



# Strategies for Making Patient Care Assignments

- Use Chamberlain's [Clinical/Experiential Learning Evaluation tool](#), which outlines clinical course outcomes and performance descriptors, as a basis for developing assignments.
- Ask for input from charge and unit nurses. Inquire about patient availability and readiness for student care. Inquire whether the patient has scheduled tests or procedures that impact his or her availability to students. Allow time to talk with unit nurses and review charts when making assignments.
- Briefly meet with patients and family, if possible, to obtain permission and assess appropriateness for student care. Inquire whether the patient or family is too anxious for student care.
- Be alert to student strengths and learning needs. Align patient selection with learning goals and knowledge level of the student.
- Be flexible. Unplanned events will occur in spite of careful preparation. Discharge, illness, death, and scheduling conflicts often happen in the patient care setting. Include additional patients as back-up or alternative if changes occur.
- Consider dual or multiple student assignments. Assigning two or more students to one patient is helpful when complexity of care exceeds the capabilities of one student. Other benefits of dual or multiple assignments include: opportunities for student collaboration, decreased level of anxiety among students, increased ability to assess and guide student clinical development, and fulfillment of clinical goals when a limited number of patients are available (Billings & Halsted, 2012).
- Develop alternative experiences to patient care assignments in order to meet clinical course outcomes, as needed. Review options with the course coordinator to ensure alternate experiences meet course outcomes.
- When possible, visit the site prior to the clinical day to review and select patient assignments. That way, students receive patient assignments prior to the clinical day and have time for adequate preparation. If you are unable to go the day before, arrive early to insure adequate time to select patient assignments. Inquire if a student orientation packet and/or site-specific information are available for student orientation.
- Just a few minutes meeting with patients can assist you in deciding whether a patient will be appropriate for a student nurse. Obtaining permission also reduces the likelihood the patient will refuse to have a student.
- Be sure patient assignments align with course outcomes and learner skill levels. This ensures that clinical learning experiences are congruent with course outcomes. It is important to match student assignments with individual learning needs. Students with beginning skill levels align with patients with lower acuity levels.