must sign in advance of obtaining the background check. The Disclosure and Authorization form is required by federal law. Although the Disclosure and Authorization form references an employment check, for these purposes, it also applies to students applying for field experience.

Students complete onboarding requirements online at http://walden.castlebranch.com/. Any questions regarding the purchase of a screening package can be answered by CastleBranch at 1-888-723-4263. For questions regarding the field site, Onboarding requirements or practicum applications regarding this process, please contact nursingfield@mail.waldenu.edu.
Preceptor Commitment Form

The *Preceptor Commitment Form* is an agreement with the preceptor to participate in the preceptorship with a Walden University nursing student. The *Preceptor Commitment Form* is an official form and requires the preceptor to complete the form in its entirety. Students are not to complete this form on behalf of the preceptor. The form is student-, course-, and term-specific. Thus, a form is required to be completed for each student for each class every quarter.

This *Preceptor Commitment Form* is different from the Affiliation Agreement. The field education staff at Walden will work directly with the administrator at the field site to establish an Affiliation Agreement, which is a legal agreement directly with the field site and is different from the *Preceptor Commitment Form*.

The *Preceptor Commitment Form* is e-mailed directly to the preceptor at the time students enter preceptor information on the Meditrek® application in the “Preceptor and Field Site Information” section. The preceptor should review the form, complete it in its entirety, and sign the form. Students must obtain this form directly from the preceptor to upload it in the Meditrek® application. *Preceptor Commitment Forms* can also be found online at: https://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/PreceptorResources

If the preceptor completes the form electronically, he or she must agree to the Walden University Policy on Electronic Signatures. If the preceptor does not complete the form electronically, he or she must print legibly and provide a signature at the bottom of the form.

After the preceptor completes and signs the form, he or she should send it directly to the student. The student will then upload this form as part of their application in Meditrek®. It is the responsibility of students to upload the Preceptor Commitment Form in Meditrek® and link it to their application.

Upon final approval of the students’ application, the preceptor will receive a confirmation e-mail with a *Preceptor Orientation*.

More information for preceptors can be found online at http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/PreceptorResources and click on the “Course Information” tab to review course objectives and clinical checklists.

If preceptors have any questions, they may contact the Field Education Office at nursingfield@mail.waldenu.edu.

Affiliation Agreement With Practicum Field Sites

An Affiliation Agreement is a legal contract between Walden University and a practicum field site. The Affiliation Agreement should not be confused with the *Preceptor Commitment Form*. Accreditation standards and university policy require that an Affiliation Agreement be in place before students start their practicum.
Coming to a mutual agreement about the terms of the Affiliation Agreement can take time, sometimes several weeks or months. In most cases, Walden is able to reach a mutual agreement with students’ practicum sites. There are times, however, when a field site and Walden are not able to enter into an agreement or cannot reach an understanding on the terms of the agreement due to a variety of factors that may be out of either organization’s control. When there is reason to believe that the Affiliation Agreement between Walden and a site will not be completed, Walden will make every effort to notify students in a timely fashion. If there is enough time, Walden works with students as they try to find a new preceptor and site, even if the Office of Field Experience is continuing to work with the first site. Students are strongly encouraged to arrange for alternative practicum sites as back-up options.

Walden requires that Affiliation Agreements are finalized for every field site where practicum will occur. If students plan to complete practicum hours at multiple sites, an application must be submitted and approved for each and every field site and preceptor. If students plan to complete practicum hours with a contract agency and will be logging hours at multiple sites, an application must be submitted and approved for each physical field site.

In some cases, the Affiliation Agreement with a planned practicum site may not be completed and it may be too late for students to find a new site prior to the start of the current term. If this happens, students are delayed a term while they find a new site. Students are allowed a limited exception to apply for the next term so that they can prepare a new application. Walden is not able to predict or control delays, but they are avoided if possible. It is highly recommended for students to arrange for alternative back-up field sites.

**Field Site Administrator—Affiliation Agreement Contact**

Students must enter the field site administrator contact information in the application in Meditrek®. The contact information for the field site administrator is entered in the “Affiliation Agreement” section of the application in Meditrek®.

It is the responsibility of students to obtain the contact information for the appropriate individual at the field site with authority to sign a legal contact. Preceptors may know whom to contact at practicum sites; otherwise, students should ask if their practicum site has an education or staff-development manager or a risk manager. Authority to sign the Affiliation Agreement could possibly be handled by a dean, chief nursing officer, director, CEO, or other administrator; large organizations may have an on-site legal department and an attorney who signs Affiliation Agreements. The person who signs the agreement must be authorized to do so by the practicum site. The individual authorized to sign the agreement is usually not the preceptor.

*Note:* It is very important to enter the correct contact information in Meditrek® for the contact at the field site because inaccurate information will delay processing of the agreement.

**Process for Affiliation Agreements**

Generally, field education coordinators will begin reviewing all applications after the application deadline. Field education coordinators will review applications to determine if there is an active and valid Affiliation Agreement on file with the field site. If there is no Affiliation Agreement
with the field site, a field education coordinator will e-mail the field site administrator with instructions on establishing an Affiliation Agreement with Walden University.

**Note:** If a field site administrator has not received the e-mail about the Affiliation Agreement, the following actions are recommended:

- Confirm the contact information is correct for the field site administrator in the application in Meditrek®. If the contact information is incorrect, please e-mail nursingfield@mail.waldenu.edu with the correct contact information and the Affiliation Agreement information will be resent.
- If the contact information is correct, confirm with the field site administrator to check his or her spam or junk e-mail folder for the e-mail.
- If the field site administrator has not received the e-mail, the agreement information can be resent or the administrator may e-mail sonaffiliation@mail.waldenu.edu to resend the Affiliation Agreement information.
- If the field site administrator would like the Affiliation Agreement information to be faxed to them, send an e-mail request to sonaffiliation@mail.waldenu.edu.

**Options for Sites to Establish an Affiliation Agreement With Walden**

- The field site is willing to sign Walden University’s standard Affiliation Agreement: This agreement is e-mailed directly to the field site administrator. The field site administrator signs the agreement and returns it to the Field Education Office.
- The field site would like to use Walden University’s standard Affiliation Agreement with changes: This agreement is e-mailed directly to the field site administrator. The field site administrator should make redline changes to the template agreement and return it to the Field Education Office. The contract administrators in the legal department will review the requested changes to either confirm the changes or to communicate with the field site to discuss further terms.
- The field site would like to use their preferred template for an Affiliation Agreement: The field site administrator should e-mail their preferred template to sonaffiliation@mail.waldenu.edu. The contract administrator in the legal department will review the template and communicate directly with the field site administrator to negotiate the terms of the contract.

**Affiliation Agreement Status in Meditrek®**

Students can monitor the progress of the Affiliation Agreement process on their application checklist in Meditrek®.

- Information Submitted by Student: Application has been submitted by the student. The field site Affiliation Agreement information has not been reviewed by the field education staff.
- Initial Request Sent to Field Site: Walden University does not have an existing valid agreement for this field site. The field education coordinator has sent an e-mail request to the field site administrator to initiate an agreement. Reminders are e-mailed to the field
site administrator every 2 weeks when in this status. E-mails are sent using the contact information of the field site administrator listed by the student on the application.

- Awaiting Response from Field Site: The field education coordinator has received a communication from the field site organization but has not received an agreement template from the field site and/or is awaiting a follow-up response from the field site organization.
- Submitted to Walden Field Experience: Information has been submitted regarding the field site and is being processed by the field education staff to move to the next stage.
- In Legal Negotiation Between Walden and Field Site: Walden University’s legal staff are in negotiations with the field site to complete an Affiliation Agreement.
- Completed and Approved: The Affiliation Agreement has been fully executed and approved.

Application Requirements in Meditrek®

Students need to submit their practicum application via Meditrek® by the application deadline (see Table 2). The following information and documents are required to submit a complete application in Meditrek®.

Forms to Complete in Meditrek®

- Student Information to include the following:
  - Student’s name;
  - Gender, DOB, Last 4 digits of SSN;
  - Address;
  - Phone numbers;
  - Walden ID number; and
  - Walden e-mail address.
- FERPA Release: Students will complete a FERPA release when completing and submitting an application in Meditrek®. The FERPA release authorizes Walden University to release all information, without limitation, regarding enrollment and academic records for the purpose of arranging for, participating in, and being evaluated on the field experience.
- Preceptor and Field Site Information: Students will complete information about the preceptor and field site in the application to provide information about the qualifications and appropriateness of the site. It is important for students to include as much information as possible about the preceptor and field site to assist the field education staff to determine if the preceptor and field site will meet the requirements of the practicum course. The required information is as follows:
  - Preceptor contact information to include name, title, phone number, and e-mail address;
  - Preceptor credentials;
  - Preceptor information to include education degree, licensure, certification, license number, state of license and expiration date;
  - Field Site Location: field site name and address;
  - Field Site Description;
  - Preceptor and Field Site Information:
Description of the job responsibilities of the preceptor;
Description of how the preceptor will provide the student with an appropriate practicum experience to meet the learning objectives of the course;
Description of how the field site will provide the student with an appropriate practicum experience to meet the learning objectives of the course; and
Supporting information or documentation to support the nomination of the preceptor and field site.

Note: Once this section is complete, the preceptor information can be submitted, and an e-mail will be sent to the preceptor with the “Preceptor Commitment Form.”

- Affiliation Agreement Section: Students need to identify, with the help of the preceptor and/or practicum site contact, who the appropriate individual is at the practicum site that can speak to the Affiliation Agreement. This individual may be the CEO, dean, contracts manager, site director, human resources, owner, or president. Large organizations may have an on-site legal department that reviews such agreements and may have an attorney who signs Affiliation Agreements. Students will complete contact information for the field site and the field site administrator that would be responsible for facilitating the Affiliation Agreement. The required information is as follows:
  - Field site name, address;
  - Name of administrator authorized to negotiate the Affiliation Agreement;
  - Contact information for the field site administrator; Note: Students need to ensure correct contact information is entered in Meditrek® as wrong contact information will delay processing; and
  - Healthcare organization—If the field site is under a healthcare organization or parent company, the agreement may be under the name of the healthcare organization, so the name of the healthcare system or organization is needed.

**Documents to Upload in Meditrek®**

Students are responsible for uploading all documents in Meditrek® to complete their application. For the most up-to-date information regarding applications and Meditrek®, including webinars, tutorials, and FAQs, refer to the field experience website: https://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/home

Note: See section on “Practicum Requirements” for more details on these requirements.

- Professional Liability Insurance: Proof of student’s professional liability insurance:
  - Memorandum of certificate of insurance coverage for the active policy;
  - Coverage amounts required are a minimum of $1 million per incident and $3 million per aggregate;
  - Coverage dates must cover the duration of the practicum course from the first day of class to the last day of class;
Coverage type must meet the following requirements:
- Students in the MSN - Nurse Practitioner Program: Must be coverage for a nurse practitioner student;
- Students in the MSN-Specialization programs to include Education, Informatics, Public Health, and Leadership Management: must be coverage for a general nursing student; and
- Students in the DNP program: must be coverage for a general nursing student.

- Student RN License:
  - Must have an active and current nursing license; and
  - Must be licensed in the state/country where practicum will occur.

- Preceptor Commitment Form:
  - This form is sent directly to the preceptor via e-mail when students submit the preceptor information section in Meditrek®;
  - Preceptor must complete the form in its entirety and sign the commitment form; and
  - Preceptor should submit the form directly to the student for the student to upload in the application in Meditrek®.

  Note: Preceptor Commitment Forms should not be completed by the student on behalf of the preceptor. If it is found that the student completed the Preceptor Commitment Form on behalf of the preceptor, a case will be reviewed by the Academic Integrity Analyst for a possible Code of Conduct violation.

Additional Application Requirements—Onboarding

Students must complete all onboarding requirements through Walden University’s designated provider, CastleBranch, online at http://walden.castlebranch.com.

Students do not need to complete onboarding requirements prior to submitting an application, but the requirements must be completed before an application is approved. Students will have the option to mark their CastleBranch status on their application in Meditrek®. However, the practicum application will not be fully approved until a CastleBranch package is completed. It is highly recommended that students complete requirements in CastleBranch as soon as possible to ensure timely approval of their practicum application.

The School of Nursing Field Education Office Staff will confirm submission of all requirements in CastleBranch in order to approve practicum applications. The practicum application will not be approved until all the requirements are complete. If a field site requires something in addition to what is required by Walden University, an additional package can be obtained through CastleBranch, at the request of Walden’s Field Education Office, to fulfill those requirements. The field education staff will e-mail students with further information about additional field site requirements.
Application Review and Approval

Applications must be completed in its entirety and submitted in Meditrek®. Applications in incomplete or incomplete-started status will not be reviewed by the field education staff. It is the students’ responsibility to ensure an application is finalized and submitted in Meditrek®.

Generally, field education coordinators will begin reviewing applications after the application deadline. Applications are reviewed in the order they are submitted in Meditrek®. Approval of the application must occur prior to the student starting the practicum course and logging hours. Students cannot begin logging practicum hours until their practicum application is fully approved and have been registered for the course.

Students are able to monitor the progress of their application review by logging in to their Meditrek® account and accessing the application checklist and clicking on the course number. The Application checklist will list the review status of each section of the application. When a section of the application is approved, it will be listed next to the section with the date approved.

Application Approval

- The application must be submitted in Meditrek®. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.
- The nursing field education coordinators will process the students’ practicum applications and notify students if applications are returned or if changes are needed.
- The field education coordinators will review the students’ application materials. If an application is denied, students will be notified, and, in most cases, they will be given an opportunity to revise their application within a short amount of time.
- If an application is approved, an email will be sent by Meditrek® to the preceptor and to the student.

Application Steps

1. When students successfully submit their application, they will receive an automatic e-mail from Meditrek® stating it was submitted and finalized. Applications will not be reviewed until an application is officially submitted in Meditrek®.
2. The application has different sections and each section is worked on by different coordinators simultaneously. Students should monitor their e-mail account for e-mails from the field education staff requesting updates to their application.
3. The Affiliation Agreement and other parts of the application are separate entities and are worked on simultaneously.
4. Students will receive an e-mail with one of the following responses regarding their application:
   - Returned Status—The application has been returned for further work: The e-mail will identify what students need to correct. Students will need to log back into Meditrek®, select the application, correct the error, and then resubmit. Students will then get another e-mail that the application has been resubmitted.
• **Pending Status**—The application is being reviewed by the field education staff. If further information is needed, an e-mail will be sent requesting additional information.

• **Approved Status**—The application has been approved. Students are approved to complete practicum at the approved field site with the approved preceptor during the approved quarter. The practicum course registration will be processed after the application has been approved.

5. Students should monitor their spam/junk e-mail folder for important e-mails from the Field Education Office regarding information about their practicum application.

6. Students can log in to Meditrek® at any time to see the status of their application by clicking on the course on their list of applications. The application statuses are listed below.

*Note:* Students are encouraged to monitor their spam/junk e-mail folders regularly.

**Application Status**

Students can monitor the progress of their application review and approval in their checklist in Meditrek®. The statuses are as follows:

- **Closed:** The application is closed due to inability to approve the application. Students are e-mailed with specific details for the closed application.
- **Incomplete—Started:** Students have started the application but haven’t submitted the application in Meditrek®. The application will not be reviewed until it is submitted in Meditrek®.
- **Incomplete:** Students have started the application and submitted the practicum site information but have not submitted the application in Meditrek®. The application will not be reviewed until it is submitted in Meditrek®.
- **Submitted:** The application was submitted to Walden and is ready for review by the field experience staff.
- **Returned:** The application was submitted and reviewed by a field education coordinator and returned to the student for further work due to issues with the application. An e-mail will be sent to the student with further instructions and information. The application will not be further reviewed until the issues are resolved by the student and resubmitted in Meditrek®.
- **Pending:** The application has been submitted and being reviewed by the field experience staff. An e-mail will be sent to the student if any additional information is needed or requested.
- **On-Hold:** All aspects of the application have been reviewed but is pending approval for the field site Affiliation Agreement and possible onboarding requirements. No further action is needed by the student.
- **Approved:** Everything is approved, including the Affiliation Agreement. Student is approved for practicum and may be registered for the practicum course.
Preceptor Options

**Change of Preceptor—Replacement Preceptor**

Because circumstances change, sometimes students need to change preceptors before they begin their practicum experience. If students need to change their preceptor before the practicum course begins, students will need to notify the Field Education Office as soon as possible to request a late application request in order to open a new application in Meditrek®. This is known as a replacement application. If the new preceptor involves a new practicum site, then a new Affiliation Agreement will also be needed. Depending on the timing before the term begins, there may not be enough time to process an application, Affiliation Agreement and onboarding; which may delay the practicum experience until a later term.

**Co-Preceptors**

In some cases, there may be someone who would be an ideal preceptor, but he or she does not meet all the requirements for the course. If students find themselves in this situation, then they have an option to nominate another person as their supplemental preceptor, provided they also nominate a preceptor who fulfills the requirements. When students complete their practicum application, they must provide a fully completed application for both their preceptor and their supplemental preceptor. Applications for supplemental preceptors should be submitted as early as possible. However, applications are not accepted during the quarter if students need a supplemental preceptor during the quarter to meet the required practicum hours. If students have a co-preceptor (supplemental preceptor), they must complete and submit a separate application for the preceptor and co-preceptor. These applications go through the same review process as other applications.

**Supplemental Preceptors**

Students may need additional preceptors in order to meet all the requirements for the course including logging all the required hours and/or patients. If students need to precept with multiple preceptors to meet the course requirements, then they have an option to nominate another person as their supplemental preceptor, provided they also nominate a preceptor who fulfills the requirements. When students complete their practicum application, they must provide a fully completed application for both their preceptor and their supplemental preceptor. Applications for supplemental preceptors should be submitted as early as possible. However, applications are accepted during the quarter if students need a supplemental preceptor during the quarter to meet the required practicum hours. If students need a supplemental preceptor, they must complete and submit a separate application for the preceptor and co-preceptor. These applications go through the same review process as other applications.

Examples for Reasons for Supplemental Preceptors:

- A preceptor may not see enough patients for the student to log the required practicum hours and patients. In this instance, a supplemental preceptor may be submitted by the student to obtain enough hours for the course requirements.
- During the course, the student may not be able to log enough hours with the preceptor to meet the course requirements. In this instance, a supplemental preceptor may be submitted by the student to obtain enough hours for the course requirement.
Field Site Assigns Preceptor After Affiliation Agreement

In some cases, there may be field sites that will not assign a preceptor until after an Affiliation Agreement has been completed. Students must still submit an application in Meditrek® following the process outlined in this section in these situations to abide by the application deadline. In order to submit an application while waiting for the field site to assign a preceptor, students should use placeholder information and documents to fill in areas of their application, which are otherwise incomplete. For instance, students can enter “TBD” into the text field requesting preceptor information. For the Preceptor Commitment Form, students can upload a word document to their application that briefly explains the circumstances and reason for using a placeholder document. Students should ensure that the document is uploaded and linked in the application. After all fields related to the preceptor have been completed with TBD and the placeholder Word document is linked, students are able to submit and finalize their application in Meditrek®. By submitting an application, this allows the field education staff to begin working on the Affiliation Agreement. Once the preceptor is assigned, students must edit their application and enter the correct information for the preceptor in the application along with the Preceptor Commitment Form. Students may have to contact nursingfield@mail.waldenu.edu to return the application in Meditrek® in order for students to edit their application.

Course Registration and Start

Registration for the practicum courses is subject to review, based on whether students meet course prerequisites and have an approved practicum application on file.

The approval of the application does not guarantee the ability of students to be registered for practicum courses. Registration is subject to availability and based upon when the practicum application is approved. Walden University offers accredited nursing programs, which require commitment to academic standards and compliance with varying state nursing board requirements. For this reason, Walden’s School of Nursing is not able to offer an unlimited number of practicum course sections.

It is the responsibility of the student to ensure all holds are removed from their account. If students have been withdrawn, on a Leave of Absence, or have not been continuously enrolled at Walden, they must contact Academic Advising to return and be reinstated at Walden. The field education staff will not be able to process a course registration if students have a hold or have not been reinstated.

Students who do not meet the application requirements and deadlines found in this manual will be dropped from the practicum course until all appropriate documents are on file and approved and all course prerequisites are met. If students believe they have met all the requirements for starting the practicum and do not see the course registration on their myWalden page, they should contact the nursing field education coordinators at nursingfield@mail.waldenu.edu.

Students cannot start logging practicum hours until their practicum application is fully approved in Meditrek® and they have been registered for the practicum course.
Registration Timeline

Students will be registered upon full approval of their application. The field education staff will submit registrations to the Registrar scheduling department after the practicum application is approved.

Timeline of Course Registration

- If the practicum application is approved 4 weeks or more prior to term start, the field education staff will process the registration approximately 4 weeks prior to term start.
- If the practicum application is approved less than 4 weeks prior to term start, the field education staff will process the registration approximately within 2 business days after application is approved.

Note: It takes between 24 and 48 hours for students to see their course information in Blackboard.

Logging Hours After Course Begins

Students may start logging practicum hours within each course on the second day of the course provided that they have received a practicum approval notice from the field education coordinators and their clinical instructor approves.

Students may not log any hours before the start of the course. Additionally, students may not log hours prior to; receiving practicum application approval from the Field Experience Office, they are registered for the practicum course, and they receive approval from the clinical instructor. Students are only to log hours with preceptors who have been approved by the Field Experience Office in Meditrek®. If students log hours with an unapproved preceptor, these hours will not count toward the practicum hour requirement of the course and program.

Logs in Meditrek®

Using Meditrek®, students keep a log of the time they spend on practicum activities. Time logs are signed off by preceptors and instructors at the end of the course after the completion of logs.

Timeline for Preceptors and Field Sites Programmed in Meditrek®

- Preceptors and field sites are programmed in Meditrek® for dropdown options in time logs at the end of Week 1 for approved applications.
- If an application is approved after the course starts, the preceptor and field site will be populated weekly on Fridays.
- Preceptors are e-mailed their Meditrek® credentials Monday of Week 3 of the course. Preceptors use their Meditrek® credentials to sign off on time logs and complete evaluations. For preceptors who have not received their Meditrek® credentials, they are encouraged to check their spam/junk e-mail folders or submit a request for credentials to be resent by completing this request form: http://www.emailmeform.com/builder/email/Walden/RequestMeditrek®Credentials.
Note: If students are unable to find their preceptor or field site in the dropdown box after Week 1 and their application has been approved more than 1 week, they should e-mail nursingfield@mail.waldenu.edu.

Change of Preceptor After Course Begins

Because circumstances change, sometimes students need to change preceptors during their practicum experience. If students need to change their preceptor after the practicum course begins, students will need to do the following:

- Notify the assigned faculty member immediately to discuss the impact of completing course requirements and the option of receiving an incomplete grade to gain additional time to log hours with a new preceptor.
- Notify the Field Education Office immediately. The field education staff will open a new replacement application for you in Meditrek®. Students must submit a new replacement application for the new preceptor to be approved. If the new preceptor involves a new practicum site, then it is likely the practicum experience will be delayed if an Affiliation Agreement is not on file.

Field Education Office

Field education coordinators are Walden employees who help students understand the practicum policies and procedures. They answer questions about the practicum application process, review materials to ensure that students have completed all required application and documentation and work collaboratively with the specialization coordinators and the program director throughout the approval process. Once practicum applications have been approved, the field education coordinators ensure that students are enrolled in their appropriate practicum course.

Field education coordinators are assigned to students by region. There are six field education staff members assigned to each region to provide assistance and support to students through the practicum application process. The staff are assigned by role and each is responsible to review the various components of practicum applications. The field education staff are assigned to the following roles by region:

- Nurse Field Education Coordinator: Responsible for ensuring the preceptor and field site meet the course requirements. This coordinator approves the preceptor/field site section of the application. This coordinator holds student appointments to provide support and guidance on preceptor and field site course requirements.
- Verification Field Education Coordinator: Responsible for ensuring students have completed the onboarding requirements. This coordinator reviews and approves the onboarding section of the application and reviews student accounts in CastleBranch. This coordinator holds student appointments to provide support and guidance on onboarding requirements.
- Affiliation Agreement Field Education Coordinator: Responsible for facilitating the Affiliation Agreement process with nominated field sites. This coordinator meets with students to provide updates and information on Affiliation Agreements. Please note that
the actual contract negotiation is completed by a contract administrator as part of the legal department in the Central Office for Field Experience at Walden.

- Assistant Field Education Coordinators: Multiple coordinators are responsible for reviewing applications to include license reviews, preceptor forms, professional liability insurance documents and they complete a degree audit to verify course prerequisites have been met. These staff members also process registrations for practicum courses.
- Support Field Education Coordinator: Responsible for providing support for Meditrek® to include credentials, submitting applications, uploading documents, time logs, patient logs, and evaluations.
- Field Education Coordinator: Responsible for assisting students with the application process in general along with providing students support and guidance on searching for preceptors. This coordinator meets with students to provide support in searching for preceptors and field sites along with general questions about practicum.

Here are the different ways in which students can reach the field experience staff:

- E-mail: nursingfield@mail.waldenu.edu. E-mail is often the most efficient way to receive a prompt response. The response time averages between 1 and 2 business days.
- Live Chat: https://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/contactus. Live Chat is a great way to communicate with fully trained team members in real time. Live Chat is the best way to reach the field experience staff when they are experiencing high call volume.
- Phone: 855-593-9632. Periods of high call volume are often experienced during term start times so sending an e-mail, using Live Chat, or scheduling an appointment are great options to get in touch with field experience staff.
- Appointments: https://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/contactus. Students can arrange for a phone appointment online to schedule a time to speak with one of the team members in the students’ region by role.
- Quick Answers: https://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/home. Search the online database for answers to questions and get a quick answer online.

Field education staff are available to students via e-mail, phone, or appointment. Students can find their regional field education coordinator online at http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/contactus.
Section 5. Practicum Policies

This manual contains only select policy information. All Walden students agree to abide by all university policies and procedures as a condition of acceptance and continued enrollment. Students should consult the student handbook for complete information about university policies and procedures.

Student Conduct and Responsibilities

The following expectations for conduct and behavior apply to all constituents of the university, including students, faculty, and staff. The university supports and expects its members to comply with the principles developed by the International Center for Academic Integrity, as follows:

- **Honesty**: An academic community of integrity advances the quest for truth and knowledge by requiring intellectual and personal honesty in learning, teaching, research, and service.
- **Trust**: An academic community of integrity fosters a climate of mutual trust, encourages the free exchange of ideas, and enables all to reach their highest potential.
- **Fairness**: An academic community of integrity establishes clear standards, practices, and procedures and expects fairness in the interactions of students, instructors, and administrators.
- **Respect**: An academic community of integrity recognizes the participatory nature of the learning process and honors and respects a wide range of opinions and ideas.
- **Responsibility**: An academic community of integrity upholds personal accountability and depends upon action in the face of wrongdoing.

Walden is committed to conducting its affairs in accordance with this code in a socially responsible and ethical manner consistent with the Walden community’s respective educational, research, scholarly, and social change missions. As such, Walden supports a code of conduct that is consistent with applicable federal, state, and local laws guaranteeing nondiscrimination for all protected classifications, as well as with the university’s nondiscrimination policies. In addition, members shall not conduct themselves either inside or outside of the classroom in a manner that is unduly disruptive or unethical or that might lower the status or damage the reputation of the university.

Academic Standing

All Walden students are expected to remain in good academic standing throughout their studies, including the practicum, in accordance with university requirements.

Student Professional Competence Policy

There can be situations in which students maintain satisfactory academic standing but exhibit behaviors that raise questions about their capacity as professionals. There are a number of professional skills and characteristics that are important for those who provide services to children, adolescents, and adults, as well as to professional organizations, in a variety of settings. These interpersonal/professional skills include, but are not limited to, adherence to ethical
standards published by professional organizations, professional deportment, sensitivity to client issues, and appropriate use of supervision. Situations can arise in which faculty members, students, or other professionals observe behaviors by other students that demonstrate a lack of appropriate interpersonal or professional skills. The purpose of this policy is to provide a set of procedures that Walden faculty members will use to address such issues.

For the purposes of this procedure, a distinction is made between different types of behaviors that impede student development. These include (a) problem behaviors, (b) inappropriate/unprofessional conduct, and (c) critical behaviors.

**Problem Behaviors**

Problem behaviors occur when a student’s attitude and/or behavior is of concern and requires remediation but is not unexpected for professionals in training. These types of behaviors include, but are not limited to, performance anxiety, discomfort with clients of diverse ethnic backgrounds, and lack of appreciation for agency rules and expectations. These types of behaviors

- Can typically be remediated with feedback and further training and supervision,
- Do not result in the potential for physical and/or emotional harm to others,
- Are limited in duration, and
- Will likely not develop into an inappropriate/unprofessional conduct situation.

**Inappropriate and/or Unprofessional Conduct**

Inappropriate and/or unprofessional conduct is defined broadly as an interference in professional functioning that is reflected in one or more of the following ways:

- An inability and/or unwillingness to acquire and integrate professional standards into one’s repertoire of professional behavior.
- An inability to acquire professional skills to reach an acceptable level of competency.
- An inability to control personal stress and/or excessive emotional reactions that interfere with professional functioning.

Problems typically become identified as inappropriate and/or unprofessional conduct when they include one or more of the following characteristics:

- The student fails to acknowledge, understand, or address the problem when it is identified, resulting in further manifestations signifying a more pervasive problem.
- The problem is not merely a reflection of a skill deficit that can be remediated by academic or didactic training. In this case, a group of professional experts (e.g., practicum course faculty members and preceptors) determines that the deficit is likely not correctable.
- The quality of services delivered by the student is sufficiently negatively affected.
- The problem negatively affects other students’ learning.
- A disproportionate amount of attention and intervention by training personnel/instructors is required to remediate the problem.
• The student’s behavior does not change as a function of feedback, remediation efforts, and/or time.

Critical Behaviors

While critical behaviors can occur in the online learning environment, they are most likely to manifest during face-to-face meetings (e.g., residencies, meetings associated with coursework, practicum settings). Critical behaviors put, or have the potential to put, students or faculty members (including one’s self) at risk for physical harm or serious emotional distress. These types of behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following:

• Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol;
• Carrying a weapon;
• Harassing, sexual or other types;
• Having thoughts of suicide;
• Abusing verbally;
• Exhibiting psychological problems (e.g., those associated with such things as psychosis or mania); and/or
• Making threats of harm, intimidation, and abusive or menacing postings.

These behaviors may result in legal, law enforcement, medical, and/or mental health interventions. The procedures for addressing these behaviors are covered in the Review Process for Code of Conduct Violations section of the student handbook.

Nondiscrimination and Sexual Harassment Policies

In Walden’s Code of Conduct, the university maintains the following nondiscrimination and nonharassment policies:

Nondiscrimination

Walden University does not discriminate or tolerate discrimination by or against members of the university community on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, mental or physical disability, veteran status, marital status, or other protected characteristics in the admission to, access to, or treatment or employment in any of its programs or activities.

Sexual Harassment

Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 prohibits sexual discrimination in educational settings. Walden’s Sexual Misconduct policy, which includes policies related to sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual violence may be found in the Walden Student Handbook and by visiting https://www.waldenu.edu/experience/support-services/student-safety-title-ix.

If you have been a victim of any form of sexual violence, harassment, or discrimination (or know someone who has), whether at a Walden-sponsored event or at your field experience site, your
First priority is your own personal safety. After you are safe, please contact either your field experience coordinator or Walden’s Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for receiving and processing, in a timely manner, reports from students, faculty, staff, and administrators regarding rights and responsibilities concerning Sexual Misconduct in violation of Title IX. Any questions or complaints regarding Title IX may be referred to the Walden University Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Title IX Coordinator or to the Office of Civil Rights.

**Walden University’s Title IX Coordinator**
Title IX Coordinator
Gina Dyson, Director, Student Affairs
Phone: 443-220-7016
E-mail: gina.dyson@mail.waldenu.edu

Title IX Deputy Coordinator
Julie K. Ogren, Associate Director, Student Affairs
Phone: 612-312-2376
E-mail: julie.ogren@mail.waldenu.edu

Title IX Deputy Coordinator, Academic Residencies
RoChelle Gilbert, EdD, Associate Director, Academic Residencies
Phone: 612-308-9254
E-mail: rochelle.gilbert@mail.waldenu.edu

**Walden University School of Nursing Onboarding Requirement Policy**

All MSN and DNP students in the School of Nursing participating in practicum courses commencing on and after November 27, 2017 will be required to complete specific onboarding requirements in order to be approved to complete field experience. Some of these Onboarding Requirements* must be obtained or completed through Walden’s designated provider, CastleBranch. Information about CastleBranch can be found at [http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/applicationprocess](http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/applicationprocess).

Students who do not meet this requirement prior to term start will not be permitted to begin their field experience until the onboarding requirements have been met. In situations such as this, failure to meet the requirements prior to term start may result in students not being able to start field experience until the next term.

Details of the practicum application process can be found in the program practicum manual located at [http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/formsanddocuments](http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/formsanddocuments). Requirements completed through CastleBranch must be started prior to submitting a practicum application and completed prior to term start.
*Onboarding Requirements are defined as a specific set of prepracticum requirements established by Walden School of Nursing based on the most common field site requirements, which will enable students to potentially qualify for a wide range of field sites. These onboarding requirements vary from state to state; however, they generally include a background check, drug screening, health requirements, required training, and professional liability insurance, as well as any additional onboarding requirements that may be required by the field site. If an approved field site requires something in addition to what is required by Walden University, an additional package can be obtained through CastleBranch, at the request of Walden’s Field Education office, to fulfill those requirements.

Walden University School of Nursing Technical Standards Policy

Technical Standards Necessary to the Successful Completion of School of Nursing Programs

Walden University’s School of Nursing programs are designed to educate nurses for today’s professional environment by developing the skills of reflection, independent learning, and enhanced critical thinking that will enable students to graduate from its programs and better equip graduates to advance their careers, develop leadership skills, and stay current in their field throughout their career. Students enrolled in Walden School of Nursing programs must establish professional relationships both within and outside of the university setting and may be required to work actively and physically both in the classroom and with other practitioners and patients in a professional setting during field experiences. Therefore, the following list of technical standards are provided to clearly establish the level of capability required to successfully complete School of Nursing programs of study and to encourage current and prospective students to self-assess their qualifications for the program.

The School of Nursing encourages any student who may not be able to meet these standards due to a disability to contact the Office of Disability Services to discuss reasonable accommodations. A reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment of to an instructional activity, equipment, facility, program or service that enables a qualified student with a disability to have an equal opportunity to fulfil the requirements necessary for graduation from the nursing program.

A student in the School of Nursing must meet technical standard requirements in the following areas (examples are not all-inclusive):

1. MOTOR AND MOBILITY FUNCTION
2. BEHAVIORAL/EMOTIONAL FUNCTION
3. CRITICAL-THINKING AND COGNITION SKILLS
4. INTERPERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS
5. COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Students are advised that their success in their chosen program may be dependent on an ability to meet these technical standards.
1. MOTOR AND MOBILITY FUNCTION
Students must be able to perform the following functions:
- Ability to observe patient condition and responses to health and illness;
- Coordinate both gross and fine motor muscular movements, maintain equilibrium, and functionally use the senses of touch and vision;
- Maintain stamina and physical ability required to participate in classes and activities that are part of the curriculum;
- Execute movements sufficient to communicate effectively in a written format;
- Obtain and interpret data from assessment techniques such as observation, palpation of anatomical structures, percussion, noting surface characteristics, assessment of tone, temperature, depth, and other diagnostic procedures; and/or
- Travel to clinical education sites.

2. BEHAVIORAL/EMOTIONAL FUNCTION
Students must be able to perform the following functions:
- Maintain the mental acuity and professional demeanor in stressful environments or during impending deadlines; and/or
- Maintain the mental acuity and professional demeanor sufficient to complete timed written and/or oral examinations and laboratory practical assessments within established time limits, especially when speed of performance or speed of decision making is a critical component.

3. CRITICAL-THINKING AND COGNITION SKILLS
Students must be able to perform the following functions:
- Analyze and synthesize data from a variety of sources;
- Put research findings into practice;
- Exhibit a positive, interactive response to feedback;
- Use sound judgment and apply safety precautions as appropriate; and/or
- Demonstrate higher-level cognitive abilities, which include
  - Rational thought,
  - Measurement,
  - Calculation,
  - Conceptualization,
  - Analysis,
  - Synthesis,
  - Organization,
  - Memory,
  - Application,
  - Clinical reasoning,
  - Ethical reasoning, and
  - Sound judgment.

4. INTERPERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS
Students must be able to perform the following functions:
• Interact appropriately with individuals and groups from a variety of social, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds;
• Actively participate and contribute to group projects;
• Consistently display integrity, honesty, empathy, caring, fairness, respect for self and others, diligence, and dedication;
• Promptly complete all assignments and responsibilities;
• Develop mature, sensitive, and effective relationships, not only with patients but with all members of the university community and other healthcare teams;
• Tolerate emotionally and mentally demanding workloads;
• Identify potentially violent or abusive situations with patients in order to safely withdraw from the interaction;
• Function effectively under stress, and proactively make use of available resources to help maintain both physical and mental health;
• Adapt to changing environments, display flexibility, and be able to learn in the face of uncertainty; and/or
• Take responsibility for themselves and their behaviors.

5. COMMUNICATION SKILLS
Students must be able to perform the following functions:
• Communicate effectively in verbal and written form in any applicable setting including communications with university faculty and staff, other students, and other healthcare professionals;
• Elicit, convey, and clarify information in a timely manner;
• Complete written work at a professional level in a timely manner;
• Document patient/client assessment/evaluation, intervention plans, and progress notations succinctly and in a timeframe similar to clinical constraints;
• Achieve basic technical competency required to function in the classroom and professional setting including functionality in word processing, e-mail, and use of the Internet; and/or
• Effectively describe perceived changes and perceive nonverbal communication.

Walden University is committed to providing equal access to qualified students with disabilities. A qualified student is a student with a disability who, with or without reasonable accommodations, meets the technical standards requirements for the participation in SON programs and activities. School of Nursing applicants and students who need reasonable accommodations to meet these requirements due to functional limitations caused by a disability, should contact disability@mail.waldenu.edu at the earliest opportunity to discuss available options. Students requesting disability accommodations must register with the Office of Disability Services prior to the start of their program, or as soon as possible if their personal situation changes and they are in need of disability accommodations.

*If students require an accommodation to complete any of the technical standards, it's their responsibility to contact the Disability Services Office (disability@mail.waldenu.edu, 612-312-1205 or 1-800-925-3368 x312-1205) to determine if reasonable accommodations can be made. There may be certain physical requirements and standards of performance that the School of Nursing programs cannot accommodate.
Problem Resolution

During their practicum, students may be vulnerable to any number of difficulties that can pose barriers to a successful learning experience. By the time students reach the end of the program, they are entering the work setting and should demonstrate effective problem-solving skills in many difficult situations. However, students are not expected to resolve practicum problems alone.

With Practicum Site Personnel

If a problem develops between students and their practicum preceptor (or other site personnel), they should consult the appropriate individual at Walden to help determine the appropriate strategy to resolve the problem in an informal manner: first, students should consult the practicum course faculty member, and then, if needed, they may consult the specialization coordinator.

Significant problems that arise in the practicum setting should be addressed using the process available to employees at the site and as officially documented in the site Affiliation Agreement signed for the practicum experience. The appropriate Walden faculty or staff member will assist students in preparing any necessary documentation and will closely monitor the progress of the problem resolution, including any grievance process.

The specialization coordinator and/or program director should inform the School of Nursing’s dean about any unresolved issues and must formally document the efforts to resolve the issues presented. The dean will review the efforts to resolve the problem and inform students of other possible recourse options.

With Walden Faculty or Staff Members

Consistent with ethical guidelines, in nearly all situations, students should initially address any concerns directly with the faculty or staff member involved (e.g., practicum course faculty member, specialization coordinator) and attempt to resolve the issue at an informal level, before proceeding to a request for intervention (e.g., from the program director or dean). Failure to address the problem at the program level may delay resolution, as the problem will likely be referred back to the program level.

There shall be no retaliation against any student who identifies a problem or seeks assistance in resolving a conflict involving a member of Walden’s faculty or staff, including those students who choose to file a formal grievance.

Step 1. Consult the Program Director

If a problem develops between students and their practicum course faculty member (or other faculty or staff member), the program director will help students determine the appropriate strategy to resolve the problem in an informal manner. The faculty or staff member and/or the program director should fully inform the dean about any unresolved issues and document all attempts to resolve the issues students have presented. All parties should receive copies of any documentation after it is submitted to and approved by the appropriate dean.
Step 2. Consult the Dean
If students are not able to resolve the problem with the support and intervention of the program director, they should approach the dean to seek guidance and/or intervention. The dean should already have copies of all the documentation of the problem and resolution efforts. The dean will initiate further investigation of the concern. Students may be offered counseling or other needed supports at the dean’s discretion.

Step 3. Consider Filing a Grievance
If the dean is unable to facilitate resolution of the problem, students may consider filing a grievance following Walden University’s grievance procedure, as described below. Note: Filing a grievance may initiate reassignment of one or more of the involved parties for a reasonable period to allow for an appropriate investigation of the situation. The right to confidentiality, both of the complainant and of the accused, will be respected to the extent possible insofar as it does not interfere with the institution’s legal obligation or ability to investigate allegations of misconduct brought to the university’s attention or to take corrective action when it is found that misconduct has occurred.

A formal grievance must be identified as such in writing and directed to the chief academic officer, using the electronic Student Academic Appeals form. The grievance normally should originate no more than 30 calendar days following a resolution decision by the dean or designee (refer to Step 2) concerning the complaint or conduct that gave rise to the grievance. The chief academic officer initially reviews the case to determine appropriate action, which can include referring the matter to an appropriate university office for review. If the conflict is resolved at this stage, no further action is necessary.

Step 4. Hearing Committee
If the conflict cannot be resolved at the initial review stage, the chief academic officer appoints a hearing committee to review the allegations. A written decision from the committee will be delivered in as timely a manner as possible, while allowing for appropriate investigation and consideration, not to exceed 60 calendar days from the date the complaint is filed with the chief academic officer, unless the committee notifies the parties of the need for an extension to properly complete the process. The written records are confidential but available for on-site review by the person(s) directly involved.

In all cases, the decision of the chief academic officer is final and not subject to appeal.
Section 6. Frequently Asked Questions

How long is my practicum?
Leadership and Management students spend a total of 144 hours engaged in practicum-related activities in NURS 6600. Nursing Education students also spend a total of 144 hours engaged in practicum activities: 72 hours are focused on advancing their specialty practice (NURS 6341) and 72 hours are focused on the nurse educator role (NURS 6351). Nursing Informatics students spend a total of 216 hours engaged in practicum activities: 72 hours in NURS 6431 and 144 hours in NURS 6600. Public Health Nursing students spend a total of 360 hours engaged in practicum activities: 216 in NURS 6720 and 144 hours in NURS 6730.

Do I have to finish all the practicum hours during the practicum course?
Yes, you must complete their practicum hours during the practicum course.

What if I do not complete all the practicum hours by the end of the course?
Students usually do not have any problems accumulating enough hours during the practicum course. If you are concerned about this, you should contact your practicum course faculty member immediately.

When should I submit my practicum application?
You must submit the practicum application via Meditrek® no later than the first day of the quarter prior to the quarter in which you plan to start the practicum. For example, if you plan to enroll in NURS 6600 in the summer quarter, your application is due by the first day of the spring quarter. You should review the deadline information in this manual. Application materials received after their respective deadlines are not processed until a later term.

What is the earliest I can submit my practicum application?
Walden encourages early submission of the practicum application via Meditrek®.

My site provides liability insurance coverage for me. Do I still need to have my own?
Yes. All Walden students beginning a practicum are required to purchase professional liability insurance, even if there is no patient/client contact.

Who at my practicum site should I designate in Meditrek® as the practicum site Affiliation Agreement contact?
The Affiliation Agreement contact must be a site administrator who has the authority to sign legal agreements. Often, this person is the CEO, dean, contracts manager, site director, human resources staff member, owner, or president. Large organizations may have an on-site legal department that reviews such agreements and may have an attorney who signs Affiliation Agreements.
If my potential preceptor does not have a master’s degree in nursing, can I still nominate him or her for my MSN practicum?

You should make every attempt to find a preceptor who meets all the requirements outlined in this manual. If you know of someone who you believe is an ideal preceptor but who does not meet these requirements, then you should follow the instructions for using a co-preceptor or mentor. The practicum experience must be overseen by a master’s- or doctoral-level nurse with the education, experience, and role that is suitable for the student’s specialization.

When can I begin my practicum?

You may begin your practicum experience after you have successfully completed all prerequisite coursework, submitted your practicum application documents, received notification of approval of your practicum application, and been enrolled in the practicum course. Students must be in good academic standing to begin the practicum experience. If you are unsure of their academic standing, you should contact the Academic Advising Team at academicadvising@mail.waldenu.edu.

My site wants me to begin practicum activities before I start the practicum course. Am I allowed to start early?

No. You must wait until the first week of the practicum course and after receiving instructor approval for your objectives before beginning your practicum activities. Any hours accumulated prior to the start of the practicum course are not accepted.

Can my practicum experience be virtual?

No. Walden does not offer an option for completing the practicum virtually.

Can I be paid for my practicum?

No. You cannot engage in a paid practicum experience under any circumstances.

How can I obtain professional liability insurance?

Walden does not endorse a particular insurance provider. Students usually obtain professional liability insurance coverage through companies such as Mercer, Marsh, or Nurses Service Organization (NSO).

Will my preceptor be compensated?

Although Walden University School of Nursing does not compensate preceptors financially for preceptorships, they are provided with the following benefits:

- Verification document of hours precepted to utilize for continuing education and licensure renewal requirements; and
- Access to free continuing education opportunities provided by Walden’s School of Nursing Continuing Education program for nurses.
Onboarding Frequently Asked Questions

Why are onboarding requirements being required?
All healthcare facilities accredited by The Joint Commission (http://www.jointcommission.org/) are required to obtain a background check on all employees, volunteers, and students that enter their facilities. Walden University is now requiring onboarding requirements to be completed in CastleBranch for students engaging in practicum experiences to ensure all students starting practicum courses have completed all requirements.

My field site does not require me to complete a background check, drug test or immunizations. Do I still need to complete CastleBranch?
Yes, this is a requirement of Walden University for students to complete prior to beginning practicum. Regardless of what your field site may require, completion of a CastleBranch package is a Walden University requirement.

Do I need to complete onboarding requirements in CastleBranch if I am an employee of the field site?
Yes, this is a Walden University requirement that applies to all nursing practicum students. Being an employee of your field site does not exempt students from this requirement. Students are completing practicum in a student role so they must meet the requirements set forth by Walden University.

Do I need to obtain a new package each quarter for each practicum course?
No; however, you will need to obtain an updated background check and drug screen annually in CastleBranch if your practicum experiences encompass more than one calendar year. Some field sites may require a more recent background check and drug screen, so you may be requested to update those screens in CastleBranch depending on the specific field site requirement. The field experience office will contact you for field-site-specific requirements.

What if a background check or drug screen was performed by my employer?
All background checks and drug screens must be completed through CastleBranch for validation and verification for Walden University. We are unable to accept background checks or drug screens from another source other than through CastleBranch.

What is CastleBranch?
CastleBranch is Walden’s designated vendor for onboarding requirements. CastleBranch is a service that allows students to complete onboarding requirements and Walden’s field education staff to verify completion of requirements. CastleBranch provides a secure and confidential platform to complete. CastleBranch provides a service for us to track, verify, monitor, manage and store all documentation required for practicum placement for auditing purposes.

What are onboarding requirements?
Onboarding is a set of practicum requirements established by Walden’s School of Nursing based on the most common field site requirements, which will enable students to potentially qualify for a wide range of field sites. These onboarding requirements vary from state to state; however, they generally include a background check, drug screening, health requirements, required
training, professional liability insurance and any additional onboarding requirements that may be required by the field site. If an approved field site requires something in addition to what is required by Walden University, an additional package can be obtained through CastleBranch, at the request of Walden’s Field Education office, to fulfill those requirements.

**How do I sign up for a package with CastleBranch?**
Go to the Walden portal for CastleBranch at [walden.castlebranch.com](http://walden.castlebranch.com). The site will walk you through the steps of signing up for a package. There is no package code required.

**What is Walden’s package code for CastleBranch?**
Walden University students do not need a package code. Students need to register for a profile by going directly to the CastleBranch portal for Walden at [walden.castlebranch.com](http://walden.castlebranch.com). The site will walk you through the steps of signing up for a package. There is no package code required.

**Can I just send all my documents directly to Walden University?**
No, Walden University cannot directly accept any personal health documentation, background checks or drug test reports. All documents received directly to Walden University will be immediately and confidentially destroyed.

**How are the results of my background check shared with my practicum field site?**
The results of your background check are only shared with the field sites to which you have authorized access through your practicum application. Once you have authorized a field site, through submission of a practicum application with a FERPA release in Meditrek®, Walden University will be able to provide verification and attestation to the field site directly.

**How do I share my results and documents in CastleBranch to a field site?**
Students can share their results and documentation in CastleBranch to representatives at their field site. Students can call CastleBranch directly to ask how to share the results with their field site.

**What happens when my requirements expire in CastleBranch?**
It is the student’s responsibility to ensure all requirements are up to date in CastleBranch. Students can update requirements in CastleBranch when they expire. CastleBranch will send email notifications when requirements are due to expire. Students must upload updated documentation in CastleBranch to keep requirements in compliance.

**How long will it take to complete the background check once I provide the necessary information to CastleBranch?**
Turnaround time for background checks vary by state, but according to CastleBranch 95% of background check results are completed within 3–5 business days. Information specific to your state can be obtained by contacting CastleBranch customer service. Students can request an expedited review through CastleBranch by paying an extra service fee. Please contact CastleBranch for more information.
Section 7. Contact Information

School of Nursing

Nursing Field Education
Nursing Field Education website: http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son
- Nursing Field Education Staff: nursingfield@mail.waldenu.edu
- Nursing Field Education Supervisors: nursingfield@mail.waldenu.edu

MSN Specialization Coordinators
Leadership and Management
Jeanne Morrison, PhD, RN: jeanne.morrison@mail.waldenu.edu

Nursing Education
Patti P. Urso, PhD, APRN, ANP-BC, CNE: patti.urso@mail.waldenu.edu

Nursing Informatics
Tracy Scott, RN-BC, DNP, FNP-BC: tracy.scott4@mail.waldenu.edu

Public Health Nursing
Janet Gerken, DNP, RN: janet.gerken@mail.waldenu.edu

MSN SP Program Director
Vincent P. Hall, PhD, RN, CNE: vincent.hall@mail.waldenu.edu

Vice Provost, College of Health Sciences and Dean for the School of Nursing
Andrea Lindell, RN, PhD, ANEF: andrea.lindell@mail.waldenu.edu

Students should begin their inquiry at the level at which their question is most likely to be answered. Delays in obtaining information may result if students inquire first from an administrator and then must be referred to a more appropriate resource person.

Note: Students should be familiar with the information in this manual, the School of Nursing Handbook, and the nursing field education website before contacting a School of Nursing faculty member or staff member for help.

Other Important Resources

Field Education Resource Links
Quick Answers: http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/home#s-lg-box-4293425.
Meditrek® Webinars:
http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/formsanddocuments

Tutorials:
http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/formsanddocuments

How to Submit Your Application:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sk9OCfNE-cg&feature=youtu.be

Schedule an Appointment With Field Education Coordinators From Your Region:
http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/fieldexperience/son/contactus

**Academic Advising Team**

Academic advisors are available at 1-800-WALDENU (1-800-925-3368), option 3, Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Central time. Students can also e-mail advisors for the MSN program: academicadvising@mail.waldenu.edu.

**Office of Disability Services**

The director of disability services can be reached by phone at 1-612-312-1205, or e-mail at disability@mail.waldenu.edu. For more information, visit the Office of Disability Services.
Section 8. Programs of Study

MSN Core Courses

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<th>Course</th>
<th>Credit Hour(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>NURS 6001 - Foundations for Graduate Study</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>NURS 6050 - Policy and Advocacy for Improving Population Health or PUBH 6127N - Public Health Policy, Progress and Politics (for Public Health Nursing students only)</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>NURS 6051 - Transforming Nursing and Healthcare Through Technology</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>NURS 6052 - Essentials of Evidence-Based Practice</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6053 - Interprofessional Organizational and Systems Leadership</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
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MSN-SP Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nursing Education Specialization</th>
<th>Leadership and Management Specialization</th>
<th>Nursing Informatics Specialization</th>
<th>Public Health Nursing Specialization</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6301 - Advanced Pathopharmacology (5 cr.)</td>
<td>NURS 6201 - Leadership in Nursing and Healthcare (5 cr.)</td>
<td>NURS 6401 - Informatics in Nursing and Healthcare (5 cr.)</td>
<td>PUBH 6034N - Environmental Health: Local to Global (5 cr.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6512 - Advanced Health Assessment and Diagnostic Reasoning (5 cr.)</td>
<td>NURS 6211 - Finance and Economics in Healthcare Delivery (5 cr.)</td>
<td>NURS 6411 - Information and Knowledge Management (5 cr.)</td>
<td>NURS 6700 - Epidemiology and Population Health (5 cr.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6321 - Curriculum Development, Assessment, and Evaluation (5 cr.)</td>
<td>NURS 6221 - Managing Human Resources (5 cr.)</td>
<td>NURS 6421 - Supporting Workflow in Healthcare Systems (5 cr.)</td>
<td>PUBH 6475N - Program Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation (5 cr.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NURS 6331 - Teaching Learning Strategies: Integrating Technology into Nursing Education (5 cr.)</td>
<td>NURS 6231 - Healthcare Systems and Quality Outcomes (5 cr.)</td>
<td>NURS 6441 - Project Management: Healthcare Information Technology (5 cr.)</td>
<td>NURS 6710 - Public Health Nursing Theory and Practice (5 cr.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NURS 6341 - Specialty in Clinical Nursing (Didactic—4 cr., Practicum—1 cr.)</td>
<td>NURS 6241 - Strategic Planning in Healthcare Organizations (5 cr.)</td>
<td>NURS 6431 - Evaluation Methods for Health Information Technology (Didactic—4 cr., Practicum—1 cr.)</td>
<td>NURS 6720 - Population-based Public Health Nursing Interventions (Didactic—2 cr., Practicum—3 cr.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6351 - Role of the Nurse Educator (Didactic—4 cr., Practicum—1 cr.)</td>
<td>NURS 6600 - Capstone Synthesis Practicum - Leadership and Management (Didactic—3 cr., Practicum—2 cr.)</td>
<td>NURS 6600 - Capstone Synthesis Practicum - Nursing Informatics (Didactic—3 cr., Practicum—2 cr.)</td>
<td>NURS 6730 - Public Health Nursing Leadership (Didactic—3 cr., Practicum—2 cr.)</td>
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<td>51 cr. (with Core Courses)—144 Practicum Hours</td>
<td>51 cr. (with Core Courses)—144 Practicum Hours</td>
<td>51 cr. (with Core Courses)—216 Practicum Hours</td>
<td>51 cr. (with Core Courses)—360 Practicum Hours</td>
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**MSN-SP Courses—Post-Master’s Certificates**

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<tr>
<th>Nursing Education Specialization</th>
<th>Leadership and Management Specialization</th>
<th>Nursing Informatics Specialization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6001 - Foundations for Graduate Study (1 cr.)</td>
<td>NURS 6001 - Foundations for Graduate Study (1 cr.)</td>
<td>NURS 6001 - Foundations for Graduate Study (1 cr.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6321 - Curriculum Development,</td>
<td>NURS 6201 - Leadership in Nursing and Healthcare (5 cr.)</td>
<td>NURS 6401 - Informatics in Nursing and Healthcare (5 cr.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment, and Evaluation (5 cr.)</td>
<td>NURS 6211 - Finance and Economics in Healthcare Delivery (5 cr.)</td>
<td>NURS 6411 - Information and Knowledge Management (5 cr.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NURS 6331 - Teaching Learning Strategies: Integrating Technology into Nursing Education (5 cr.)</td>
<td>NURS 6221 - Managing Human Resources (5 cr.)</td>
<td>NURS 6421 - Supporting Workflow in Healthcare Systems (5 cr.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS 6351 - Role of the Nurse Educator (Didactic—4 cr., Practicum—1 cr.)</td>
<td>NURS 6231 - Healthcare Systems and Quality Outcomes (5 cr.)</td>
<td>NURS 6441 - Project Management: Healthcare Information Technology (5 cr.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NURS 6241 - Strategic Planning in Healthcare Organizations (5 cr.)</td>
<td>NURS 6241 - Strategic Planning in Healthcare Organizations (5 cr.)</td>
<td>NURS 6431 - Evaluation Methods for Health Information Technology (Didactic—4 cr., Practicum—1 cr.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NURS 6600 - Capstone Synthesis Practicum - Leadership and Management (Didactic—3 cr., Practicum—2 cr.) (OPTIONAL)</td>
<td>NURS 6600 - Capstone Synthesis Practicum - Nursing Informatics (Didactic—3 cr., Practicum—2 cr.) (OPTIONAL)</td>
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<td>16 cr.—72 Practicum Hours</td>
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<td>26 cr.—72 Practicum Hours</td>
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