Master of Science in Nursing with an Emphasis in Health Informatics- Practicum Guidelines

The goal of the 200 hour practicum experience is to explore an area of healthcare informatics. Some options include informatics clinical workflow and electronic health record application projects using SQL or Java, EPIC, UML, UP, HIE,use of report writing software such as Tableau or Crystal Reports, record template development and other Health Information Technology projects. Other opportunities/experiences do exist and all have final approval by the faculty member of the practicum course. All preceptors and sites are initially approved by the lead faculty or assistant dean for graduate studies.

Selecting a Nursing Informatics Preceptor and Site

Once students have decided upon their area of interest in informatics, they are ready to select their preceptor. Students may already know an expert or specialist in the field with whom they would like to work. Preceptors may include: clinic or nurse managers that work in informatics, Chief Medical Informatics officers (CMIO), Chief Information Officer (CIO), clinic administrators, Health Information Management (HIM) department specialists, informatics department specialists, and compliance, revenue integrity and revenue informatics specialists. If they do not know what they want to do, it is recommended to look at the AHIMA, ANIA, and AMIA websites, individual state component associations such as AzHIMA, HIMSS and Health Current, the Arizona health information exchange to help identify project sites. Projects should add value/benefit to the organization chosen. Students cannot be paid for their practicum time.

Examples of Suitable Health Informatics Practicum Experiences

Health Informatics Practicum Topic	Description	Examples of a Suitable Practicum Activities	Examples of Suitable Practicum Sites
Electronic Health Record Enhancement	The electronic health record (EHR) is a digital version of a patient's clinical information that provides secure, transferrable records that can improve patient safety and the quality of patient care. EHRs often require customization to enhance the patient safety end-user experience. Backed by evidence-based research, students participate in usability tests to identify potential EHR enhancements.	▪ Review EHR related patient safety incidents, conduct related usability tests, analyze root cause, and develop solutions and specifications for enhanced EHR functionality. ▪ Based on interviews with the clinical documentation improvement and health information management departments, identify a clinical record gap that impacts capture of clinical criteria or quality measure data. Work with system stakeholders to design a solution including user screen layout, templates, menus, or user alerts. ▪ Discuss interoperability issues with health information technology, health informatics, and health information management stakeholders. Conduct an analysis of the EHR and corresponding interoperable systems. Create a graphical depiction of the interfacing systems. Select one interoperability issue and identify root cause. Interview users and develop a proposed solution with a corresponding presentation.	Hospital, clinic, or community health center Provider medical practice
Database Management	Database management systems in healthcare are used to store, protect, and analyze data from diverse sources. Databases are used to warehouse data for easy user access, data	▪ Interview the health information management director and determine the need for an employee productivity database. Identify the data elements required for productivity monitoring. Assess the current systems that house productivity data. Evaluate database	Hospital, clinic, or community health center

	analysis, report generation, and strategy development. Students will create a database to solve a specific user defined need for business intelligence.	management system options based on user preference. Create a database system that imports electronic or manually entered productivity data. Using the selected database, create reports per user specification. Develop training materials and train users to input the data and access the reports.	Provider medical practice
User Interface and Workflow Mapping	Effective user interface functionality and workflow mapping are crucial to a successful health information system implementation. Based on stakeholder discussions students will select a user interface or workflow issue and develop a solution.	▪ Interview information technology, health informatics, or health information management stakeholders and identify a system related user interface or workflow issue. Use evidence-based principles of user-centered design, including user feedback at multiple points of the workflow to assess the problem. Conduct usability testing with the users through test cases and walk-throughs. Map the workflow and identify potential improvements. Design a system enhancement or workflow improvement. Create training materials for user presentations.	Hospital, clinic, or community health center Provider medical practice
Request for Proposal (RFP)	RFPs are documents used to provide system details for vendors who wish to submit health information systems bids. Students will investigate system requirements and develop an industry-standard RFP.	▪ Interview information technology, health informatics, or health information management stakeholders regarding future information system needs. Research industry-standard examples of health care system RFPs. Research system offerings by several vendors based on user preference. Based on evidence-based research identify industry-standard system requirements for the chosen application. Create a health information system RFP for the selected system.	Hospital, clinic, or community health center Provider medical practice
Implementation Training	Implementation training is a key to success of any new health information system. Information technology stakeholders conduct implementation training before system go-live and afterward for new users joining the organization. With the health of organization stakeholders, students will identify a need for implementation training, develop educational materials, and conduct training sessions.	▪ Interview organization stakeholders and identify a new or recently implemented information system or module where additional training is required. Gain access to and analyze the system functionality. Conduct evidence-based research on techniques for developing health information system training materials. Using industry best practices develop training materials using screenshots and workflow graphics in a PowerPoint document. Conduct training sessions for new users.	Hospital, clinic, or community health center Provider medical practice

Nursing Informatics Preceptor Requirements

- Holds an unencumbered and current nursing license.
- Must hold a master's degree in Nursing.
- Provide opportunities to work with other nursing staff as appropriate to augment the practicum experience.
- Minimum of 2 years current work experience in informatics. This can be within a hospital or clinic setting.
- Minimum of 3 months at current employer.
- Able to provide an educational experience that will help meet overall practicum objective and personal learning objectives
- Preceptor willingness and time available to mentor students learning by serving as a resource during the practicum time.
- Preceptor is experientially and academically prepared
- Preceptors cannot be relatives, personal friends, direct supervisor or a current GCU student
- Preceptor can work at student's place of employment but cannot work in the same department as the student.

Preceptor responsibilities include:

- Provide an environment for the student to gain experience in planning as part of a leadership team, while regarding the student as a professional colleague
- Communicate expectations to the student
- Approve student submitted practicum hours through Thunder Time preceptor website.
- Objectively review and validate the student's competencies through intermittent observation, discussion, mid-term and final evaluation
- Share educational expertise, tools, and references that will aid the student in role transition to a competent public health professional. Provide time to mentor the student's learning by answering questions and reviewing progress on practicum work, etc.
- Participate in conferences with course faculty to review and assess student progress (see Preceptor-Faculty-Student Conferences and Evaluations section)

Students must make an appointment to interview their potential preceptor. They must share their objectives for their practicum with him or/ her. Students must determine what do they want to learn and how they best see themselves learning it. Students must discuss this with their potential preceptor and see if their preceptors' responses fits with the students' learning needs and learning styles. Students should determine if they are comfortable with this potential preceptor. More importantly, they must determine if they are comfortable making a mistake and taking feedback from this person. Those are critical pieces of a practicum experience and the success of the practicum may be directly related to the preceptor selected and how the student works with that person. So this selection process may be one of the most important steps in the overall practicum experience.

Students should not hesitate to thank a prospective preceptor for their time, but should not select them as their preceptor if they do not feel it is a good fit. It just is not the foundation for a good learning experience. Students must not make a final commitment to their potential preceptor until they have Office of Field Experience approval. All preceptors and sites are approved by the lead faculty or the Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies.

Time Commitments to the experience

Students should plan ahead to meet the commitments of the practicum experience. Most practicum sites are often limited to daytime and weekdays for providing practicum hours, so it may be necessary to adjust one's schedule accordingly. Students must complete all of their professional time commitment to the host agency even if they have successfully completed their logged clock hour commitment. They must discuss, and agree upon, their practicum experience start and end dates with their preceptor. It is important for students to confer with the preceptor on how they will be expected to provide closure to their assigned projects. **It is important to note that failure to complete the required minimum 200 hours within the timeframe of the practicum course, or failing to properly document completed hours for the practicum will result in failure of the course.**

The practicum course curriculum is developed to be taken concurrently as the student is fulfilling their practicum hours. If the student experiences an extenuating circumstance that will require the early completion of hours, the student must receive faculty permission before doing so.

Field Experience Documentation Checklist – MSN-HI

The following documentation may be required and can be scanned and uploaded to one's student file, via the student portal. It is requested that the students organize the required documents after the checklist in the order noted in the checklist if possible. Note: A student's practicum site may require additional or different health and safety documents than those in the lists below, as stipulated in an affiliation agreement.

- Field Experience Site Information Form

- Copy of current Healthcare Insurance Card
- CPR/BLS or ACLS (online certification is not acceptable)
- HIPAA/FERPA Confidentiality form
- Immunizations or Titers for the following: TB, Influenza, Tetanus, MMRx2, Varicella, HepBx3
- Preceptor Current Curriculum Vitae or Resume
- Preceptor/mentor current Nursing License, if applicable.
- Medical Clearance Form (or proof of a physical within 6 months of practicum)
- Acknowledgment of Field Experience Guidelines

The deadline to submit required documentation is generally a minimum of 8 weeks prior to the planned practicum course. Documentation submitted late may result in a later registration of the practicum course. Students should submit their documentation early to avoid a delay in their practicum/clinical start date.

Logging Practice Experience Hours

The Lopes Activity Tracker (LAT) is used to track practicum hours throughout the students experience. This hour tracking system can be found in the Student Portal. Training material can be found at the following link on how to log hours:

https://support.gcu.edu/hc/en-us/articles/360036640353-Lopes-Activity-Tracker

• All 200 hours must be completed on-site and under direct supervision. Time taken to complete assignments for the Practicum course does not count toward completion of the 200 hours. Depending on practicum placement, the faculty member may approve up to 20 hours to be completed at home for research or planning activities.
• All hours must be completed and signed off/approved by their preceptor no later than at mid-term and end of term. Faculty members will provide final validation of all practicum hours.
• Field Experience Counselors are available for questions and assistance with this program if needed.
• Students are not to log hours until they have been cleared by the OFE.

Evaluations

Practicum Course Evaluations

A *pre-conference* will occur prior to the start of the practicum/clinical experience. This meeting is intended for the student and preceptor to review course and student-specific learning objectives as well as the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of student and preceptor during this clinical experience. The preceptor and student will attest to meeting by signing the Preceptor-Faculty-Student Conferences and Evaluations form and submitting to the classroom in the first week for faculty approval of the proposed experiences.

The midterm and final evaluations are electronic and can be accessed in ThunderTime (the preceptor version of Lopes Activity Tracker). The practicum faculty will contact the preceptor at midterm by phone, Skype, Facetime, or any other desired virtual modality. The preceptor will complete the midterm evaluation electronically after discussion with the faculty member. The final evaluation will be completed by the preceptor with input from the faculty member. In both cases, the student will be involved, either during the conference period or through review of the evaluation with the preceptor. This valuable feedback/input given by the preceptors on the students' performance will receive a final review and evaluation by the practicum faculty after being uploaded to the classroom by the student.

The student and preceptor will attest to reviewing these evaluations together by signing the separate *Preceptor-Faculty-Student Conferences and Evaluations* form and submitting to the classroom both mid-course and in the final week.

Any student who scores "below expectations" at mid-term will meet with the faculty to complete a remediation form and plan.

At the end of practicum, Students will submit an evaluation of the preceptor and site that is reviewed by the faculty. All evaluations that have any "below expectations" will be sent to the program lead for review and further investigation.