

ACEN Practicum Requirements for Graduate Nursing Programs

Program Type	Non-APRN Program Options	APRN Program Options	ACEN Glossary Definition of Practicum
MSN	All program options preparing the student for eligibility to sit for a certification examination must include the minimum hours needed for certification. Program options not leading to certification are required to have direct clinical/practicum experiences in accordance with the ACEN Glossary definition. However, programs are allowed to determine the number of practicum hours	Currently require a minimum of 500 direct patient care hours or the number of hours required for the specific population foci for certification. Transitioning to minimum of 750 hours by 2025. If the certification agency requires more than 750 hours, the program must include the minimum number of hours for certification.	Learning Environments and Experiences, Clinical/Practicum Direct, hands-on, planned learning activities required of nursing students in all degree or certificate granting nursing education programs, regardless of the student's licensure status at the time of admission. Settings include, but are not limited to, acute-care and specialty hospitals, long-term care facilities, ambulatory care centers, physician offices, communities, and home health care. Clinical/practicum learning experiences should engage nursing students in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor work of nursing appropriate for the level at which students are being prepared. Consistent with the level of academic study and the roles and responsibilities after graduation, clinical/practicum experiences should prepare graduates for practice in the care of patients/clients including a/an: individual, family, group, or populations, and support students' attainment of the identified end-of-program student learning outcomes and/or role-specific nursing competencies. Clinical/practicum experiences are overseen by qualified nursing faculty and may include assistance from preceptors who provide feedback to students in support of their learning and professional development. Clinical/practicum learning experiences are required for all nursing students enrolled in any undergraduate or graduate program, including all students enrolled in post-licensure undergraduate programs, graduate programs, all program options in any undergraduate and graduate programs, and/or certificate program options.
DNP	All program options preparing the student for eligibility to sit for a certification examination must document the minimum number of hours needed for certification. If the program option does not make the student eligible for a certification, the ACEN requires DNP students to document a minimum of 500 clinical/practicum hours at the DNP level. The hours may include the capstone project.	Currently requires a minimum of 500 documented direct patient care hours; transitioning to 750 hours by 2025. DNP programs with APRN program options are required to have 1,000 documented post-baccalaureate practicum hours. The total number of hours may include hours awarded after a gap analysis (if applicable). Capstone project hours may be used.	

ACEN's Position Statement Related to Graduate Nursing Education Programs