

RNEP Academic Partner Eligibility and Requirements Policy



Overview

RNEP supports a “grow your own” workforce model designed to increase access to nursing education and strengthen the rural healthcare workforce. Students complete training in their home or local communities through place-based clinical models.

Eligible Academic Programs

RNEP currently partners with the following programs:

- Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN)
- Licensed Practical Nurse to Registered Nurse (LPN–RN) bridge program (pilot)
- Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Nurse Practitioner program (pilot)

Note: the policies and requirements below are applicable to ADN programs. Pilots with the LPN-RN bridge and MSN NP programs operate under unique clinical models for their respective place-based programs.

Academic Partner Program Requirements

Delivery Model

Academic programs must:

- Offer (or be willing to transition to) 100% online didactic coursework
- Include asynchronous learning to support rural students
- Assign designated faculty to support and monitor RNEP students

Clinical Education Models (Required)

Participation in RNEP requires programs to adopt one of the following models:

1. Preceptor Model (Primary RNEP Model)

RNEP aligns with [WAC 246-840-533\(1\)–\(6\)](#) and uses a preceptor-based model where each student is paired with a dedicated nurse preceptor at their health care facility.

Key Features

- Student works directly with a licensed nurse preceptor while following the preceptor’s work schedule

- The preceptor provides direct teaching, supervision, and coaching
- Student gains independence while the preceptor ensures patient safety
- Typically 1 student per preceptor

Faculty Role

- Maintain responsibility for student evaluation and outcomes
- Conduct check-ins with students at key points:
 - Start of the experience
 - Midpoint
 - End
- Communicate and collaborate regularly with preceptors

Preceptor Requirements

- Active license
- Minimum 1 year of experience
- Completion of RNEP Preceptor Training

Additional Roles (as needed)

- Interdisciplinary preceptors (e.g. therapists, providers)
- Proctors (limited, task-specific supervision)

2. Practice–Academic Partnership

RNEP also uses a second, work-and-learn clinical model known as Practice-Academic Partnership aligned with [WAC 246-840-533\(7\)](#).

Key Features

- Student works as a licensed **Nurse Technician (or similar student-employee role)** in the healthcare facility while enrolled in their nursing program
- **Work hours may count toward clinical learning hours**, when appropriate
- Continuous, real-world experience (vs. short rotations)

Requirements

- Academic program works closely with the health care facility to ensure strong alignment between job duties and clinical learning objectives
- Ongoing faculty oversight and evaluation
- Structured, competency-based learning

Best used when

- Traditional clinical placements are limited or difficult to access

- Rural sites and students benefit from longitudinal workforce development

Core Clinical Expectations

- Students train in their local/rural communities
- Each student is paired with a dedicated preceptor
- **Academic programs must:**
 - Support preceptor engagement
 - Collaborate with clinical partners on placement and scheduling
 - Ensure clinical objectives and competencies are met

Program Flexibility

RNEP is designed to integrate with existing academic structures:

- No major curriculum changes required
- Programs must provide online didactic coursework
- Students may travel occasionally for:
 - Skills validation
 - Simulation
 - Required in-person training
- RNEP will reimburse student travel related academic program requirements
- Faculty may be community place-based or based at the health care facility

Alignment Expectations

Academic Partners must:

- Support preceptor-based or practice-academic partnership models
- Be flexible in clinical placement design for rural settings
- Collaborate closely with rural health care facilities

Exclusions

Academic programs may not align with RNEP if they:

- Rely solely on traditional faculty-led group clinical models
- Only offer fully in-person course delivery without remote flexibility
- Do not support preceptor-based learning

Approval of Academic Partners

All academic partners must be reviewed and approved by RNEP leadership to ensure alignment with program goals and clinical model requirements.

Statement of Commitment

Participation in RNEP reflects a shared commitment to innovative, place-based nursing education that strengthens the rural healthcare workforce.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically to reflect evolving program needs and workforce priorities.