Tips for Securing a Clinical Preceptor and Site

Clinical Preceptor and Site Requirements:

- The preceptor must be a nurse practitioner, physician assistant or a physician in a primary care practice.
- One of your preceptors during your program must be a NP in your population area i.e. adult, family or pediatrics.
- Clinical sites should be primary care sites with a variety of populations and clients with episodic and chronic conditions.
- FNP students should find a family practice site
- PNP students should find a pediatric site
- ANP students should find either a FNP site (you would only be able to see adolescent and adult patients) or an internal medicine site.
- A specialty site is not acceptable as your only clinical site for the semester.

Who to contact: Who to consider?

- Consider your personal doctors.
- Look up doctors in your area in the phone book/internet.
- Ask friends or family who may have contacts. ***Students who have personal contacts are the most successful in finding a preceptor in a timely manner.***
- Check with your State Board of Nursing to see if there are any NP Groups in the state.
- Check to see if your state has an Area Health Education Center (AHEC) at: http://www.nationalahec.org/student/. If they do, they may have Health Professions Student Coordinators that may assist you in locating a site and/or preceptor.
- To search for possible preceptors across the US, check out the eNP website at http://www.enpnetwork.com/. Under Preceptor Directory, you can type in the area you are looking to do clinicals and you will be able view a list of possible preceptors. For a small fee you can communicate and access them directly through the website.
- Consider approaching smaller, private sites. It is usually a much smoother and easier process to get a contract in place than it is with a larger healthcare system.
- To find out which sites CON has legal contracts with already in your area, please contact Arly Douglass, asdoug@musc.edu, and indicate the surrounding cities in your area.

Tips for approaching a potential preceptor:

- If possible, visit the site in person.
- Introduce yourself to the office personnel (office manager), and if possible,
the nurse practitioner, physician assistant and/or physician. If you can only get in touch with the office manager, ask if they can provide you with the email address of the provider.

• Ask if they would be interested in serving as a clinical preceptor and if they have a few minutes to discuss this possibility.
• Explain that you are a MUSC CON NP student and provide some background information about yourself. Have a one-page copy of your resume or CV with you to show them.
• Ask physician/practitioner about their practice and background.
• Explain how many hours each clinical course consists of. The clinical days should be determined by the site/preceptor needs and availability.
• It is intended that you stay at the same site for all of your clinical courses unless there is an issue with the site/preceptor or you are not seeing the needed patient population, which will be determined by midterm and final clinical evaluations. When approaching the preceptor, please make them aware that if the first semester is successful, you would like to continue the following semesters if the opportunity is available.
• Provide them with the Clinical Preceptor Packet which is available on our website at http://academicdepartments.musc.edu/nursing/academics/preceptor/PRECEPTOR_PACKET_current.pdf. Print this out prior to your visit and give to them so they can review. The packet includes the roles and responsibilities of the preceptor and student.
• You can provide them with further preceptor information found on our website at http://academicdepartments.musc.edu/nursing/academics/preceptor/. The NP Graduate Clinical Evaluation Tool: Primary Care is an example of competencies that the preceptors will evaluate students on at midterm and final, so many preceptors find this helpful.
• Follow up with them in a few days (this can be done by phone).
• Never try to answer questions that you are unsure of the answer. If you are unsure of the answer to a question they ask, defer to the Clinical Faculty or Graduate Program Coordinator. Tell the preceptor you will h0av0000e them call to discuss these issues.
• If the provider agrees to precept, please ask them to complete the Clinical Site Approval Form, the Clinical Preceptor Abbreviated CV Form and Affiliation Agreement Request Form (this form is only needed if we do not already have a contract with the site) found on our website at http://academicdepartments.musc.edu/nursing/administration/studentservices/forms.htm. Upon completion, please fax or scan/email the forms to Arly Douglass at CON.
• If the CON does not have an Affiliation Agreement with the site, an Affiliation Agreement Request Form needs to be completed and returned to Arly Douglass. The CON will begin the process of obtaining the formal contract with the site. This process can take 6-8 weeks or more. Please plan for this length of time.
• Students CANNOT begin clinical experiences until a signed contract is on file at the CON.

Contacting a potential preceptor by phone:

If you have been referred by someone:
• Call and ask to speak to the nurse practitioner/physician.
• If you are unable to speak with the potential preceptor, leave a message to include referral information by (name of friend/family/acquaintance). For example: “_____ said you are an excellent practitioner and would be a good preceptor. I am a student in the MSN/DNP program at MUSC studying to be a (FNP, ANP, PNP). Would you be interested in being a preceptor during the fall/spring/summer semester? I could come in and talk to you (or I could send you some information) about our program.

If you are calling a potential preceptor without a referral:
• Utilize the same information above, but instead of talking about being referred by someone, mention that you are from that area, or are planning to work in that area and wanted an opportunity to meet them/discuss the possibility of doing your clinical placement under them.

If you are having trouble connecting with the Nurse Practitioner/Physician:
• Please do not give up or take it personally if they do not respond right away.
• Calling them 4+ times is very typical.
• You may try asking for the office manager to leave your message if the practitioner has not responded or is not available.
• If possible, it is best to leave a message or voice mail for the practitioner.
• You can also ask for an email address.

*If the provider you contact is not interested or not available to be your preceptor, try asking them if they know of any provider who might be interested.

All clinical forms should be scanned/emailed to asdoug@musc.edu or faxed to 843-792-5395.