

# Mississippi Summer Student Nurse Externship Program

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*Frequently Asked Questions with Externship Committee Responses*

*To add Q&A to this booklet,  
Email [rpowell@mhanet.org](mailto:rpowell@mhanet.org)*



**MCQW**  
Mississippi Center *for*  
Quality *and* Workforce

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# MISSISSIPPI SUMMER STUDENT NURSE EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM

## Setting Up a Program at Your Healthcare Facility

1. Review data on the MHA website regarding the Nurse Extern Program. [www.mcqw.org](http://www.mcqw.org) | WORKFORCE
2. Talk with your Administration regarding number of externs for program. Our pay is equivalent to our other patient care tech pay. Multiply by the 320 hours of the program to get a number for cost to see if it can be budgeted for. There is no guarantee of funded positions but you will be given the number you qualify for after applications are completed for the program.
3. Once you determine the number of externs for your facility, talk with HR about their onboarding process time frame: applications, interviews, pre-hire requirements, etc. HR will have a final cut-off date after which they can't be processed.
4. Once you have the number of positions to be offered and the dates from HR, review your clinical affiliations with Schools of Nursing. This is a summer program so check on their summer start dates. You can then pick dates for your program, some do 8 weeks and some do 10 weeks. They must complete the 320 hours required for the program. The extra week or two gives you a little wiggle room for sickness or other issues of both the Extern and the Preceptor.
5. Now that you have the potential dates for your program, start looking for potential areas they may be in and Preceptor availability. It is a summer program so new graduate hires needing Preceptors will impact your availability. Preceptors must have 12 months of experience. Remember to evaluate availability of BSN preceptors when placing student nurse externs.
6. Preceptors will have to attend a training session on the program prior to start of program so you will need to schedule some dates and times for this (approximately 30 minutes will suffice). They will need to review the program guidelines, checklists, exclusion checklist, and other documents related to the program. Consider placing externship info on hospital's learning management system as a prerequisite to the training session in order to decrease time.
7. Attend the mandatory MHA meeting on the program and then download, complete and return the required documents. You will need a Nurse Extern Job Description, Orientation Objectives and Clinical Objectives to attach to your application. Attend the meeting with the WIN Job Center to discuss potential funding.
8. Reach out to your Schools of Nursing and let them know you will be participating in the program and learn the name and contact information of the Instructor who will be overseeing the class for the SON. Let them know when your application process will open. Ask the SON representative to place content for your program on the SON's learning management system in addition to posting flyers and/or sending it electronically to the students.
9. Look at Orientation week and determine if extra classroom space or Educators will be needed. Our Externs onboard as employees so they attend General orientation and then Patient Care Service orientation for classes such as Accucheck, Phlebotomy, IV, wound care, patient safety, restraints, etc. as required for our clinical employees. You will need to develop a schedule for their orientation week. We try to condense to get it completed in 4 days so they can be on their unit quickly.

10. Now time for interviews! Once screened by HR they are scheduled interviews with Extern Coordinator and other Leaders like Director of Education or Director of Nursing. It will be helpful to develop a screening tool for the interview so the same questions are asked of each. What lead you to Nursing? Previous Clinical experience? Where do you see yourself in 5 years? Etc. We also ask their 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> preference for work area from areas we have available. It's not a guarantee but we would like to match if able. We discuss the 320 hours, dress code etc.
11. Then make an offer to chosen applicants. YAY! Gather acceptances.
12. Send Checklists to your accepted Externs to take to their SON to have completed. Send funded Externs the Instructions from WIN Job Center that tells them about required documents and how to complete application. You must receive the Eligibility form from the WIN Job Center PRIOR to Orientation day for your funded Externs!
13. Confirm your Preceptors have all completed training on program. Place fliers throughout facility or in the newsletter telling staff about the nurse extern program.
14. Consider sending a list of the student nurse externs who were accepted in your program to the SON Facilitator/Instructor(s). Communication with the SON instructor is helpful especially if extern has accepted two positions at two different clinical partner sites. Also the SON instructor can assist with educating extern about their responsibilities such as enrolling in the summer externship program at their respective schools.

NOTE: If foreign exchange students are chosen to extern, an OPT form (Optional Practical Training) must be approved 90 days prior to externship start date. Ensure all externs in this category are aware that this form must be completed within that timeframe. Also, foreign exchange students are not eligible for funding from the Planning and Development Districts.

15. During Orientation have a short session with externs to discuss program guidelines, rights & responsibilities of externs, 320 hour requirement, checklists, Skills Exclusions, dress code, absences, tardies, contact info for extern facilitator and other leaders they will interact with. Gather up the completed checklists, get participation share of information agreement signed, get copies of BLS. As they complete orientation classes try to have the Preceptor drop by and meet them, take them to their unit and introduce around, and/or discuss their schedule. We made a pocket card of the skills exclusion list to give to extern and Preceptor. Also post a flier in their work area on the Skills Exclusion.
16. Orientation meeting is a good time to have CNO come greet them and snap a group picture to send to MHA (with their permission of course).
17. Determine who will be assessing the extern's competency. They should always have their validated checklist from SON with them and the Preceptor can note when they observe them complete skills. You may also have another competency assessment tool required by your facility, either paper or electronic, so decide who will be completing those.
18. Have the externs send you their schedule so you can do periodic rounds to check on them and/or get access to your entities' database to view schedules. The Instructor from their SON will have a system set up for them to follow them as well. Remember that the hours worked are confirmed through the extern's paystub – not their work schedule so ensure the student checks the paystub and tracks actual worked hours (rather than submitting scheduled hour plan).
19. Consider setting up a mid-term meeting so you can check on them, to see if there are any barriers such as unable to shadow, problems with preceptor, etc. and discuss future employment opportunities.

20. Funded externs will have to have their time submitted to MHA for reimbursement. Once all funded externs complete at your facility, send all time sheets proving 320 hours and the reimbursement form to [rpowell@mhanet.org](mailto:rpowell@mhanet.org). They must show that the extern completed 320 hours. You will need to work with Payroll in order to get reports for reimbursements.
21. I ask that they bring me a copy of the verification form for completing the online evaluation required by MHA that Robin sends them so I can verify that they did complete it. I make a copy of their completed checklists at end of program for my records. Make sure the SON gets their copy also.
22. Final Day. We set up a reception for them. Leadership is there to mingle and get their take on how the program went. Marketing is there to cover it as well for newsletter or to send to news outlets.

*The foregoing hospital start-up guide was developed by the Externship Committee in January 2022.*

## MISSISSIPPI SUMMER STUDENT NURSE EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM

### Setting Up a Program at Your School of Nursing

*The following SON start-up guide provided by the University of Southern Mississippi, 2022*

**Speak to incoming students** that will be eligible (see program guidelines for eligibility) to participate in the Summer Nurse Externship Program once the Spring semester begins. Share information about the program, including cost, requirements, process to register for the course, answer questions, and get a “feel” for how many may be interested.

**Create a Canvas module** in their lab course that includes:

- ✓ Program Information received from MCQW
- ✓ Approved facilities (Contracts)
- ✓ Important dates (acceptance and deadline dates)
- ✓ Facility flyers. I may also place announcements if a facility chooses to speak to the students on a particular date.
- ✓ I use this same module for the students to inform me of their acceptance. Once they do this, then I contact Student Services so that the student can register for the course.

Once I have a list of students that have accepted a position, I help them with paperwork.

I send the students an email to inform them to contact me for any questions.

Provide a small course orientation. I only have two requirements for the course:

- ✓ Students must submit a work schedule and update accordingly to keep me update on their schedule.
- ✓ Students must submit a reflective exercise each week if the work schedule allows. This is guided by a rubric available in the course syllabus.

# Application Process

**Q1:** A request has been made that the hospitals disclose their approximate dates for their application process (beginning and ending).

**A1:** This question has been added to the application.

**Q2:** If we submitted objectives the previous year, are they due for the current year as well?

**A2:** The attachments are due every other year from the hospital and every year from the SON. If the hospital provided attachments the previous year of the program, they are not due the current year.

**Q3:** When can the hospital post positions for extern program? Before or after application approval?

**A3:** After their application has been approved. Robin Powell will alert you once the application has been approved.

**Q4:** SON application due February 1st. When is student applications due?

**A4:** The SON can take applications for their summer course at the normal time period for their students.

**Q5:** We are planning to expand our extern program to include 75 – 100 externs. This will be a heavy lift initially with application review, interviews, and onboarding and I wondered if we have to wait until January to begin the process or is it possible to begin the application / interview process after we receive our application approval?

**A5:** The documents needed for the program won't be available until after the Externship Committee has approved them (December each year). To keep it equitable for all participants, the start date will remain in January. I think you could definitely reach out to area schools and let them know that you will be offering the Summer Program and ask them to "Save the Date" for applications to open and go ahead and block out some interview time with HR in January to help facilitate scheduling of interviews. I know that large a group would require staggering interviews and onboarding dates.

## Hiring of Extern at Multiple Facilities

Issue: An extern will apply at various facilities. He/she will accept a position THEN receive another offer and, without communicating to anyone, choose to forego the first offer and accept the second. This is an ongoing problem and oftentimes leaves the first hospital without an extern for the program, because by the time the hospital finds out the extern has chosen differently, it's too late to start over in the application / interview process.

Committee Response: Communication between key partners (school, clinical partners, and funding agency) is essential. Have conversations regarding respect, accountability, and professionalism with the student.

This issue has been added to the Program Guidelines for the student to adhere to.

The MCQW office collects / compiles INTERVIEWED and HIRED data from all participating hospitals. This compilation is then emailed each week to all approved facility personnel (hospital and SON). The hospital and school personnel are asked to update the information as interviews and hires take place. This compilation gives hospitals a "heads up" for students interviewing at multiple facilities, knowing that more than one offer could be given.

Strategies to consider:

- **Maintain a waitlist of potential student nurse externs** (Difficult situation if the pool of applicants are low)
  - This can fill in the gap with this situation to have a pool of potential applicants who have applied and already been interviewed

- The issue described really puts a burden on the agency; There is a cut-off period due to the HR compliance needs with onboarding but we have interviewed and added students based on the HR cut-off period several weeks prior to orientation when this situation happens
- **Communicate with the School of Nursing Instructor/Facilitator** over the externship program to let them know the student nurses that have been accepted at your facility
  - SON instructors have alerted our facility that a student has selected another site for their externship before the student alerts us
  - Stressing to the students to let the clinical partners know as soon as possible (it is part of professionalism); Usually during the HR onboarding process is when the clinical partners are notified OR we can't even reach the student nurse
- **Continued flexible strategies with the MS Planning and Development District to get student registered based on the criteria**
  - We added several students with the grant funded opportunities 1-2 days prior to orientation since we wanted to utilize these funds and of course increase the number of students to participate in program. The funding agents were wonderful to work with and helped to get them processed prior to orientation.

## Clinical Affiliations

**Q1:** I understand that I can only work with SONs that I have a clinical affiliation with. How do I set up a clinical affiliation?

**A1:** The hospital must have a clinical affiliation agreement with each SON that it recruits students from for externship. That document is handled between the hospital and the SON. If you do not have a clinical affiliation to use as a guide, another participating hospital can share a copy with you. This document must be in place prior to accepting students. The only other option is for the student to enroll in another SON program that already has an affiliation with that hospital.

**Q2:** If we (USM) are working on a contract with a facility, can the student apply, as long as the contract is activated before the Externship Program begins? Please advise.

**A2:** I would think that if the SON and agency are agreeable it shouldn't be an issue. The agency sets the deadlines for applications.

**Q3:** St. Dominic's just let me know that they have hired an extern from Jones Community College. After hiring, they realized that Jones CC was not an approved school for participation. No application has been submitted by them. Thoughts? What to tell B Buckley (St Dominic's) at this point?

**A3:** The student could enroll in the extern course at another school that is participating. I know Hinds use to allow students from other schools to enroll in their course.

## Communication

**Q1:** After the extern accepted the position, they would also accept a position at another facility. The externs did not notify us of the change. This was figured out when they were listed under another facility. Then we had to call back an applicant that was originally declined and offer them a position. There is a lot of time and expense put into hiring someone.

**A1:** The hospital and SON personnel must stress emphatically to all externs that they are to alert all hospitals to which they have applied once they have accepted a position.

# In State and Out of State Students – Can they participate?

**Q1:** I noticed on the application form #31 stated, "We understand that this program's goal is to grow Mississippi's future healthcare leaders and will be mindful of this when interviewing and/or hiring out-of-state students". Is it still correct that students considered for the externship have to attend a Mississippi school of nursing? The reason I ask is we have several students that have been interested in the externship, one from Auburn and some from Beville state (Alabama). These students would be possible candidates for our organization NMMC-Tupelo, since they live close to this area. – Chessie Womack, NMMC Tupelo

**A1:** Students from out of state schools can participate. They must enroll in a MS school of nursing that is approved for externship in order to be eligible for the program. Since this is an elective course, these students can enroll in an AD or BSN school. They would not be eligible for any funding from a planning and development district. If the out of state students are interested, they will need to speak with a faculty member at the school that is in charge of externships so they can apply to the school and coordinate the skills checklist and other requirements with their faculty.

**Q2.** I have a couple of students that live out of state and want to do an extern with a hospital that's not affiliated with us and not take our course at MC. I guess that's not an issue as long as the hospital agrees to hire them correct?

Amber Nesenson, MSN, RN, CEN  
School of Nursing, Nursing Instructor  
Mississippi College

**A2.** The Mississippi Externship program has no affiliation with or responsibility for the students completing an externship out of state. The student is not eligible for the 3-hour credit since they are not enrolled in the course at your SON.

## Drug Screening Policy

**Q1.** Our current policy/practice related to students and screenings (TB & Drug) is to defer to the protocol of their respective school. I do not see in my binder any reference to MHA guidelines for screenings of these summer externs. From MHA viewpoint, is our current policy/practice for students acceptable for our summer externs?

**A2.** Since you are **hiring** these students vs clinical rotation students, I would think you would require the same for externs as you do for a new hire.

You can request anything that the school would have that is included in your list.

I hope this helps clarify your question.

Following is the only mention of drug screening in the program guidelines.

### 1. ELIGIBILITY OF STUDENT NURSE EXTERNS:

- 1.1. Authorize school of nursing and agency in which he/she will be an Extern to exchange information related to student nurse record; externship application; pre-employment screening, **including but not limited to drug screening**; performance as an extern; and any other information relevant to him/her as a summer student nurse extern.

# COVID-19 Protocol

**Q1:** I have one of the externs to have Covid and has missed 84 hours. Is there a way to have make-up after our end date? Sheila Williams RN, Southwest Mississippi Regional Medical Center

**A1:** If the program allow the student to complete the hours, and the agency/preceptor is willing to extend, it should be ok. Make sure however that the grant funds are still available in the extension (assuming the student is grant funded).

**Q2:** Can the student care for COVID-19 patients?

**A2:** The School of Nursing and the Hospital points of contact will make this decision together, based on each facility's policies and procedures regarding COVID-19.

**Q3:** Will students and/or faculty be required to take the COVID-19 vaccination in order to participate in clinicals?

**A3:** Each facility will follow its own policies and procedures regarding its employees and the vaccination requirement.

**Q4:** Will students be required to furnish their own PPE?

**A4:** Each facility will let its externs know whether the student must furnish his/her own PPEs. Check with the employing hospital and inquire about these supplies.

**Q5:** The question came up about COVID-19 testing for the summer externs, will they be tested prior to starting their externship at the hospital?

**A5:** Each clinical partner would need to decide if they would initiate as part of the onboarding process/health screening for student nurses. I am going to forward this question to my CNO and director. I know the Baptist Memorial system is starting to test some of our frontline workers. Testing negative for COVID-19 might need to be a requirement prior to initiating employment, not just our student nurses. The asymptomatic COVID phenomena is just a puzzling one.

## Funding: Planning & Development Districts

**2026: THERE IS NO FUNDING FOR EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM FOR SUMMER 2026**

**Q1:** Will the grant funds cover the cost of the summer class for externs?

**A1:**

- 1) The grant funds are for externship hours worked only.
- 2) The funds do not cover the cost of the school summer program at the SON.
- 3) Externs can contact the WIN Job Center about reimbursement for the summer program class. The extern would be put on a waiting list -- this action **does not guarantee** funds will be allotted for the cost of the class.

- 4) For those externs who are on SNAP, there could be benefits available to cover the cost of the class. The extern would need to contact the WIN Job Center and let them know. That is between the extern and the WIN Job Center.

**Q2:** Are the observation, orientation hours:

- 1) Counted toward the 320 hours required?
- 2) Reimbursable?

**A2:** Yes to both 1 and 2.

**Q3:** We have hired 10 Externs, but I was approved grant funding for two externs. Do I provide a list of all 10 Externs or just the ones that are approved by CMPDD? The grant funding process is not complete to my knowledge. I have instructed all 10 applicants to notify Paris, set up appointments and complete this process ASAP, because I wanted to ensure that we had applicants who qualified. But who will notify me once they are approved for grant funding? How does that process work?

**A3:**

- 1) MHA needs contact information for only those externs that are grant funded. Complete the spreadsheet provided by MHA and return it to MHA.
- 2) Only those that are specified as grant funded need to register through the WIN Job Center.
- 3) When you receive the slots provided to your hospital from MHA at the beginning of the externship process, that is your approval for grant funding. The funding is yours at that point. If you do not use all of the provided grant slots, return them to MHA asap so that they can be used by a neighboring hospital.
- 4) You may have more externs than the "funded by PDD" slots. That expense would be covered by the hospital's budget.

**Q4:** Can the funding from the PDDs be increased from \$10 / hour to possibly \$12 or \$13 per hour?

**A4:** L Weems will discuss this with each PDD during the contract phase. UPDATE: Each PDD has approved \$12 / hour for the 2022 externship year.

Update 2024: Hospitals are approved to pay \$15 / hour for an extern's hourly wage. The PDD has approved \$12 / hour for the 2024 externship year.

**Q5:** Is there funding for faculty position or is this an expected cost of the college?

**A5:** At this time we do not have funding for the faculty position.

**Q6:** Will MOUs be needed again each year?

**A6:** All hospitals receiving grant funds from the PDDs will need to sign a MOU each year for participation, showing number of externs and wage per hour. This form is signed by the hospital administration and returned to MHA for the files.

**Q7:** Will the cost of the college course be covered by grant funds?

**A7:** Beginning with summer 2022, the South Delta PDD and the Central MS PDD will provide funds for payment of college course for externship students. For the MSPTNR and TWDIS districts, please talk with the WIN Job Center representative to find out if there are other type funds available through their office that could be used to cover the college course cost.

**Q8:** How soon will we know about funded positions? How many each facility will receive?

**A8:** The contracts from the four PDDs will be finalized first in the MCQW office. Once that's complete and all hospital applications have been received / approved, each hospital will be advised to the funding they have received. This will most likely take place the first week of February (after the application deadline).

## **LPN to RN Transition / Eligibility**

**Q1:** *I have a SON that has **LPN to ADN students**. These are already licensed LPNs that bridge into the program and complete their RN mid-way through an Associate's Program. Would these students be eligible for summer externship with a projected December 2026 graduation date? I don't see an issue with it in regard to our facility. I just wanted to make sure it was allowed.*

*The students in question will have completed 2 semesters as of May and be entering into their final semester in August following the summer. The way I read it, it was ok for them to participate but we wanted to make sure.*

A1: Final comment after discussion: (discussion is below)

**If they are in a program that they have completed 2 semesters of RN program they should qualify for the summer. Unfortunately for those who have not completed two semesters according to our guidelines this year do not qualify I believe.**

### ***Discussion that transpired to get to that resolution:***

- I do not see an issue with it. I would approve the student. KDMC
- I agree that the students should have the opportunity to participate. USM
- I agree. If the student has had at least one semester of an RN program and is currently in good standing with the program, I believe they should be eligible for the externship program. DSU
- Do the guidelines require a certain number of semesters of an RN program to qualify? If so, that may have to be changed first or the student may qualify. I do not think it matters much which track, it is more what aligns with the guidelines we have established. MUW
- The guidelines are completed at least 2 semesters of RN program. Committee please review and give thoughts. BMH Leake
- According to the criteria and requirements:  
To be accepted in a Student Nurse Externship Program, a student must:
  - 1, Be enrolled in an accredited school of nursing program within the United States preparing candidates for registered nursing licensure and have successfully completed one academic year or two clinical semesters of clinical courses in nursing.
- Now that the issue of how many semesters the student must have completed comes up, I must agree that we have set those guidelines of one year or two semesters. I will say that I too may have answered too quickly. However, these are LPNs and not an undergraduate RN student. Does that make a difference? These are not undergrads with no degree. Would that be something that the committee could change? If these are ADN students, would one semester of RN school allow them to participate in externship? DSU
- Would the PN program count as a clinical course in nursing? It doesn't say what type of nursing clinical course? Holmes
- I have had the same question from one of my SON.
- I would personally think they would be ok because they have the LPN course and hours that they have worked. I have always valued LPNs and think their clinical work should count, but that may not be something we can change until after this cohort of externs. BMH Anderson
- I would agree. If the student is enrolled in an LPN–RN (undergraduate RN) program and has completed two semesters of clinical hours—which this student has—then they meet the requirements.
- Unfortunately, our LPN–RN students at the W do not meet this requirement because of the shorter semester length. Therefore, they are not eligible. MUW

**Q2:** I have a question about students who are licensed as LPNs and are in the first semester of their transitions program (LPN to ADN) and their eligibility to participate in the externship program.

The LPN programs are a year- long, but does that count? Do we consider them from their LPN programs being one year or that they are technically first semester students in transition ? I have received conflicting responses and need clarification.

**A2:** Discussion below In order of receipt:

- My understanding, as the guidelines are currently written, both LPNs and generic traditional RN students need two semesters of an RN program before being eligible to participate. MUW
- My understanding was they had to have two semesters of the RN program to be eligible to participate. BMH Anderson
- We consider students who complete their first semester of our bridge/accelerated program at the same level as a traditional student who has completed two semesters of nursing. Our LPN to RN students pass off all first and second semester skills during their first semester. Meridian CC
- I think to be in compliance and show integrity in the externship program, 2 semesters of an RN program are required. SW MS CC
- The Committee visit this issue for Externship 2027, but our guidelines for this current year state "must complete 2 semesters" of an RN program. BMH Leake

**Q3:** I wanted to reach out to you regarding my extern position on 3C. I unfortunately had to withdraw from my adult class today, I will be picking it back up in spring and my graduation date will be moved to 2024. I will still be enrolled in my pediatric and research class and can continue with that. I do have the option to do elective courses to hold my enrollment in the school of nursing or I can take a leave of absence and pick back up in the spring. This will be 3<sup>rd</sup> semester for me so I will still have the first year under my belt and I am currently in my pediatric clinical rotation so it will also be completed soon. I am reaching out to see if I would still be eligible to do my extern on 3C this summer? I know that there are rules and regulations and having to withdraw from the adult course may have put that on the line. I am hoping for the best. However, if I am not eligible for the extern at this point, I wanted to enquire about a student tech position on the floor in the meantime and in hopes of redoing my extern this time next year as well as being a future employee there. I do appreciate your time, understanding, and interest in having me and I hope to see you soon. Thank you, Reagan Thornton

**A3:**

**Wanda Johnson, Delta Health**

If her nursing institution allows her to enroll in the extern course, I don't see why she can't continue in the extern program this summer. WJ

**Dana Walker, Itawamba CC**

If the policies of the university allow the student to complete the extern this summer, then I believe it should be allowed.

**LaDonna Northington, UMMC SON**

I have to say I think this is a new one for me. There is nothing from the SON side that prohibits her from participating. She has completed the basic requires (semester 1 and 2) and will complete 90 hours in the clinical course she is staying in, which is peds. 3C is a peds unit.

I ok with approving her externship experience.

**Kim Smith, USM**

I agree with Wanda. If the requirements are that the students have completed their first year of nursing school to be eligible, and the school/college/university allows her to enroll in the extern course, which could be greatly beneficial, I can't see why she couldn't participate.

**P Donald, UMMC**

Thank you everyone. I have the same sentiments. We don't technically have anything restricting her from moving forward. In addition – per the school, she will be in good standing. I just wanted to bring this up in case others may have a similar future scenario and also bring to our attention in case we should consider ramifications for those who perhaps may fail a semester, but technically will still meet the requirements.

## **4<sup>th</sup> Semester BSN Student – Eligibility**

**Q1:**

**A USM BSN nursing student that we interviewed is currently in her 4<sup>th</sup> semester. She elaborated the school has a Summer extern clinical option....it's not technically a semester, as she explained it. The criteria I had for the Externship program states they must have successfully completed 2 semesters and be accepted in a 3<sup>rd</sup> semester. Since she is 4<sup>th</sup> semester and not 3<sup>rd</sup>, does this exclude her from being able to participate? As the student explained it, "it counts towards her clinical hours", so I got the impression she was looking for those hours. I don't currently have a USM Affiliation Agreement, but I don't think it would be a problem for me to obtain it. Is it OK for me to get this affiliation agreement now, after the deadline passed for the MHA Externship enrollment?**

**A1:** Discussion below in order of receipt:

- My opinion is that being in 4<sup>th</sup> semester would not exclude her from participating. It's odd that a student would opt to do this; however, it may be just the thing they need to prepare for NCLEX and the work force. *SW MS CC*
- So, the student is graduating in May and wants to Extern after graduation? I would think a Nurse Grad position would be great for her/him. *Holmes CC*
- In the past years we have made the decision to only hire those who have completed their 2<sup>nd</sup> semester or 3<sup>rd</sup> semester depending. Our thought was those completing 4<sup>th</sup> semester would no longer be enrolled in the SON if graduating in May. I don't quite understand the summer clinical option she is referring to at her school, but it is required they are currently enrolled in a participating SON and also enrolled in the school's Summer Extern course offered for the summer. If she graduates in May (not sure if I understand she is) she would no longer be enrolled in the SON. If you can explain more about what her status of enrollment will be for May - July it would be helpful. *BMH Leake*
- For a student who is graduating, a Nurse Graduate position would be the most appropriate choice. *UMMC Jackson*
- USM offers a summer session for some of their nursing students courses so it comes down to when she will be graduating May 26 or December 2026 with one more semester left in her nursing courses. We have Nurse Externs from USM who will be graduating in December 2026 because of when they entered into USM's clinical sessions so they have an open summer with no other clinical courses. That may be the situation here. She can reach out to the faculty overseeing the Summer Extern course Kim Smith if there is a question. *Forrest General*
- I believe the most important thing is to make sure the student is still enrolled in the SON and will be enrolled in the summer extern program offered by the school (this is a requirement). *BMH Leake*
- As long as she is registered with her SON and graduates in December of 2026, she would be eligible for the Summer Externship program. *Bolivar Medical*

## **Extern – Second Summer Externship Participation (Extern II)**

**Q1. The 3 externs we had last year have all reapplied to complete another externship this summer. They are all Delta State students. What is the program's stance on this?**

A1. Delta State has a second semester externship course for that reason. These students have completed an externship previously and are eligible to complete a second if the hospital will allow.

Christy Jenkins, Delta State University

Excerpt from the Program Guidelines: 1.9. DSU does have an accredited course for "Extern IIs":

### **1.9 Nursing students eligible to participate in a second summer externship:**

Nursing students may have the opportunity to participate in a second summer externship, depending on their school's curriculum and start dates. Eligibility for this additional externship requires students to continue meeting the criteria outlined in the program's guidelines.

It's important to note that while hospitals can offer and fund these additional externship positions, financial support from Planning and Development Districts is not available for the second externship experience.

Regarding academic considerations, schools of nursing have the discretion to determine how the second externship is incorporated into their programs. They may choose to list it as the same course or develop a distinct "Extern II" course. Students should be aware that financial aid typically does not cover elective courses. If the same course is repeated, additional credit hours may not be awarded. However, if an "Extern II" course is created, students can earn an extra 3 credit hours and corresponding grade points.

Students interested in a second summer externship should consult their school's nursing program to understand how it fits into their academic plan and to ensure they meet all necessary eligibility requirements.

## **Extern to Intern Transition**

**Q1:** Following the externship, there are nursing students asking about staying on as a nurse intern. We have never done that before. If they want to remain here as an employee, they go to a patient care tech position. Do you have any guidance on how to let them transition to a nurse intern? What are the differences in the extern and intern? I know that NMCC in Tupelo, which is not far from here, allows them to stay on as interns.

A1: We do allow Nurse Externs to roll over to an RN Student tech position after the program concludes. We have a manager that oversees the RN student Techs. They only perform Tech skills in this position but we allow them to shadow a nurse so they can get a peek at the different departments available to help them decide where they may want to work.

There is no set amount of hours required for this position but it is maxed at 36 hours a month. They are required to complete any educational (online or live) sessions or competency checkoffs as other employed techs. – Forrest General

Our nurse techs can transition to a patient care tech. – Bolivar Medical

1. Organization must create a job position along with job description for the Nurse Tech or Intern position.
2. After the program ends, the Extern title can no longer be utilized so they must transfer to a new position within the hospital as NT or Intern.
3. Intern position: They are unable to perform **any RN skills** after the program ends. If performed, they jeopardize future RN licensure and possible school status.
  - a. At Baptist we utilize the Interns with the RN, but some entities might utilize the Intern/Nurse Tech as a Nursing Assistant.
  - b. Responsibilities: Round with RN, assist RN with Skin assessment (4 eyes in 4 hours), perform VS/obtain weight/Intake and Output, perform ADL, conduct Blood Glucose Checks, Set up suction, place external urinary catheters, place internal urinary catheters with RN present and must be permissible in your policy, serve as a sitter (safety for falls/suicide) with training, perform ancillary duties similar to a nursing assistant, etc.

- c. We allow flexible scheduling with the Interns/Nurse Techs.
- d. Student must remain in good standing with approved registered nurse program to remain in this position.

Overall goal is retention and transition into the New Graduate RN position. Intern/Nurse Tech position is governed by entities' policy and processes but essentially they cannot perform skills that are not permissible from MS Board of Nursing standpoint. – BMH Mississippi Baptist Medical Center

## Observation Visits by SON to Hospital

**Q1:** Lisa Davis at Holmes Community College has asked to visit the students participating in the BMH-Oxford externship. At this time, due to COVID, visitors must follow our organization's specific requirements for faculty and students to complete before they are allowed in our facility.

**A1:** It's a requirement to check on students. That visit can be accomplished physically or virtually. See excerpt from the Extern Program Guidelines. We often have SON Instructors who visit in the clinical area to make sure guidelines are not being violated. As part of the BMH system guidelines, we are following the clinical student nurse group rotations requirements at BMH-MBMCE and are instructing Extern SON Faculty Instructors to supply a negative COVID test prior to rounding on student along with the other necessary requirements outlined. I hope this helps.

- 1.5. Assure that an instructor who is a Registered Nurse is responsible for the program, for follow-up on the progress and problems of Externs, and for verifying that guidelines are not violated in any clinical area.

## Transcripts

**Q1:** Does it matter if we get the extern's official or unofficial transcript?

**A1:** It must be the official transcript after grades are added.

## Preceptors

**Q1:** We are lining up Preceptors for the Extern program and I would like to clarify that **we have PRCC (ADN Program) whose students register for the Summer Class at USM (BSN Program)**. In the past we have paired the PRCC students with ADN Preceptors since that's their Primary Nursing School. My director asked me to clarify if that is acceptable prior to our meeting tomorrow. Department

**A1:** According to the Externship Guidelines, it would be acceptable for the student who is enrolled in and attends the PRCC School of Nursing to have a preceptor prepared at the ADN level. My interpretation is the guidelines speak to the program the student is attending, not the program the student is registered with for the extern program.

- 2.7.1.3. An ADN-RN Preceptor may serve as the Primary Preceptor for the associate degree students of nursing.

**Q2:** Am I responsible for keeping files of Preceptors (and ensuring my BSN students are assigned a MSN- or BSN-prepared preceptor as a primary preceptor) or is this just the responsibility of the clinical partner (hospital)? Amy Mobley MSN, RN, Mississippi University for Women

**A2:** Clinical partners are responsible for making sure externs - preceptors are appropriately assigned. At MBMC, I communicate this info to the School of Nursing Instructors. Occasionally, the SON Instructors have requested the MBMC Preceptor Data Form that I have our preceptors fill out and I keep on file at MBMC. I know some SONs require an additional Preceptor Info sheet to be filled out that may or may not contain all info listed on the MBMC designated preceptor form. Erica Dupree, MS Baptist Medical Center

It is correct that the clinical partners are responsible for making sure the externs are assigned to a qualified preceptor according to the externship program guidelines. However, it would not be a bad idea for the school of nursing to maintain the preceptor information to ensure preceptor guidelines were met in accordance with state and national school of nursing accrediting bodies in case these are ever requested. Most schools of nursing have a preceptor data form that is used for validation of preceptor credentials for the accrediting bodies, which should suffice for the validation of preceptor credentials for the externship program. Hope this helps from the school of nursing perspective! Debra Spring, Alcorn State Univ

**Q3:** I know we discussed that an ADN can precept a BSN with the exception noted in 2.7.1.1 - It is allowable for a BSN student to be assigned an ADN preceptor with the requirement that a BSN on the floor when the ADN preceptor is guiding the BSN extern. I thought on the call, we discussed this BSN could be the manager, if that is the case... the manager isn't there at night or weekends (technically) so is that allowed? Jennifer Davis, MSN, RN | Nurse Recruitment Coordinator, Human Resources, St. Dominic Jackson Memorial Hospital

**A3:** Unfortunately, no. The preceptor does have to be on the floor with the extern on off shifts. The manager (BSN) can serve in the primary role during the days the manager is there while the extern (BSN) is assigned to an ADN preceptor. LaNelle Weems, MCQW

**Q4:** Is there an evaluation that the preceptor could complete on each extern? What about one for the extern to complete on the preceptor?

**A4:** Robin Powell can provide both for you in Word format. You can edit the questions specific to your facility then ask each responsible party to complete. You could share the Preceptor's comments with the SON contact for their info. The eval results are not required for our files here at MHA. Your hospital can keep them on file for future use, if needed.

**Q5:** We have two surgery students that have not received the hours that they need. Can I assign them a **secondary preceptor** for a few twelve hour shifts on the weekends on top of what they are already working? That's the only way I know how to get them the hours needed prior to the end of the summer.

**A5:** Yes, you can.

**Q6:** Is it ok, to place two Externs with one Preceptor, possibly on the same shift, if they are working with different patients?

**A6:** Yes. This is permissible.

**Q7:** After looking at the accrediting bodies' requirements for preceptors I did not find anything that contradicts an extern or student nurse being precepted by a nurse that is contracted with the hospital they are working. Is there anything you know that states students cannot precept with an agency or contracted nurse of a hospital?

*Tracy B. Killebrew, MSN, RN, Mississippi Delta Community College*

**A7:** There is nothing in the Externship Guidelines that states students cannot precept with an agency or contracted registered nurse of a hospital. If the hospital has vetted them, meet the criteria of a preceptor and the nurse agrees to the preceptor responsibilities, there shouldn't be any problem. I would make sure that the

preceptor would be there the entire time of the student. It would be less disruptive than having to take on a new preceptor mid-course.

**Q8: Q: Could facilities provide contact info on preceptors that are assigned?**

A8: I have found over last few years that preceptors often didn't communicate/answer emails from instructor. Just wondered if had better way to open those communication lines between SON instructor and individual preceptors because I want to know ASAP if there are concerns or issues with a student.

Ran into issue last summer that facility didn't really address concerns with the student and went through other persons and still hadn't reached out to me. It was an easy "fix" once student actually was made aware of concern. But really was a total lack of communication between preceptor actually speaking with student and the other channels as well. I spoke with student immediately and they were clueless that there were any concerns.

I always provide an envelope for student to take to their assigned preceptors that includes syllabus, my contact info and letter about extern and appreciation of them being a preceptor, evaluation form for end of student performance, etc.

Allison Caston

Instructor of Nursing, Mississippi University for Women, ASN Program

Each student has all of my contact information to share with the preceptor. I have not had to contact any preceptor outside of the student working with them. I have at least 1 face to face interaction with the student and preceptor during the summer. The student turns in information at the beginning of the externship that includes preceptor qualifications and phone number.

Stephanie C. Greer, RN, MSN, CNE, Southwest MS Community College

We do close to the same as Tiffany laid out. Faculty go and meet with the preceptor within the first couple of weeks. Faculty give their contact information to the preceptor and obtain preceptor information. The course coordinator also sends out an email to all preceptors introducing herself and giving her contact information at the start of the semester.

Sharon McElwain, DNP, RN, FNP-BC, University of Mississippi Medical Center

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We have a preceptor information sheet that must be completed by the preceptor prior to start date. It has the preceptor and schedule listed. I also try to supervisory visits at least the second week of the preceptorship (with most). I instruct the students, in orientation for the class, to give their preceptor my business card. I also make sure I leave a business card with the preceptor on the supervisory visit. I also make sure that the person who is over the preceptor program for the facility has my contact information. That is all I know to do. Does anyone do anything additional?

T Cox, Holmes Community College

**Q9: Regarding the BSN Preceptor being "on the floor" if an ADN Preceptor is precepting over a BSN student. The nurse extern students will be serving on our Forensic Services building at Ms. State Hospital. Forensic Services is in a 3-story building but it is ONE service. Our question is...does the BSN Preceptor need to be present on the exact "floor" as the BSN student at all times or can the BSN Preceptor be on the "service" at all times to monitor and assist.**

A9: My understanding is that the BSN nurse must be available to oversee the student (as a charge nurse, supervisor, or manager) when the student is with an ADN nurse. I would say that as long as there is a BSN nurse in the building or on the service during the student's rotation, it would be acceptable.

C Jenkins, Delta State University

My interpretation is that the **preceptor** must be on the same floor as the student extern. The exact wording of the requirement is “ It is allowable for a BSN student to be assigned an ADN preceptor with the requirement that a BSN is on the floor when the ADN preceptor is guiding the BSN extern.”

“on the floor”, in my opinion means on the unit and available. If the unit happens to be a large building, but the BSN is available for guidance if needed, I believe that is acceptable.

S Greer, Southwest Mississippi Community College

## Program Prep at Hospital

**Q1:** I am helping with the extern program at Methodist Rehabilitation Center. Please help me to understand the requirements (as I remember from last year before the program was stopped due to COVID)

- Transcript is required? (is an unofficial acceptable?)
- Letter of good standing is required?
- What other documents are required of the student before we can hire as an extern?

**A1:**

### Transcripts

As UMMC is the only academic medical center in the state – we have imposed an additional requirement that considers the students educational progression. Students must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0; thus, a transcript is requested. Further, an official transcript will validate the student’s status in confirming their **successful** completion of said clinical courses (an unofficial transcript is acceptable as long as final grades are reflected). It is of our opinion that GPA is a great indicator of how serious students are about nursing school and/or about the profession. It is also a good predictor of how well they will perform in the future. Our focus is a high reliability organization and that will start with students.

The other requirements are in alignment with the program guidelines outlined below and specifically that were attached.

### Letter of Good Standing

The statement confirms that the student is not on any form of academic probation or have an outstanding account with their current institution. The letter is a requirement to meet overall program guidelines.

### Other Documents

In addition to the other documents required to meet program guidelines (i.e., Skills Checklist, Student Participation Agreement, Skills Exclusion List) UMMC requires students to submit requested health documents/forms such as Form No. 121, Medical and Physical Examination Forms, SNE Patient Registration Forms and students must schedule an appointment to be fitted for a mask. With this said, whatever your facility requires for employment perhaps should also be applicable for the students as they will be your employees.

It may also be helpful in the future to have your information systems team provide students a link in which they are able to upload all requested documents (health related documents are a separate link and documents are only seen by our Employee Health department). It has helped tremendously in keeping up with records.

FROM THE PROGRAM GUIDELINES

## 2. ELIGIBILITY OF STUDENT NURSE EXTERNS:

To be accepted in a Student Nurse Externship Program, a student must:

- 2.1. Be enrolled in an accredited school of nursing program within the United States preparing candidates for registered nursing licensure and have successfully completed one academic year or two clinical semesters of clinical courses in nursing.
- 2.2. Authorize school of nursing and agency in which he/she will be an Extern to exchange information related to student nurse record; externship application; pre-employment screening, including but not limited to drug screening; performance as an extern; and any other information relevant to him/her as a summer student nurse extern.
- 2.3. Be enrolled in an approved Mississippi Summer Student Nurse Externship course for the summer 2022 term.
- 2.4. Obtain verification that all Student Nurse Externs are qualified for the program and are in good academic standing.
- 2.5. Assure that an instructor who is a Registered Nurse is responsible for the program, for follow-up on the progress and problems of Externs, and for verifying that guidelines are not violated in any clinical area.
- 2.6. Provide copies of the state approved Externship Guidelines and Skills Check list to Externs and Preceptors.
- 2.7. In the event of a report of alleged violations of the guidelines, the Education/ Service Liaison Committee Chairperson, upon notification by the committee, the agency involved will:
  - 2.7.1. Conduct a fact-finding investigation; and
  - 2.7.2. Report to the Education/Service Liaison Committee the results of the investigation and actions taken to correct any violations of the guidelines if applicable.

## Start Dates, Depts, Forms, etc. for Externs

**Q1:** Our start day was given to us for May 18<sup>th</sup>. We generally have orientation for our students on Mondays, (which would be May 17<sup>th</sup>,) My question is, can we begin with General Orientation on Monday the 17th, or do I need to wait until May 18<sup>th</sup>?

**A1:** I have a separate orientation for our externs. I select the date (s) to fulfill our facility's and state requirements. The state does not assign the start date so I would think the answer to your question would have to come from your facility. Wanda R. Johnson, BA, MSN, RN, Delta Health The Medical Center

I think that is fine. LaDonna Northington, UMMC

I would think it would be ok. Dana F. Walker, Itawamba CC

I don't think this should be an issue since the hospitals are having to still adjust their orientation schedules and numbers around COVID restrictions if the students are registered in the appropriate class with their school of nursing. Jason Cain, Director of Nursing, Anderson Regional Medical Center

You should be able to start on the 17<sup>th</sup> as long as the "funded" externs have completed their paperwork with the WIN Job Center prior to starting work. LaNelle Weems, MHA

**Q2:** We applied for a start date in May and end in August for our program at MGH. I have interviewed 2 nurse externs and I am offering them jobs to them. Can they start earlier than the May date? Due to COVID, they are out of school indefinitely.

**A2:**

- 1) The student must successfully complete the prior academic semester.
- 2) The summer course must be open and the student successfully registered.
- 3) No grant funds can be used for students who begin prior to the grant contract date.

**Q3:** Will you clarify something please? I was going to set my orientation date for May 14<sup>th</sup>; however, I see that Delta State says their summer externship semester won't begin until June 3 and MDCC is May 15<sup>th</sup>. Does it matter that orientation would be before those dates? Surely my students could start before June 3<sup>rd</sup>! I've never waited that late. Maybe I'm overthinking! Hannah Barrett, North Sunflower Medical Center

**A3.** Check with the reps at the two schools, Dr. Vicki Bingham and Traci Beckham, to see if this is permissible. I'm not sure what hours can be approved prior to their beginning of the summer semester. LaNelle Weems, MSN, RN, Executive Director, MCQW

- DSU replied stating the students could start before that date.
- MDCC replied: they're fine with it as well! Hannah Barrett, North Sunflower Medical Center

**Q4:** Who gets the skilled checklist once it is completed?

**A4:** The completed skilled checklist is shared between the hospital points of contact and the SON points of contact. MHA does not need a copy of this paperwork.

**Q5:** I have a quick question regarding student hours. I have an Extern who was informed by her school of nursing that classroom hours were included in the 320 hours required to complete the Externship. My understanding is that the 320 are hospital/skill hours. She informs that she has 2-3 hours of classroom time where her school of nursing instructors review the Externship program and expectations. Would these hours count in the 320? She is working to complete this week and we are seeking clarification.

2.4. Provide a Student Nurse Externship Program with a minimum of 320 hours in hospital and have a current affiliation with a Registered Nurse education program.

**A5:** The 320 hours required do not include classroom hours. The 320 hours are made up of working hours at the hospital.

**Q6:** Do you know if it matters if the nurse Externs go over the 320 hours? Is there any rule regarding this?

**A6:** The hours over 320 would be to complete a shift. No extra shifts beyond the last shift reaching 320 should be scheduled. Beyond the final shift, the faculty would not have the responsibility of the student extern. If the student wants to continue to work, the hospital must change their job title and job description to whatever the equivalent of nursing assistant, pt. care tech, unit secretary, etc. They would not be allowed to perform the skill of a RN extern. Only the skills of new title would be allowed.

**Q7:** Does the program allow for extern placement in the OR?

**A7:** Yes. Be sure they can get all of their hours (320).

**Q8:** Can we place students in specialty areas (OR, Cath Lab, Outpatient Surgery) as their main Extern experience?

**A8:** Yes, you may as long as they can get their hours and have an assigned preceptor! All of these areas are Med Surg. There may be more opportunity to expand on their knowledge in these areas.

Remember they can go to OB as long as the student completes the OB module before they begin and their preceptor uses the module to help the student learn more about OB. Just be sure this is done prior to beginning.

**Q9:** We are considering participating in the externship program (I know our application is due Monday!). I went through the Webinar, and I want to make sure I'm understanding the process. As a hospital we would submit an application and then we would be responsible for contacting each school for the available externs vs. MHA assigning or delegating externs to our facility?

**A9:** Students seek out hospitals (usually either where they have done clinical or where they live) to see if there are extern slots available. They complete the hospital applications at that point. MHA does not assign externs to hospitals. Hospital interview and hire externs.

**Q10:** So participation in the program really is to gain access to a pool of students and not guarantee students at our facility, correct?

**A10:** We don't guarantee any slots to any students. Most agencies use externs as a recruitment tool.

**Q11:** We have a pretty defined student nurse extern program set up with MCC and I just don't want to create more work that results in the same group of nursing students at our facility. Does that make sense?

**A11:** Yes, however, there may be other students from other schools that are in the area that might be interested other than MCC.

**Q12:** Can externs take pediatric patients? We have a surgical-pediatrics unit. There are adults, usually post op, but also this is where we admit our pediatric patients. We do not have a large pediatric population but we do have some. In the past, we have not allowed our Externs to take pediatrics but they can observe with their preceptor. Should we continue this process? If they have completed a pediatric rotation, I would like to provide that opportunity, but I want to make sure that it's not in violation.

**A12:**

- Yes with their preceptors.
- If they haven't had the content then we recommend something similar to what we did for the students going to labor and delivery who hadn't had content yet.
- Sounds like a judgment call on part of student and preceptor in terms of competency.
- If student has not had content I would stick with observing.
- If the extern has had content and clinical experience I'd leave to judgment of student and preceptor in terms of competence level.

**Q13:** Can an extern work more than 40 hours a week?

**A13:** The Program Guidelines do not state that they can or they cannot so it is acceptable – just not preferred. If it is a funded extern, the funding will not pay overtime. No matter the number of hours worked in a week or on a holiday, the reimbursement approved rate by the PDD (TBD for Summer 2022).

From a facility standpoint that is an extra expense for overtime so it would be up to the facility if they will allow overtime. Only 8 of our 20 Nurse Externs are funded and all overtime costs go to the facility.

As for our facility, we do not allow overtime due to the extra costs but will look at it on an individual case as the end of the program approaches to ensure they get their 320 hours.

**Q14:** Will students interested in Externships be able to view all hospitals offering the program?

**A14:** Yes. The spreadsheet showing all approved facilities (hospitals and SONs) will be updated daily and posted on our website at [www.mcqw.org](http://www.mcqw.org) | Workforce tab. The spreadsheet will be an active link on that page.

**Q15:** Can externs be placed in the ED?

**A15:** Yes.

**Q16:** We currently employ students from various programs. We would like them to participate. Can they participate as long as they are not one of the two we have been funded for?

**A16:** From the overall program's perspective for participation, yes. This is admissible.

From the funding standpoint: All PDDs with the exception of South Mississippi PDD allow the hiring (and funding) of currently hired students as funded externs. The South Mississippi PDD does not allow funding for currently hired students.

**Q17:** Somehow I missed the component that we will get a skills checklist from the SON. I thought we used the one on the MHA website. Thank you so much for clarifying.

**A17:** After hire, you will give your nurse extern a copy of the skills checklist from MHA website for them to take to their SON to get completed and return to you.

## Certs of Completion

Q1. When the SON receives the certificate of completion, what does the SON do with it?

A.

- I created a completion assignment in Canvas to add their certificates and also printed for my files.
- Upload an unpublished copy into the Externship Canvas course and place a copy in student's file
- Placed in the student's academic folder and saved for 3 years
- Keep in a file on email
- Keep on file. It lets me know that MHA is aware that the student has completed.
- I download the cert. Save a digital copy and print for student's file.
- We use it as a verification that the student has completed the evaluation and then give a final course grade. The students keep this and place in their professional portfolio project that is due in their final semester of school.

## Uniforms

**Q1:** What uniforms do the Nurse Externs wear at the other facilities? Do you designate a color of scrubs for them to wear or do they wear school uniform?

**A1:**

- 1) School uniform with proper patches. *Anderson Regional*
- 2) We require them to wear school uniform and student ID. *BMH Attala*
- 3) School Uniform. *BMH Leake*
- 4) School uniform or olive-green scrubs. Students do not have enough pairs of their school uniform to meet the demands of a full-time schedule. *BMH Oxford*
- 5) Nursing Uniform. They wear our nurse colors. Teal. *Greenwood Leflore*
- 6) We do not require any certain color. Wear scrubs and good clean walking shoes. They can wear their school scrubs. *Marion General*
- 7) They are expected to wear their school uniforms while working as an extern. *Merit Health Central*
- 8) Solid scrubs of any color, ironed, nice and clean. MRC allows the student to wear school uniform (if school allows) or whatever type uniform they prefer. Our nurse staff does not wear specific colors, so

- we follow the same practice with the externs. Some of the students liked wearing the school uniform, since they already had those. *Methodist Rehab*
- 10) Prefer for the students to wear their school uniform. *North MS Pontotoc*
  - 11) Nurse externs either wear school uniforms or the scrub colors worn on the unit they will be an extern on. *North MS Tupelo*
  - 12) Our nurse externs wear the same scrub colors that our nurses wear. *North Sunflower*
  - 13) I asked this question last year and the response was they should wear the color of scrubs the unit wears. So, our extern wore purple, which is the color of the unit she was hired to work on. I think she preferred that over wearing a school uniform. *OCH Regional*
  - 14) Some wear whatever scrubs they have. Some choose to wear their school uniforms. We don't require them to wear anything specific. *South Sunflower*

## WIN Requirements

**Q1:** I have a student that called me today. She was told by WIN Job Center that she cannot be an Extern because she is only a resident and not an American Citizen.

**A1:** All WIOA participants must be U.S. citizens so if she's not a citizen, she cannot be placed on externship using our funds. The hospital can hire the international extern and absorb that expense. No funding is available for an international student.

**Q2:** I have a student that is interested in doing her externship here again. She was with us last summer. Can she do that?

**A2:** WIOA (FUNDING) can only pay once. Students must have successfully completed two semesters of nursing school. Regardless we can only pay once. The hospital can hire her again without the use of grant funds.

## On The Job: Issues, Questions, Situations

**Q1:** We are reviewing whether the IM injection Rhogam would fit into the category "blood product" on the Exclusion List.

**A1:** Rhogam has been added to the EXCLUSION list.

**Q2:** Can foreign students participate in this externship program?

**A2:** For the SON, if the student (extern) is enrolled in an accredited nursing program in Mississippi, he/she is eligible to participate in the Externship Program. The hospital, however, must consult with its Human Resources Dept regarding corporate policies for students that do not have US citizenship.

Update 2024: If a foreign exchange student has been hired as an extern, the OPT Form (Optional Practical Training) must be completed 90 days prior to extern beginning work.

**Q3:** How can I make externs understand that during the externship they are not to plan / schedule time away from work (vacations, camps, etc.)?

**A3:** The Committee discussed this problem at their December 2021 meeting. Since then, content was added to the STUDENT PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT to ensure the student understands his/her obligation and clarifying to the student that the 320 hours should be their main focus for the summer.

**Q4:** Do you recommend competencies in the skills lab during hospital orientation be RN skills or tech skills?

**A4:** We offer basic classes like phlebotomy and IV along with Accucheck and restraints that have a checkoff component during orientation week. They are only allowed to do skills validated by their SON so that is a competency check as well.

Q5: Are there types of units that are not allowed for externships?

A5: They have to have had lecture/clinical components to be an extern in an area. You will see this information on the validated skills list you get them to have their SON to complete. We (Nurse Extern Program) do have an OB program on website they can complete if they have not had OB clinical. Then look at your policy for areas that may be restricted to students at your facility.

Q6: Can externs float to a different area for the alternative experiences?

A6: For observation (No Skills) purposes yes. If you want them to do skills instead of observation they would have to have a Preceptor assigned in that area who has completed all aspects of training for a Nurse Extern Preceptor.

Q7. MDCC has sent an email to a hired extern stating that she cannot participate in the program here because of conflict of interest due to a family member working here. Can you advise us on this situation? Is this a policy that MHA has in place? Cassie Montgomery, MSN, RN, Employee Health Nurse/Externship Coordinator, Delta Health System – The Medical Center

A7:

- ✓ I do not have a problem with a student working at a hospital where a family member works as long as the family member is not the student's preceptor or working in the same unit. We have had instructors that teach their own children so I don't understand the problem with the student going to a clinical situation where a family member works.  
Christy Jenkins, DSU
- ✓ Cassie, I would ask for their policy. If a direct report, I can see that. What is the policy at Delta Health? LaNelle Weems, MCQW, MHA-F
- ✓ I agree with Christy. We allow them to work, they just can't be under the supervision of a family member. Linda Holmes, MSN, RN, NPD-BC, Forrest General Hospital, *Education Specialist, Education Department*
- ✓ I agree too. **Lara Collum, PhD, RN, Associate Vice President | Nursing and Healthcare Education, Meridian Community College**
- ✓ I agree, as well. Wendy Lingle, MSN, RN, Dean of Nursing, Hinds Community College
- ✓ I would agree with all – but not as the preceptor. Michelle McCann, BMH Leake
- ✓ I also agree. Kim Smith, USM
- ✓ I see no problem with working in the same facility. As previously stated, just not under the supervision. Is that a facility policy? Tiffany Cox, Holmes CC
- ✓ I agree with the recommendation- the student may participate in the experience, as long as, the family member is not the student's preceptor and/or working on the same unit/floor. Mary Helen Ruffin, MUW
- ✓ We are located in a small, rural community as many colleges are. Our students work and have clinical and do externship in the same facilities as family members; however, I do not recommend any family member to be the preceptor or direct supervisor over a nursing student. I agree with Christy as well. **Stephanie C. Greer, RN, MSN, CNE, Southwest MS Community College, Associate Vice President for Nursing**
- ✓ I concur with the team. Shirley Evers-Manly, **PhD, RN, FAAN**, Professor and Dean, School of Nursing, Alcorn State University
- ✓ I agree as well. Sharon Davis, East Central CC

# Clinical Skills List | Exclusion List

**Q1: Is donning/doffing PPE included in check off? Speaking of blood products are they able to administer the monoclonal antibody infusions?**

**A1:** Yes, we will add DONNING AND DOFFING PPE under the Infection Prevention checklist section as #5. No to monoclonal antibody infusions. These are currently emergency use authorization (EUA) and not FDA approved. We are adding this to the Exclusions list #1.

**Q2: Will students be able to sign blood products out of the blood bank? It was not on the exclusion list.**

**A2:** No, they are not allowed to sign blood products out of the blood bank. That revision will be added to the EXCLUSION list.

**Q3: Can students perform EKGs (in the nurse role)?**

**A3:** I am not aware of any policy prohibiting the student from performing EKGs in the nurse's role. This activity would require instructing the student on how to perform the skill. As long as the student does not interpret results or contact the physician, I do not have concerns regarding this practice.

C Jenkins, Delta State University

The extern would be allowed to assist the RN. It is not an exclusion.

S Greer, Southwest Mississippi Community College

**Q4: There has been a discussion among local nursing programs and some of the NMCC unit managers about whether students can access VAD's with RN supervision at clinicals and if this should be taught in school. ICC does not currently teach this skill and I see that this is on the May Not Perform list for externs. Can you validate where this decision came from, individual organizations/facilities, IHI, or somewhere else? I am just wanting to see if we should add this to our curriculum or if I can validate why we do not teach this skill.**

S Langford, Itawamba Community College

**A1:** Delta State does not teach this skill. We provide students with information about the device's appearance and assessment; however, we do not instruct them on how to access it, even under faculty supervision. I believe that most of our patients in the Delta region are cancer or sickle cell patients, many of whom have experienced trauma from multiple IV sticks prior to having a port-a-cath placed. Many patients do not want someone who has never performed that skill to access their device. The majority of physicians I have encountered prefer that only designated nurses access the port due to its use for chemotherapy. Improper technique—such as lack of sterility, inadequate flushing, or insufficient training—can lead to complications, including port occlusion or infection.

If the college adds this skill, I will be supportive. However, I do not recommend students access ports clinically for the above reasons. Facilities would also need to approve such changes.

C Jenkins, Delta State University

We do not teach the skill at USM, but do educate students on the content.

K Smith, University of Southern Mississippi

Hinds does not teach the skill but teaches the theory, and this is listed on our list of skills students cannot perform in clinical.

J Chandlee, Hinds Community College

Our guidelines state that they are NOT to perform this skill so no entity or unit should allow this.  
M McCann, BMH Leake

I believe this is #10 on the exclusion list. We do teach the content at SMCC and practice utilizing a Huber needle for implantable ports; however, for the extern program it needs to remain an excluded skill. The risk for infection is just too high.

S Greer, Southwest Mississippi Community College

## Restraints

**Q1.** I am thinking that we treat externs like nurse assistants, and they are not allowed to place restraints and only remove in emergency. Can you tell me where you all stand on restraints? I do not see it on the do not do list. Sandy Stagg, MSN, RN | Nursing Professional Development Generalist, St. Dominic Hospital | Clinical Education Department

### A1.

- I agree completely. Hannah Barrett, North Sunflower Medical Center
- I am good with the restraint placement and removal under the supervision of the RN. This is an RN responsibility that they need to learn, especially if working psych. Tiffany Cox, Holmes Community College
- At River Oaks we refer to our student affiliation agreement with a specific school and is it on their list of tasks that they can perform. Generally, students are not allowed to place or manipulate restraints, only remove in case of emergency. Externs do receive training in orientation on restraints. Felycia Dear, MSN, RN, Nurse Advisor, Merit Health River Oaks
- Our Acute Care Techs (Nursing assistants) except in our Skilled Nursing Unit (CNAs) are allowed to place them and remove restraints for checks or ADLs and then reapply. They attend a Restraint and Suicide class during orientation with a return demonstration of safe restraint application. Linda Holmes, MSN, RN, NPD-BC, *Education Specialist, Education Dept*, Forrest General Hospital
- Regarding the application of restraints by externs, it's important to recognize that restraints are a fundamental skill taught in nursing programs, including at MUW. As part of the student's fundamental curriculum, students demonstrate competency in this skill, which is also heavily emphasized on the NCLEX exam.

Given the importance of this skill in nursing practice, we request that students can perform restraints with proper supervision. Externs, like nurse assistants, should be trained and supervised appropriately in using restraints to ensure patient safety and compliance with institutional policies and ethical guidelines. Mary Helen Ruffin, Ph.D., RN, CNE, Chair, ASN Program, Professor of Nursing, Tenure, Mississippi University for Women

- I agree. I would not allow the externs to place or remove restraints in the emergency room. Moreover, as a former Cooperate CNO of six hospitals, we only allowed trained staff to apply and remove restraints under the supervision of an RN. Finally, TJC is very strict about this. In fact, the TJC policy indicates that Residents can only place and remove restraints after medical training. Most SON do not offer this type of training. Shirley D. Evers-Manly, PhD, RN, FAAN, Professor and Dean Alcorn State University School of Nursing, First Vice President National Black Nurses Association

# Rotation for Externs through various depts

11/9/23 Q:

As we are preparing for 2024 Externs, I wanted to ask if externs could rotate through areas. We have multiple specialty areas and it's difficult to assign the externs to one specific area. My thought was to list all of our care areas and ask the externs to select 4 areas and they would spend 80 hours in each area with a preceptor. This would allow all externs the opportunity to receive the optimum learning experience.

Emily Edwards DNP, RN, Director of Nursing Practice  
North Mississippi Health Services, Tupelo, MS

A1:

It is always a struggle with Preceptors. As long as the Preceptors are trained in Nurse Extern program that should be ok. It will only give them about 7 shifts in each area. I'm not sure if that is enough for them to really get comfortable in each area. You might consider just two areas.

We offer one or two observation days if the Extern would like to look at another specialty. Some have not wanted that option since they wanted the time on their assigned unit. It is strictly observation unless I have a Nurse Extern trained Preceptor in that area.

**Linda Holmes, MSN, RN, NPD-BC, Forrest General Hospital**

A2:

I assign the externs to one preceptor; I can keep up with them better that way. They work 3 12-hour shifts with that preceptor. I have some very good preceptors for the externs. With the nursing shortage is so hard to have good preceptors. The externs have 4 hours/week that they can go to any unit they desire, the extern notifies me of their wishes, and I speak with the director/manager of the requested unit. They use these 4 hours as observation hrs. and it is documented on their time sheet. Our externs keep a time sheet in addition to clocking in. We only have 6-8 externs, so it is easy to keep up with them.

Thank you,  
Kaffie Denley, RN  
Bolivar Medical Center, Cleveland, Ms.

A3:

This is a great question! I will give you my honest opinion. Please feel free to share with the rest of the committee. I love the idea of allowing students to train in other areas. However, I get a little concerned about students who have not had specific content training in an area that may be unfamiliar territory. Example: students who have just completed their second semester (med-surg) and hospitals placing the student in ER or ICU. Students may feel overwhelmed, but some will thrive! I believe it is individual to the student.

I have had students who "shadowed" in different areas, and I love that idea. I want students to get ALL of the training and every experience possible, but some students are not prepared to work in high acuity areas without the benefit of classroom knowledge. I hope this makes sense.

Christy Jenkins MSN, RN, CLC  
Instructor in nursing/simulation educator  
Robert E. Smith School of Nursing, Delta State University

A4:

One of the hospitals I had summer extern students at actually created a schedule and rotated the students through specialty areas. It made it more difficult for them because of the schedule (but it was only 3 students, I think). My contact at the hospital assigned a preceptor in each area. The students loved it because they had so much exposure, and could really get a feel of what area they may want to work in. I was very appreciative of the hospital's efforts to make the experience valuable for the students.

**Stephanie C. Greer, RN, MSN, CNE**  
Southwest MS Community College

A5:

I think this is a great idea. If the assigned preceptor is out on vacation, we do utilize our specialty areas such as OR, Cath Lab, L&D, Endo, PACU, and SPS. These might not be areas that accept new graduates but the exposure to these areas does help gain better knowledge of the innerworkings of the hospital.

-Alicia Ciarloni, Externship Chair 2024, BMH North Mississippi, Oxford

A6:

Most inpatient managers and directors like the idea of rotating, maybe start off slow and only rotate their top 2 choices to see how it goes then add more.

Brandie Beard, BMH Golden Triangle, Columbus, 662 244 1493

A7:

I believe rotating the Externs to different areas is a great idea.

Shirley Evers-Manly, **PhD, RN, FAAN**, Alcorn State University

## **Externing at an Out-of-State Hospital**

**Q1.** What about someone going to LeBonheur or Children's Hospital of Alabama? That's just on the hospital since it's out of state correct?

**A1.** R Powell: The two out-of-state hospitals (Childrens of Alabama and LeBonheur-Memphis, TN) are not approved for the *Mississippi Externship Program* therefore I did not list them as externs.

L Weems: In my opinion, for the student to receive 3 hours for the externship course, they would need to be enrolled in the MC externship course and MC would have to have a clinical affiliation agreement with the out of state (OOS) hospital. MC would also have to confirm that the objectives defined in the OOS hospital meet the MC SON curriculum of the externship course and there is oversight from MC faculty OR the student would need to enroll in the OOS SON that has an approved extern program at the OOS school.

Dr. Melissa Temple, Director of Nursing at IHL, defines how the 3 hours can be received by the student. Here is Dr. Temple's reply.

MC will have to go through the process required by the Tennessee BON and Alabama BON to place students in clinicals in those respective states. My understanding is that, in Tennessee, they would have to submit an SSR to the Tennessee BON to be placed on their agenda and physically appear at one of their BON Business Meetings to request approval. There is a process for Alabama as well along with a fee. I am not sure about the timeframe. This responsibility is on the School of Nursing to seek approval in those states and to ensure the faculty and program meet the specific requirements.

From Christy Jenkins, DSU: LeBonheur in Memphis does not participate in externship but has internships for students who wish to work there during the summer. I have found that to be true of most of the Methodist hospitals in the Memphis/Southaven area.

