

Nursing Apprenticeship Talking Points

Massachusetts Nursing Apprenticeships

1. Apprenticeships provide individuals—particularly those who might not otherwise have access—the opportunity to pursue a nursing education and the support needed to succeed.
2. These learning opportunities represent an investment in both the individual and their long-term professional development. This investment is not limited to the individual's physical presence at a healthcare organization; rather, it reflects a broader commitment to sustainability and skill expansion in the healthcare workforce.
3. Apprentices completing clinical experiences as part of a program of study are not included in staffing numbers. During this part of their education, and similar to traditional students, they are clinical students.
 - a. When working outside of the clinical requirements for the healthcare organization sponsoring the apprentice, they are counted in the staffing numbers as working in a nurse apprentice role.
 - b. Because apprentices complete all of the same clinical experiences required of traditional students **AND** work as nurse apprentices, these students receive supplemental training and experiences that enhance their nursing education.
4. Participants are full-time employees and receive pay for hours worked, as well as financial stipends from the sponsoring healthcare organization while not on the job. When performing work shifts as part of their apprenticeship, state and federal requirements include that apprentices must be compensated.
5. Apprenticeship programs are committed to a full and diverse learning experience for students.
 - a. This includes clinical exposure across multiple healthcare settings and organizations, particularly in areas such as mental health, pediatrics, and obstetrics.
 - b. Co-sponsoring organizations collaborate with academic institutions to ensure comprehensive training opportunities across specialties.

6. Throughout the apprenticeship, the educational institution retains full responsibility for ensuring that students meet all program outcomes. The school remains accountable for assessing and evaluating each student's learning in accordance with academic and licensure standards.
7. The work commitment for nursing apprentices does not change in the last semester of nursing school, even with the expanded ability to practice. Rather, the apprenticeship continues to emphasize the development of necessary skills and behaviors to ensure the nurse is successful.
8. Upon graduation, the apprentice progresses through orientation at the healthcare organization and completes the NCLEX exam within the recommended six weeks from graduation.
9. Apprenticeship programs are very similar to some “learn and earn” models currently active in Massachusetts. Our model provides a structure that yields higher rates of graduate success due to the close partnership with the academic institution and the employer.
 - a. The enhanced mentoring during an apprenticeship, along with the program design of apprentices completing 40 hours per week of didactic education, clinical rotations, and work shifts, means that apprentices will complete up to five times as much clinical time compared to traditional nursing students.
 - b. Thus, an apprentice often completes competencies at a faster rate, is far less likely to withdraw or not complete a program, and has higher exam passing rates than traditional students—all of which may improve the overall outcomes of the nursing program and enhance the potential success of the student.