MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 12, 2015

TO: College of Nursing Students

FROM: Dr. Debra C. Davis
Dean, College of Nursing

RE: Procedure for Establishing a Clinical Affiliation Agreement or a Letter of Agreement

The purpose of this memo is to help you understand the clinical affiliation agreement process at the College of Nursing. This is the process that you and your faculty will use to plan for your practicum experiences. The key is to work closely with your faculty and to start your planning early and to follow all the steps. Our goal is to make sure you have an excellent practicum experience.

The College of Nursing has clinical affiliation agreements with approximately 700 agencies. The purpose of the clinical affiliation agreement is to guide and direct the working relationship between the USA College of Nursing and Agencies in providing learning opportunities for nursing students.

We highly recommend that you consider completing your practicum requirements at a site that has an affiliation agreement in place. For your review, the list of agencies is posted on the College of Nursing’s website. Go to http://www.southalabama.edu/colleges/con/, click on Students then click Current Student followed by Clinical Affiliation Agencies. In addition, under the Current Students menu click on Forms to find other documents that you may need (Letter of Notification and Appreciation, CON insurance information, Two-Page Letter of Agreement, etc.).

After choosing a site that has a current clinical agreement with the College of Nursing, the next step is to discuss the site with your faculty and to identify a qualified preceptor. Your faculty will evaluate the site and preceptor qualifications to determine if the site and preceptor are appropriate. An agreement must be in place before students can begin practicum activities. Some clinical sites have very specific requirements for students to meet prior to being approved for a clinical experience in their facility. For example some sites may require a student to attend an orientation session at the facility or to undergo an additional background check. Students and faculty should check the College of Nursing website for specific requirements for each agency.

For your convenience, a one-page Letter of Notification and Appreciation is posted in College of Nursing website under Forms. You will download this letter and provide it to the clinical site for signatures from your preceptor and the responsible agency representative indicating their willingness to precept you. You will return the signed form to your faculty for approval prior to beginning your practicum.

In situations where it is not possible for you to use one of the agencies that has an agreement with the College of Nursing, it will be necessary for us to negotiate an agreement with the agency prior to you beginning your practicum experience. This can be a lengthy process sometimes requiring up to three months or more to complete. The most expedient way to set up a practicum experience is to use the College of Nursing’s Letter of Agreement (two-page agreement). This letter of
agreement is a two-page legally binding document used with Agencies that students do not use on a regular basis. The Letter of Agreement covers a specific student, for specified time frame. Changes cannot be made to the Letter of Agreement (two-page agreement) without the USA attorney’s approval. However, we are always willing to try and resolve any issues in order to negotiate the agreement. Please contact your faculty immediately with complete information including the name of the agency, contact person, address and phone number.

Some agencies will request that instead of the Letter of Agreement that a clinical affiliation agreement be established (in this case the request to establish form will need to be submitted to your USA Faculty). The College of Nursing has a standard agreement that will be forwarded to the agency once your faculty has provided us the name of the agency, contact person, address and phone number. Conversely, the agency can provide us with their own agreement to consider if they have a standard form. Please note however, that this process is time consuming, as it requires review and approval by attorneys from USA and the agency. The office of Clinical Affairs will negotiate with the agency and USA legal department to establish the agreement. You should follow up with faculty if you have questions about the process. Faculty will direct questions to the office of Clinical Affairs. Do not contact the agency regarding approval status. Use the process described above for inquiries.

In the process of setting up the practicum experience, you may be asked about liability insurance. The University of South Alabama maintains professional liability coverage insuring the University of South Alabama, its health care employees and nursing faculty, and nursing students with limits of liability coverage of not less than $1,000,000 per occurrence, and $3,000,000 annual aggregate. You can download the verification of professional liability coverage for the agency from the College of Nursing website [College of Nursing / Students / Current Students / Forms / Statement of Liability Insurance Coverage].

Likewise, the College of Nursing requires that the agency have the same limit of liability coverage for their employees, agents, or servants. In certain cases, you may be asked to provide proof of the Agency’s liability coverage. As evidence of such coverage, the agency must furnish us with a copy of a CERTIFICATE OF INSURANCE prior to you beginning your practicum. Please note however, that certain state agencies have insurance coverage under state statutes and differ from what the contract requires.

Please ensure that all times that your faculty member is your contact regarding affiliation agreements.

DCD/to
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