APRN Preceptor
Orientation Manual

University of Mississippi Medical Center
2500 North State Street
Jackson, Mississippi 39216
Phone: 601-984-6255
Website: www.umc.edu/son
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Welcome Letter

Dear Preceptor,

The University of Mississippi (UMMC) School of Nursing (SON) would like to thank you for taking the time to precept our students. A preceptor is one of the most important mentors a student will have, and you are the key to their successful learning experiences as they transition from professional nurse to an advanced leader or provider. A preceptor guides, directs, and challenges students while serving as a role model, facilitator, and support system. Without your dedication to the profession, this would not be possible.

We appreciate and value your expertise and recognize this commitment requires a lot of your time and patience. Without your diligence, effort, and enthusiasm, our students would not be successful in fulfilling the requirements for graduate school clinicals.

On behalf of the University of Mississippi Medical Center School of Nursing faculty and administration, we want to thank you again for your service to our students. We welcome your comments, suggestions and feedback always. Please, do not hesitate to contact us for any additional questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Anne A. Norwood, Ph.D., FNP-BC

Anne A. Norwood, Ph.D., RN, FNP-BC
Professor
Associate Dean of Practice and Partnerships
University of Mississippi Medical Center
School of Nursing A-310
2500 North State Street
Jackson, Mississippi 39216
601.984.6236 (o)
Anorwood@umc.edu
Introduction to the UMMC & the SON

The University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC) School of Nursing (SON) was founded in 1948, and thousands of its graduates have cared for the people of Mississippi in health care organizations and at home ever since. The SON develops nurse leaders through our innovative partnerships; unique community-based systems; evidence-based practice and research; and a focus on excellence and life-long learning. The UMMC campus houses four specialized hospitals, including the State's only children's hospital, a women's and infant's hospital, an adult hospital, and a critical care hospital. These learning hospitals give SON students the opportunity to participate in truly unique clinical experiences not found anywhere else in the state. UMMC also has the state’s only Level 1 trauma center, Level 4 neonatal intensive care nursery and organ transplant program, meaning that our students have the opportunity to obtain the experiences required in the field and population of their choice. SON-managed clinics, spread throughout the state provide practice and research opportunities that contribute to the health of the communities we serve. Within these communities, the school has surpassed 40K hours of service-learning activities and provided pro bono work totaling more than $1 million in value.

Purpose

Each student who enters the clinical preceptorship presents with a varied and diverse clinical experience with distinct levels of skills and competencies. Your role will be challenging as you support the student’s individual clinical learning needs. Therefore, the purpose of this manual is to provide the preceptor with a guide of helpful information and effective strategies to optimize learning experiences for our students who are under your clinical direction. The National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (2015) states: “The role of the preceptor is important in shaping the development of a nurse. This Manual establishes the School of Nursing guidelines for using qualified healthcare professionals as preceptors to assist with clinical instructions in a variety of health care delivery settings. For the purpose of this manual, a ‘preceptor’ is defined as a professional healthcare employee of a healthcare agency, who agrees to serve as a role model, teacher, and clinical expert directing graduate nursing student learning experiences in the clinical setting. The purpose of the preceptor is to provide a one-to-one relationship between an experienced healthcare professional and a graduate nursing student through valuable experiences in a specific area of practice. The faculty member and preceptors plan clinical activities [via course syllabus] to meet the learning needs and objectives of the students as related to the course outcomes. The faculty retains the responsibility for student instruction and supports both the student and preceptor by providing expertise to ensure that the learning experiences meet the course outcomes and objectives. The preceptor and the faculty member collaborate in planning, monitoring, and evaluating the student clinical experiences. Faculty maintains the ultimate responsibility for the student evaluations.”
The School of Nursing offers six (6) areas of emphasis within the master's program. Additionally, post-master's certificates are also available in these areas. The coursework for each track is accessible and predominantly online and/or hybrid. Flexible plans of study are available and are designed with your career, family, and life in mind.

Administrator
- Nursing and Health Care Administrator

Educator
- Nurse Educator

Practitioner
- Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner
- Acute/Primary Care Pediatric Nurse Practitioner
- Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner
- Family Nurse Practitioner
- Neonatal Nurse Practitioner
- Psychiatric/Mental Health Nurse Practitioner

MSN and Post-Masters Purpose and Outcomes

The purpose of the master's program is to prepare baccalaureate nurses for advanced practice and provide a solid foundation for additional graduate study. The purpose of the post-master's program is to provide additional specialized graduate education to nurses who have already earned a master's in nursing and who wish to practice as nurse practitioner, nurse educator or nurse administrator.

OVERVIEW OF MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING [MSN]

Audwin Fletcher, PhD, APRN, FNP-BC, FAAN, Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies

The University of Mississippi Medical Center, School of Nursing, located on the only health science campus in Mississippi, provides an excellent environment for learning. The School of Nursing shares the campus with six (6) other professional schools: Medicine, Health Related Professions, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Population Health, and Graduate Studies in the Health Sciences.
The School of Nursing graduate program is affiliated with several hundred hospitals, community health centers, health departments, private practice and community clinics, and schools, affording the student extensive opportunity for interdisciplinary collaboration in clinical practice and research.

Classrooms at all sites are equipped with distance learning technology. The courses for most tracks are offered online or in a blended format. Online courses meet synchronously or asynchronously and may require attendance at proctored examinations or lab experiences. Blended courses require the student to be on campus up to four times during the semester. The Family Nurse Practitioner, Neonatal Nurse Practitioner, Primary/Acute Care Pediatric Nurse Practitioner, and the Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner tracks may have some specialty courses that require meeting on the Jackson campus several times during the semester, primarily on weekends. Contact the track director for information about specific courses. In addition, the first 45 clinical hours and an additional 200 clinical hours for the AGACNP track must occur at UMMC. The remaining 385 clinical hours may occur at UMMC or at another approved site with an approved preceptor.

The University of Mississippi Medical Center School of Nursing has eight (8) tracks leading to the Master of Science in Nursing degree: Nurse Educator, Nursing and Health Care Administrator, Family Nurse Practitioner, Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner, Adult Gerontology (Primary Care) Nurse Practitioner, Family Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, Neonatal Nurse Practitioner, and Primary/Acute Care Pediatric Nurse Practitioner (dual role).

Preparation for advanced practice roles includes core content in research, informatics, finance and leadership, quality improvement, health policy, and theoretical foundation of the discipline. In addition, each track has specialized courses appropriate for the role. Part-time study is available. Candidates who successfully complete the program are awarded the Master of Science in Nursing degree. Graduates of all nurse practitioner tracks meet eligibility requirements for advanced practice certification by national professional organizations and by the Mississippi Board of Nursing. To be considered full time, the graduate student must be registered for at least 9 hours during the semester. The following MSN tracks are classified as online: AGNP, FNP, NED, NHCA, and PMHNP.

**Description of MSN Programs Offered**

**ADULT GERONTOLOGY (Primary Care) NURSE PRACTITIONER**

Audwin Fletcher, PhD, APRN, FNP-BC, FAAN, Track Director [Interim]

The Adult Gerontology (Primary Care) Nurse Practitioner track (AGNP) provides graduate students and/or currently practicing advanced practice nurses with specialization in the care of adults and older adults.
The curriculum prepares the student to: 1) integrate the principles of aging, health, and specialized advanced practice nursing into evidence-based clinical management of adults, their families, and communities of diverse cultures in rural settings; 2) demonstrate comprehensive assessments, planning, and interventions with the complex health care problems of adults and older adults and their caregivers in a variety of rural health care settings; and 3) use critical thinking and decision-making skills in evidence-based clinical management of wellness, prevention, maintenance, common symptoms and syndromes, and common illnesses affecting adults and older adults and their families in rural settings. The clinical component consists of a minimum of 630 hours of guided experience in select areas under the mentorship of an advanced practice nurse or a physician.

**FAMILY NURSE PRACTITIONER**

Derek Holt, DNP, FNP-BC, ENP-BC, Track Director

The Family Nurse Practitioner track (FNP) is designed to prepare nurses to deliver primary health care to adults and families. The didactic curriculum provides students with advanced knowledge and skills in bio physiological science, pharmacotherapeutics, primary care concepts, advanced assessments, and diagnostic skills as a basis for clinical practice. The clinical component consists of a minimum of 630 hours of guided experience under the mentorship of an advanced practice nurse or a physician. Plans of study are designed by faculty with individual consideration given to students' goals and geographic locations.

**ADULT GERONTOLOGY ACUTE CARE NURSE PRACTITIONER**

Audwin Fletcher, PhD, APRN, FNP-BC, FAAN Track Director

The Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner track (AGACNP) is designed to prepare nurses to deliver acute and/or critical care to adult and older adult clients in a variety of settings. The didactic curriculum will provide students with advanced knowledge and skills in bio physiological science, pharmacotherapeutics, acute and/or critical care concepts, advanced assessments and diagnostic skills as a basis for clinical practice. Plans of study are designed by faculty with individual consideration given to students’ goals and geographic locations.

**NEONATAL NURSE PRACTITIONER**

Amy Lowery Carroll, DNP, CPNP-AC, Track Director [Interim]

The Neonatal Nurse Practitioner (NNP) is prepared to deliver comprehensive care to pre-term and full-term infants. The curriculum emphasizes advanced nursing care of newborns and infants from birth through the first two years of life.
The spectrum of health from promotion of wellness to management of acute and chronic illness in a variety of settings is incorporated into the program. The clinical component consists of a minimum of 630 hours of guided experience in select settings under the mentorship of an advanced practice nurse or a physician.

**PRIMARY/ACUTE CARE PEDIATRIC NURSE PRACTITIONER (DUAL ROLE)**

Amy Lowery Carroll, DNP, CPNP-AC, Track Director [Interim]

The dual role Primary/Acute Care Pediatric Nurse Practitioner (PACPNP) is prepared to provide advanced care in both primary and acute care settings. The curriculum emphasizes advanced nursing care of infants, children, and adolescents with acute and complex health disorders. The spectrum of health from promotion of wellness to management of acute and chronic illness in a variety of settings is incorporated into the program. The clinical component consists of a minimum of 990 hours of guided experience in select settings under the mentorship of an advanced practice nurse or a physician.

**FAMILY PSYCHIATRIC MENTAL HEALTH NURSE PRACTITIONER**

Carl Mangum, PhD, RN, PMHNP-BC, NHDP-BC, Track Director

The Family Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) is prepared to provide advanced mental health care. The curriculum assists students to develop skills for independent and interdependent decision-making and direct accountability for clinical judgment. The required skills include comprehensive physical and mental health assessment, diagnosis, and psychotherapeutic and pharmacological interventions. The graduate will be able to participate in and use research, help to develop and implement health policy, implement educational programs, and provide case management and consultation in his/her area of expertise.
# Program Outcomes

**Essential I:** Background for Practice from Sciences and Humanities  
**Essentials VIII:** Clinical Prevention and Population Health for Improving Health  
**Essentials IX:** Master’s-Level Nursing Practice

- Apply broad, organizational, patient-centered, ethical, and culturally responsive concepts into daily practice.
- Demonstrate theoretical knowledge from nursing and other disciplines to advanced role practice in nursing for analysis of clinical problems, illness prevention and health-promotion strategies.
- Utilize quality processes to evaluate outcomes of aggregates and monitor trends in health care.

**Essential II:** Organizational and Systems Leadership  
**Essential III:** Quality Improvement and Safety

- Analyze the impact of systems on patient outcomes.
- Demonstrate leadership in providing quality cost-effective care, with management of human, fiscal and physical resources.

**Essential IV:** Translating and Integrating Scholarship into Practice

- Apply translational research in the practice setting through problem identification, systematic inquiry and continuous improvement processes.

**Essential V:** Informatics and Health-Care Technologies

- Utilize current technologies to deliver, enhance and document care across multiple settings to achieve optimal outcomes.

**Essentials VI:** Health Policy and Advocacy

- Articulate change within organizational structures of various health-care delivery systems to impact policy, financing and access to quality health care.

**Essentials VII:** Interprofessional Collaboration for Improving Patient and Population Health Outcomes
Affiliation Agreements

Affiliation agreements between UMMC SON and the clinical agency are required prior to the start of any clinical experience. The UMMC SON has a designated Education Administrator who oversees all affiliation agreements and will notify the clinical agency of the status of the agreement at the start of each semester. Any affiliation agreement not current must be updated and signed before the student can begin clinical in the agency.

Expectations of Preceptors for APRN Students

- Lead and coordinate interdisciplinary teams across care environments to reduce barriers, facilitate access to care and improve health outcomes
- Act in an ethical manner
- Arm the student with clinical expertise to the best of their abilities and in accordance with the guidelines presented within this manual.

Qualifications of the Preceptor

The qualifications of the preceptors include the following established criteria:

1. Will be selected based upon clinical competency in their practice setting.

2. Will be educationally qualified, holding a minimum of MSN degree in a field related to the course objectives and have a minimum of one (1) year of clinical experience and demonstrate competencies related to the area of assigned clinical teaching responsibilities.

3. Will provide input in the evaluation of the student’s performance and achievement of learning objectives.

4. Will make available time to periodically review the student’s learning objectives and provide the student with direction related to his/her achievement in that setting.

5. Will critically evaluate the student’s progress during and at the end of the practicum experience.

6. Will meet with the SON faculty, as needed, during the semester to facilitate the student’s progress.
Roles and Responsibilities of the Preceptor

Role: The preceptor is a registered nurse who possesses an unencumbered RN and APRN license to practice in the state of Mississippi and who is in good-standings. The preceptor is employed by a clinical agency who agrees to serve as a role model, teacher, mentor, and clinical expert for the student in a clinical setting. Preceptors must exemplify strong cognitive, technical, and interpersonal skills with the ability to set goals, plan outcome driven learning experiences, and provide meaningful feedback to the student. Preceptors assist students to move from novice to expert and assure they are competent to care for the patients and their families in their specific role.

Responsibilities: Preceptors are expected to:

1. Complete all preceptor agreement forms and provide licensure and certification information to student when requested in a timely manner.

2. Complete preceptor evaluation of the student in data tracking system used by the SON at the completion of the clinical experience. The evaluation tools are provided at the beginning of the practicum. While preceptors provide feedback to the course faculty about student performance, the final clinical evaluation of the student is the responsibility of course faculty.

3. Confirm the student’s number of completed hours in the data tracking system at the end of the semester.

2. Act as a role model, teacher, mentor, and clinical expert for the student while facilitating the learning process in an appealing and enthusiastic manner.

3. Orient the student to the learning site and staff.

3. Provide student with facility policies, procedures, and protocols during the first clinical week.

4. Collaborate with student to develop learning experiences to achieve course outcomes, objectives and clinical competencies.

5. Provide the student with ongoing constructive feedback that will assist and improve critical thinking, deductive reasoning, and decision-making processes.

6. Select appropriate patient assignments and help guide the student in providing safe patient care when applicable.

7. Facilitate professional socialization (i.e., attending staff meetings, in-service education).

8. Encourage and assist the student in reaching the goal of increasing independence, competence, and confidence while ensuring high quality and safe patient care.
9. Contact faculty member as needed with any questions, issues, and concerns that may arise.

12. Participate in clinical site visits by faculty during the semester. These visits are required and may be done physically or using technology (e.g., FaceTime, WebEx, Zoom).

Roles and Responsibilities of the Student

Roles:
The student is an adult learner who bears the responsibility for learning and for completing all assignments on time and in accordance with ethical standards and published guidelines. The student is expected to treat the clinical site as they would employment.

Responsibilities: Students are required to:

1. Abide by all the applicable rules of conduct and the academic guidelines that are included in the UMMC SON Student Handbook.

2. Adhere to the UMMC SON Honor Code and SON Core Values.

3. Maintain current APRN student malpractice insurance at all times.

4. Abide by all applicable agency rules of conduct, policies, procedures, and protocols with guidance from preceptor.

5. Review course requirements, course objectives, and personal objectives, competencies and goals with clinical faculty and preceptor.

6. Complete the required clinical hours as outlined in course syllabus performing hands-on patient care by expected due date. Students will meet with their individual preceptor to arrange clinical hours.

7. Collaborate with the clinical faculty and preceptor to determine specific, achievable learning objectives and appropriate learning experiences. The objectives may focus on developing competency in specific psychomotor skills, integration of pathophysiology, pharmacology, and specific treatment regimens, prioritization of patient care, clinical decision-making, and management goals.

8. Engage in self-directed, assertive learning activities.

9. Communicate with preceptor and faculty member in an on-going basis.

10. Practice in accordance with institutional, professional, legal, and ethical guidelines.
11. Demonstrate professional clinical behavior at all times as outlined in the Student Handbook including but not limited to: being on time and prepared for clinical, respect, honesty, flexible, confidentiality, motivation to learn, accountability, corrective behaviors from feedback.

12. Demonstrate care that is inclusive, culturally sensitive, and respectful to patient populations.

13. Demonstrate professional role behaviors of an advanced practice nurse.

14. Demonstrate accountability for knowing or seeking appropriate references to learn the rationale for medical and nursing therapies. Self-direction and taking the initiative are essential.

15. Demonstrate accountability for thoroughness and timeliness in completing assigned role responsibilities.

17. Promptly notify preceptor and faculty in the event of a schedule change or absence from the scheduled time or date for the clinical experience.

18. Contact faculty member by phone or e-mail if assistance is needed.

19. Complete assignment and submit to course faculty on designated due dates.

20. Participate in ongoing self-evaluation with feedback from faculty and preceptor.

21. Complete the preceptor and faculty evaluation forms at the end of the clinical rotation.

Students Not Prepared or Needs Remediation

The preceptor is to notify faculty immediately by phone or email if an issue has been identified. Faculty will assist these students; the student may be referred to the Clinical Simulation Laboratory, tutoring, and/or counseling.

Unsatisfactory Clinical Performance

If a student has unacceptable clinical or professional behavior, the preceptor should contact the faculty or program director, the program director will document with the preceptor the performance in the setting. Unsafe clinical practice will result in immediate dismissal from the clinical area. The student will be given a clinical failure for the occurrence. Students may be disciplined or dismissed from the SON for practice or behavior which threatens, or has the potential to threaten, the safety of a client, family member, authorized representative, student peer, faculty member, healthcare provider, and/or self, or is unethical or illegal.
The incident will also be reported to the BON if applicable. Unacceptable practice may be a one-time event or a series of events. The policy in the student handbook will be followed.

Examples of Unsatisfactory Clinical Performance include by not limited to:

- Arriving late to clinical more than twice
- Unsafe clinical practice or behaviors related to physical or mental health problems (i.e., sleepiness, anxiety, and inability to concentrate)
- Use of alcohol, drugs, or chemicals
- Lack of preparation for clinical
- Continued deficits in problem solving
- Professional, legal, ethical, behavior deficits (i.e., lateness, absences)
- Failure to act when such action is essential to the health and safety of the client

### Illness and Injury

The clinical oversight faculty should be notified via phone or email if an illness or injury occurs.

### Incident / Occurrence Reports

The clinical oversight faculty should be notified as soon as possible that an incident has occurred. A written incident/occurrence report should be thoroughly completed. The student and preceptor should co-sign the report, and faculty will follow-up within 3-5 days.

### Preceptor is Ill

If a preceptor calls in sick, the student should contact the clinical oversight faculty for instruction.
Student Absence

Students are required to notify the clinical oversight faculty AND preceptor of illness or inability to attend clinical prior to or at least one hour before the beginning of the scheduled experience. Failure to do so may result in a clinical failure. This time must be made up.

Dress Code

Students should check with the preceptor prior to the first day of clinical for appropriate dress in clinical agency. Students are required to always wear SON name badges on their chests with their legal first and last name clearly visible. In addition, students must wear their UMMC SON student badge while in clinical.

Roles and Responsibilities of Faculty

The faculty are registered nurses with advanced degrees who are employed by the SON. The faculty retains the responsibility for student instruction and supports both the student and preceptor by providing expertise to ensure that the learning experiences meet the course outcomes and objectives. The faculty member and preceptor collaborate in planning, monitoring, and evaluating the student clinical experiences. Faculty maintains the ultimate responsibility for the student evaluations.

Faculty are required to:

1. Verify appropriateness of preceptor including documentation of qualifications and credentials.

2. Provide preceptor with their contact information and how to access the Preceptor Orientation Manual.

3. Collaborate with the student and preceptor to establish mutually acceptable clinical learning outcomes and personal objectives within the framework of the existing practicum objective.

5. Monitor and assist in facilitation of student learning experiences, student progression and schedule changes with student and preceptor throughout the semester.

6. Maintain communication and regular contact with student and preceptor via e-mail, site visits (as needed), or phone using the schedule of clinical days/hours provided by the student.

7. Respect preceptors and provide timely feedback for any expressed concerns.
8. Participate in ongoing evaluation of student’s learning experiences with student and preceptor. Evaluate student clinical performance and achievement of learning outcomes, using input from the preceptor and student.

9. Guide students on a continual basis through the clinical practicum by utilizing written clinical logs and didactic assignments related to the clinical experience.

10. Provide formative feedback to the student regarding progress during practicum experience on an on-going basis and will develop a remediation plan with preceptor and student in situations where the student’s clinical performance is unsatisfactory.

11. Complete the student’s evaluation of the clinical experience using feedback from the preceptor’s evaluation of the student. Submit into the data tracking system used by the SON.

Benefits of Being a Preceptor

As a benefit to you for being a participating in this role, we offer the following additional extensions of our gratitude.

Contact Hours for National Re-Certification

Acting as a preceptor counts towards your contact hours for certification. The Education Administrator will confirm the number of hours completed with the student at the end of each semester and provide documentation that can be used for recertification.

Clinical Faculty Appointment

Preceptors for UMMC SON students may be eligible to become a SON Affiliate Clinical Faculty. This appointment is reserved for those APRNs who precept UMMC SON students on a regular basis. This request is made through the Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies.

Legal Consideration of Being a Preceptor

Students are accountable for their own actions. The signed contract or memorandum of understanding between the UMMC SON and the clinical agency delineates the legal relationship between students, the school and the clinical site, and includes language related to liability coverage.

Students are responsible for knowing their abilities and limitations and for asking questions as needed. The preceptor is responsible to direct the student appropriately based on the students’ level of ability. Any questions regarding what a student may or may not do during clinical should be immediately directed to the course faculty. Safety and critical thinking are the dominant components of a successful clinical experience.
If a preceptor has concerns about the safety of the student’s clinical practice or the student’s ability to demonstrate appropriate critical thinking skills, the clinical instructor should be contacted immediately.

Preceptors should review and be familiar with state board regulations regarding delegation and supervision of students and agency policy. Incidents involving the patients under the care of the student DO NOT exempt the preceptor from legal consequences. Students must be observed for competence in skills prior to functioning independently.

**Legal Accountability**

The contractual relationship between the University of Mississippi Medical Center, School of Nursing and students allows students to be on campus, without the instructor always present.

**Student-Preceptor Relationship**

1. The student is not “working on your license.” All graduate students must hold an active RN license in the state in which the experience is taking place, they are not however licensed as APRN’s.

2. Healthcare facilities must comply with regulatory guidelines: “Staff supervises students when they provide patient care, treatment, and services as part of their training” (The Joint Commission, HR.1.20). (“Staff” means healthcare facility staff, not School of Nursing faculty.)

3. Preceptor has the responsibility to delegate according to the subordinate’s (student’s) abilities and to supply adequate supervision.

4. Under the law, each person is responsible for his/her own actions.

5. If the clinical instructor’s and/or preceptor’s evaluation of the student’s behavior or health status indicates that the student is unlikely to provide safe care, the clinical instructor and/or preceptor has the legal responsibility to deny the student access to clinical learning experiences.

**All information presented here could vary based on the health care facility involved.**

**Legal/Liability Issues**

- **Negligence** – a general term referring to acts and behaviors, which would be construed to be irresponsible or unreasonable for any person in a particular set of circumstances (Fiesta, 1983).
Malpractice – professional negligence; specific type of negligence in which a practitioner fails to follow a professional standard of care; nurses, doctors, and other professional may be liable for malpractice (Fiesta, 1983). Failure to follow professional standard of care may involve:

- Doing something incorrectly.
- Not doing something when it should have been done.

Nonmaleficence – avoidance of harm or hurt, core of medical oath and nursing ethics.

Vicarious liability – liability for conduct of another person who is, theoretically, under your control.

Negligent supervision – negligent way you supervised an employee or student. Did you exercise reasonable judgment in supervising the individual?

Corporate liability – every chartered, legally recognized organization is expected to conduct business in a reasonable, responsible manner.

Organization is negligent in its own right not because of an employee’s actions – see respondent’s supervisor (e.g. short staffing situations, continuing to admit critically ill patients when essential services are not available).

Joint liability – multiple individuals held responsible; RN + MD + Healthcare Facility
Important Contact Information

Audwin B. Fletcher, PhD, APRN, FNP-BC, FAAN
Assistant Dean of Graduate Programs
Director of Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner
Director of Adult-Gerontology Nurse Practitioner (Interim)

UMMC
School of Nursing
2500 North State St
Jackson, MS 39216
Office: A-222
T: 601-984-6210
F: 601-984-6206
afletcher@umc.edu

Amy Lowery Carroll, DNP, CPNP-AC
Director of Pediatric and Neonatal Program Track Director (Interim)

UMMC
School of Nursing
2500 North State St
Jackson, MS 39216
Office: A-236
T: 601-984-6339
F: 601-984-6206
alowery@umc.edu

Carl Mangum, PhD, PMHNP-BC, NHDP-BC
Director of Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Track

UMMC
School of Nursing
2500 North State St.
Jackson, MS 39216
Office: A-213
T: 601-984-6269
F: 601-984-6206
cmangum@umc.edu
Derek Holt, DNP, FNP-BC, ENP-BC  
*Director of Family Nurse Practitioner Track*

UMMC  
School of Nursing  
2500 North State St.  
Jackson, MS 39216  
T: 601-984-6245  
F: 601-984-6206  
dholt@umc.edu

Tina Reeves  
*Education Administrator*

UMMC  
School of Nursing  
2500 North State St.  
Jackson, MS 39216  
T: 601-984-6255  
F: 601-984-6206  
treeves@umc.edu