

Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Concluding Graduate Experience (CGE) Handbook



Welcome to your MSN Concluding Graduate Experience (CGE).

All your previous graduate courses have led you to this moment – the application of your knowledge and skills in real-life situations and events and the demonstration of your achievement of the program outcomes. The two Concluding Graduate Experience (CGE) courses are very different from your previous courses because they place the responsibility on you, the learner.

It is critical for you to identify and formalize arrangements for the on-site practice component (practicum) of the CGE as early as possible. The information within this document will help you finalize those practicum arrangements. Please read and implement the information carefully and completely.

In the CGE, you will produce a professional portfolio which provides evidence of your progress and development toward your professional goal. Review your syllabus carefully and discuss milestones with your CGE practicum mentor and instructor to avoid missing a deadline. The practicum coordinator will include a link to this handbook in an email sent to each mentor.

Enjoy your CGE experience and take advantage of every opportunity to apply your new knowledge and skills.

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Concluding Graduate Experience (CGE) Guidelines & Procedures

I. General Guidelines

The culmination of your Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Specialty Track is the two-course Concluding Graduate Experience (CGE). The CGE consists of two courses (CGE I and II). Each course has didactic and on-site-practice (practicum) components. The practicum component is related to your specialty. The didactic component includes demonstration of your achievement of the MSN program outcomes.

The practicum component offers you the opportunity to apply newly developed skills and relate theoretical content, as presented in core and specialty courses, to real practice situations. Prior to the CGE, you will have demonstrated an understanding of the theoretical foundations of your nursing specialty track. This final, concentrated professional experience helps to further prepare you for an advanced practice role. On a larger scale, it allows you to enhance skills in communication, teamwork, critical thinking and professionalism.

All practicum projects focus on quality improvement, require interprofessional communication, use of evidence-based practice and coordination to achieve clinical or academic outcomes. You will implement a comprehensive plan and disseminate the evaluation findings. You will also prepare a publication-ready manuscript as a part of the second CGE course.

You are responsible for identifying an appropriate location and mentor for the practicum component of the CGE that will meet the expectations for the project. You must secure an acceptable site a minimum of 120 days prior to the beginning of the first CGE course. A master's-in-nursing-prepared nurse mentor with experience in the selected specialty track is required to provide guidance and direction for attainment of your learning goals.

Graduate students in the MSN specialty tracks may not be given direct patient care assignments to supplement or replace nursing staff in any practicum setting. Students must have an active and unrestricted license in the state where the practicum will be completed. In the event a student is completing the practicum in a non-resident state, proof of current RN licensure will be required.

In concurrence with the your assigned faculty member and clinical mentor, a learning agreement including expectations, student learning outcomes and means of measuring success will be executed. During the practicum, you must advise your mentor of course requirements and student learning objectives. You are also responsible for developing a portfolio of the clinical experience including accurate reflections on activities and attainment of course outcomes and specialty competencies. Each assigned faculty member is responsible for evaluating their student's performance and all associated assignments completed during the CGE. You are responsible for making travel arrangements and incurring all related expenses.

You must be scheduled for and are responsible for completing a minimum of 72 hours of practicum experience in an approved and supervised setting for each of your two CGE courses in the Educator, Executive or Healthcare Policy Specialty Tracks (for a total of 144 practicum hours). For the Nursing Informatics (NI) Specialty Track, students must complete a total of 216 hours of practicum over three courses: NR-640: Informatics Nurse Specialist Practicum and the two CGE courses. Your scheduled hours are arranged in conjunction with the practicum site to satisfy the practice-experience requirement. Chamberlain allows flexibility in scheduling these hours. The requirement may be met with full days, partial days or consecutive days as agreed upon with the practicum mentor. Your Student Activities Log must be submitted to the instructor and included in your professional portfolio. Documentation must demonstrate activities related to course outcomes, specialty competencies and your learning agreement.

You will also participate in the didactic components of your CGE courses. The didactic work includes weekly learning assessments in addition to the practicum hours. Up to 40 percent of student practicum activities may consist of:

- Preparation for the CGE project
- Completing approved research associated with the practicum experience or practicum project
- Completing research requested by the practicum mentor or agency that supports practicum goals
- Preparing for and attending a professional meeting
- Meeting with mentor and/or a site orientation prior to course opening

All hours must be documented on the Student Activity Log and signed off by the mentor. Your travel time to and from the practicum site and time spent working on the practicum portfolio requirements cannot be included in your practicum hours.

II. Eligibility for Concluding Graduate Experience (CGE)

1. Prerequisite Requirements

- Completion of all core and specialty track prerequisite courses
- Nursing Informatics students must first complete NR-640, followed by NR-641

2. Practicum Site Selection

You must take a proactive role in this process to assure that an acceptable site is found. Begin the process by identifying your learning goals. After identifying these goals, initiate the process of selecting a site that provides the best opportunity to promote learning. Consultation with track-based faculty is recommended.

Practicum experience location

- You may have working relationships in the field and may use these networks to determine a location for completing the practicum.
- Identify a learning need in consultation with track-based faculty that is outside of your network. You may need assistance in learning about a potential practicum site. Your practicum coordinators will assist in exploring opportunities in your area. The practicum coordinators can be reached at ccnmsnpracticum@chamberlain.edu.
- It is important to remember the practicum gives facilities the opportunity to observe you as a potential employee. Therefore, you may consider employment goals in selecting a site.

Criteria for site selection

- Your site must be a healthcare-related organization or nursing institution in accordance with the needs of the specialty (e.g., hospital, outpatient clinic, long-term care facility, home-care services, school or college of nursing). Nursing Informatics students might seek a practicum experience with a vendor of information systems or an information-systems consulting firm. Healthcare Policy students may seek a nursing organization, agency or legislative office.
- The site may be in the institution where you are currently employed but must be outside of your normal work area (e.g., if you are a hospital staff nurse in the cardiac unit, then you may select a mentor who is the director of staff development in the same hospital).
- You cannot engage in direct patient care as part of your practicum experience. You are not to be given patient-care assignments. Acceptable practicum experiences may include patient interviews, chart reviews, participation in pre-clinical conferences, post-clinical debriefings and observation of the mentor doing clinical teaching or patient care. You may also observe and/or oversee pre-licensure students performing patient care that are under the guidance of your mentor. You must also meet the institution's HIPAA compliance requirements prior to start of the practicum experience.
- You must have an active and unrestricted registered-nursing license in the state where they wish to complete the practicum. If you are completing your practicum in a different state from where you reside, then proof of proper RN licensure will be required prior to practicum registration.

Direct your questions about site selection to the Practicum Coordination Office. Contact information for the Practicum Coordination Office is located in the resource titled Practicum Orientation, in Student Resources.

Site requirements

The site may request various requirements of students. It is your responsibility to ensure all site requirements are understood and completed prior to the beginning of the first Concluding Graduate Experience (CGE) course. This can include but is not limited to: background check, drug or urine screening, immunizations, proof of health insurance, etc. Because a student must be fully compliant with all site requirements before beginning the first CGE course, automatic registration for any of the CGE courses is not allowed. Once Student Services is notified that you are fully compliant, then you may complete manual course registration.

An agreement or contract between Chamberlain and the site is required. This process can take several weeks or longer to secure; therefore, it is important that you identify the proper point of contact at the site to assist in this matter. The Practicum Coordination Office is available to assist with contractual agreements.

All agreements must be completed prior to the beginning of the first CGE course and course registration. In the event an agreement is not completed, a delay in starting the first CGE course will occur.

3. Mentor Qualifications

- Minimum of a master's degree in nursing; a doctorate preferred
- Mentor must hold a master's degree in nursing for a minimum of two years prior to the first CGE course
- Holds a position in the student's chosen specialty*
- Has a minimum of five years of nursing experience with a minimum of three years in that specialty

NOTE: Mentor cannot be a relative or family member. In addition, the mentor cannot be a direct supervisor or any staff member who can impact the employee evaluation.

* For the Executive CGE courses, the mentor must have fiscal responsibility (e.g., annual budgetary planning, oversight and monitoring) over a nursing unit, department, service line and/or facility or organization the mentor must also have direct supervision of personnel (i.e., direct reports). For Informatics CGE courses, the mentor must be in a project management role. For Healthcare Policy CGE courses, the mentor must be actively engaged in external healthcare policy creation, advocacy or application within a professional community; mentors within agencies must be responsible for dissemination and compliance with policy required by accreditation, regulation or state boards.

4. Clinical Compliance Requirements

There are a number of documents that must be submitted at least 30 days prior to your practicum start date. Some are required by Chamberlain, others may be required by your practicum site. Your clinical compliance team will send you a comprehensive list of all required documentation. It is your responsibility to ensure all requirements are understood and completed 30 days prior to beginning the practicum experience at each site. This may include, but is not limited to: liability insurance, background check, drug screening, immunizations, proof of health insurance, evidence of HIPAA training, current CPR certification. A listing of Chamberlain requirements can be found in the [MSN-Post-Licensure Clinical Compliance Packet](#).

Because a student must be fully compliant with all site requirements before beginning the practicum course, automatic registration for any of the practicum courses is not allowed.

5. Completed Practicum Application

Once the site has been selected and mentor identified:

- Complete the *Practicum Application* in the Student Portal at least two sessions prior to the beginning of the practicum course
- Identify the mentor and include the mentor's qualifying information on the *Practicum Application* and attach the mentor's resume/Curriculum Vitae (CV)

If you need help submitting the *Practicum Application*, please review the [MSN Practicum Application Guide](#).

6. Self-Assessment of Professional Competencies

At the beginning of the first CGE course, complete a *Self-Assessment of Professional Competencies*. This assessment will help guide the development of goals for the practicum experience. *The Self-Assessment of Professional Competencies* may be found in the course resources section of the CGE courses.

7. Portfolio

Throughout both CGE courses, you will develop a *Professional Portfolio*. Requirements for the portfolio are delineated in the *Practicum Portfolio Guidelines*, for each specialty track located in the course resources section of the CGE courses.

8. Ethical Behavior

Students are expected to present professional demeanor, behavior, appearance and communication at all times. You are bound by the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics. You also must agree to abide by all the rules and regulations of the practicum site.

III. Roles & Responsibilities

1. Faculty Role

During the course, the instructor should be available via email or telephone to provide support to the student and the mentor. It is incumbent upon the instructor to assure that the site is not misappropriating the student's time and/or utilizing the student as it would a full-time employee but instead, is facilitating learning. Given the nature of the practicum, the role of the instructor becomes a combination of facilitator, organizer, professional-relations coordinator, role model, coach and counselor. The instructor's role is to maintain ongoing and effective communication throughout the practicum experience. The instructor is responsible for the final evaluation of the student's learning.



2. Responsibilities of Chamberlain University

- Ensure students have met all eligibility requirements prior to beginning the practicum
- Define competencies to be addressed during practicum assignment
- Suggest activities to enhance the educational experience
- Provide a faculty member to act as instructor and facilitator
- Instruct students to abide by practicum-facility policies and procedures, rules and regulations
- Consider promptly any complaints by facility, mentor or student
- Maintain communication with student and mentor during the assignment
- Agree to not discriminate by race, creed, color, religion, sex or national origin
- Evaluate academic performance of students in the course

3. Responsibilities of the Practicum Coordinator

- Make contact with the site and confirm all needed compliance forms
- Confirm compliance agreement and needed requirements are in place between the site and the student prior to practicum registration
- Make contact with mentor, providing the course syllabus, mentor manual, practicum handbook and contact information of the faculty and practicum coordinator
- Be a conduit if mentor changes are requested by student
- Follow up with mentors, students and faculty about the overall practicum experience upon the completion of the course

4. Responsibilities of the Practicum Mentor

- Cooperate with Chamberlain faculty to promote student success in the practicum
- Orient the student to the facility environment and policies
- Design suitable experience situations as described in the course outcomes and student-learning agreement
- Serve as mentor for students in professional development
- Participate in initial conference call with student and practicum-course instructor during the first week of each Concluding Graduate Experience (CGE) course
- Refuse to pay students for practicum or use students to replace paid staff
- Provide constructive feedback to students about their performance in the practicum setting
- Not disclose any personal student-identifying information or records of students' participation except as set forth by an agreement or required by law
- Agree to not discriminate by race, creed, color, religion, sex or national origin
- Respond to practicum-course faculty requests for updates throughout the CGE experience
- Provide feedback to Chamberlain as requested

5. Responsibilities of the Student

- Meet eligibility and course requirements
- Be familiar with all procedures and content for practicum experience
- Meet deadline dates for all practicum coursework and activities
- Assist in the facilitation of an initial meeting between the practicum course instructor, mentor and student during the first week of their practicum
- Demonstrate competence in practicum assignments
- Abide by facility rules and regulations
- Conduct oneself in a professional manner during the practicum assignment
- Accept instruction from facility personnel as a learning opportunity
- Maintain communication with the course faculty
- Comply with all facility requirements (e.g., liability insurance, background screening, physical examination, drug screening and current immunizations)

NOTE: If you completed any program previously at one of our campuses, your compliance for that program is no longer viable. New compliance will have to be completed and submitted per the instructions noted above.

- Evaluate the practicum experience
- Perform a self-evaluation on the practicum assignment
- Fund all travel arrangements and any associated expenses
- Provide proof of active and non-restricted RN licensure throughout the experience
- Graduate students in MSN specialty tracks may not be given direct patient care assignments to supplement or replace nursing staff in any practicum setting. Acceptable practicum experiences may include but are not limited to: conducting patient interviews, performing chart reviews, participating in pre-clinical conferences, conducting debriefing sessions after clinical or simulated learning, instructing pre-licensure students or nursing staff on procedures and/or equipment use, demonstrating and reviewing nursing care for pre-licensure students in a skills lab, simulation lab or at the bedside or attending and participating in meetings related to your learning contract.

6. Orientation to the Practicum

General information about the practicum is available in the MSN Student Resources/HUB. The site includes the description of the practicum, forms, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), grading rubrics and contact information.

7. Mentor Receipt of Handbook

Email a copy of this handbook to your mentor to ensure that both of you understand course requirements.

Direct all questions about the practicum to the practicum coordinator at ccnmsnpracticum@chamberlain.edu.

Practicum Portfolio Guidelines

I. Elements of the Portfolio

All practicum projects are to focus on quality improvement, require interprofessional communication, use of evidence-based practice, and coordination to achieve clinical or academic outcomes. You will implement a comprehensive plan and disseminate the evaluation findings.

You will also prepare a publication-ready manuscript as part of the second Concluding Graduate Experience (CGE) course:

1. Self-Assessment of Professional Competencies: Completed at the beginning and the end of the CGE (located in the course resources section of the CGE courses)

2. Student's Curriculum Vitae (CV)

3. Learning Agreement: You are responsible for the construction of a learning agreement that includes the following elements:

- Name, credentials and contact information of mentor
- Student-defined practicum goals (as approved by the mentor and CGE instructor), methods planned to meet these goals and how each goal was met. Areas of concentration include:
 - Application of nursing-specialty knowledge and skills
 - Application of nursing science/theory
 - Application of nursing theory
 - Critical judgment
 - Professional development
 - Personal development
 - Human caring/diversity
 - Ethical/legal principles
 - Leadership
 - Evidence-based practice
 - Communication

The *Learning Agreement* should present a rich narrative, documenting the course outcomes achieved. The initial *Learning Agreement*, submitted in Week 1 of the first CGE course, forms the basis for the narrative. Each week, you will add further activities and document practicum hours and modifications to the plan to meet your self-identified practicum goals and show when and how those goals were met. Creation of a timeline with activities for each point on the timeline is required.

4. Project: A nursing specialty track project that directs activities to be conducted during the practicum experience.

Required elements include:

- Identification of an issue, problem or concern that aligns with the organization need and student learning need
- Target audience (e.g., learners); stakeholders
- Assessment of the needs of target audience; stakeholders
- Objectives for the experience
- Methods used

- Materials developed for the specialty activity (e.g., handouts, PowerPoint, etc.)
- Measurement, Evaluation of the achievement of objectives, & dissemination of the project outcomes.
- Publication-ready manuscript

You will develop and implement an activity project that will benefit the organization and contribute to your ability to achieve your course outcomes. Your practicum activity should be chosen in conjunction with the mentor and approved by the course faculty and be based on a review of the needs of the nursing specialty and facility. You will assess the need for the activity, develop objectives for the project and identify strategies from the literature used in the development and implementation of the activity.

5. Completed Student Activities Log identifies how the required practicum hours were met.

II. Portfolio Evaluation Methods

Portfolio Element	Possible Points
Self Assessment of Professional Competencies	50
Learning Agreement	250
Curriculum Vitae (CV)	100
Practicum Project	250
Student Activities Log	50
Total Possible Points	700

III. Prior to Course Opening

Due Date	Practicum Element
120 Days Prior to Course Opening	Practicum Information Form submitted; Plan bi-weekly communication with the practicum coordinator to ensure the approval process is moving forward
Prior to Course Opening	Review course requirements with mentor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus • Learning Agreement* • Portfolio Assignments* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Practicum Project – Student Activities Log – Professional Competencies

*These requirements are initiated and completed during the practicum experience; see syllabus.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Contact Information

Direct all questions about the practicum experience to the practicum coordinator at cnmsnpracticum@chamberlain.edu.

Practicum Handbook

All information, forms and contact information about the practicum are located in the *MSN Practicum Handbook*.

Eligibility for Practicum

1. When can I take the practicum?

You may take the practicum course only after successful completion of all core and specialty-track courses.

2. Can I take both of the Concluding Graduate Experience (CGE) courses at the same time?

No. All practicum courses, including NR-640 for the Nursing Informatics track, must be taken in sequential sessions as the content and assignments presented and completed in one course are the basis for the next course in the sequence.

Applying for the Practicum

3. When do I apply for the practicum?

You will complete the *MSN Practicum Application* at least two sessions prior to your anticipated practicum start date. The deadline for applying for the practicum is two sessions before the practicum start date. Please do not expect the practicum processing to be completed more quickly than this time frame and if there are barriers based on compliance, such as ability to obtain a contract agreement between the university and the agency, there may be a longer timeframe to be prepared to be registered for the CGE courses.

4. Why do I have to apply so long ahead of the practicum start date?

This allows time for Chamberlain to communicate all expectations for the practicum to the student, the mentor and the agency and to complete agreements. This also allows sufficient time for you to complete any agency-specific requirements such as immunizations, safety orientation, drug screening, CPR, etc.

5. Where do I find the Practicum Application?

Your Practicum application can be found and completed on your student portal at my.chamberlain.edu. Please follow the steps provided in the [MSN Practicum Application Guide](#) to complete the application

6. How do I know if the site and mentor I have selected will be appropriate for my practicum experience?

The practicum coordinator will answer any most questions you have about the practicum and will help guide you in site and mentor selection as needed. Track-based faculty may assist you in mentor and site selection and appropriateness. Contact the practicum coordinator at cnmsnpracticum@chamberlain.edu.

NOTE: Students must have an active and unrestricted nursing license in the state where they wish to complete the practicum. For students who are completing their practicum in a different state from where they reside, proof of proper nurse licensure will be required prior to practicum registration.

Site Selection

7. Can I do the practicum at the agency where I am employed?

Yes. You may complete the practicum at their place of employment; however, they must select a different department. Your mentor cannot be your supervisor at your place of employment.

8. Do I have to do my practicum at a hospital or at a school of nursing?

No. While a hospital or school of nursing may provide a familiar opportunity for the practicum, there are many other potential sites from which a student may choose (e.g., an out-patient clinic, home care or community health agency, a rehabilitation center or surgery center). The site must offer the student the opportunity to work with a mentor to apply the specialty skills attained in the MSN program.

Mentor Questions

9. Does my mentor have to have a master's degree?

Yes, the minimum requirement for a mentor is a master's degree in nursing, with a doctorate preferred. Mentor must hold a master's degree in nursing for a minimum of two years prior to your practicum course. Your mentor must have five years experience as a nurse, with three years in that specialty. The mentor must be currently employed in that specialty area.

10. What happens if my mentor gets sick or has to quit during my practicum?

In this event, students would notify their instructor immediately. The student, instructor and practicum coordinator would work together closely to find an alternative.

11. What are some suggestions for a practicum project? Some examples for practicum projects are:

Executive:

1. Throughput issues: designing optimal flow of patients from the emergency department to ICU and telemetry units.
2. Implementing various best practices related to nursing operations: purposeful rounding, bedside reporting, multidisciplinary rounding.
3. Implementing evidence-based practice council or shared leadership council for the purpose of the Magnet Designation journey.
4. Addressing key changes related to Joint Commission surveys (e.g., improving patient satisfaction scores through peace and quiet time), interdisciplinary rounding and communication for optimal coordination of patient care; communication during hand-offs).

Educator:

1. Comprehensive (lecture, visuals, handouts, study tips, verification of learning, assignments) on skin care for beginning nursing students.
2. Comprehensive (lecture, visuals, handouts, study tips, verification of learning, assignments) presentation to staff nurses on using a new piece of equipment.
3. Comprehensive (lecture, visuals, handouts, study tips, verification of learning, assignments) presentation to faculty about issues related to remediating students who are not passing.
4. Comprehensive (lecture, visuals, handouts, study tips, verification of learning, assignments) simulation (hands-on or virtual learning environment) based on curricular need.
5. Comprehensive (lecture, visuals, handouts, study tips, verification of learning, assignments) for community center, state board of nursing (or other agency) on area of need.

Informatics:

1. Downtime procedures for Home Health and Hospice (HHH) nurses with EPIC conversion Toolkits for translation strategies for disseminating health information Interdisciplinary communication via mobile heartbeat Interdisciplinary Plan of Care (IPOC) project
2. Bed management protocol to assist in predictive discharge planning

Healthcare Policy:

1. Creation and/or dissemination of state legislative items; bills or new legislation (e.g., changes in policy for reporting nurses that have been terminated from organizations needing to be reported to board of nursing).
2. Implementation of new processes related to patient care that cover broadly over all organizations caring for this type of patient (e.g., using a set of standing orders for palliative care patients that travel with them from acute care to chronic care and how to implement acceptance of these orders by outside facilities).
3. State emergency response policies (e.g., students work to create work flows and decision trees that coordinate all types of responders in a coordinated effort to help).

Our Mission:

To educate, empower and embolden diverse healthcare professionals who advance the health of people, families, communities and nations.



THE MSN/CONCLUDING GRADUATE EXPERIENCE

Literature



Catalog



Viewbook



MSN Curriculum Grid



Academic Calendar



Graduate Learning Agreement



Graduate Student Activities Log



Graduate Practicum Checklist

For more information, email cnmsnpracticum@chamberlain.edu



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