

**PEN PROGRAM**  
Professional Excellence in Nursing

## Program Information

[PEN@utoledo.edu](mailto:PEN@utoledo.edu)



### PEN Review Board membership 2024/25

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The PEN program is for registered nurses working as hourly employees. It has been developed to provide the registered nurse with an opportunity for professional development and recognition of clinical excellence. Please note, if you hold two positions in different classifications, the criteria must reflect activities completed as a staff nurse and must show evidence of working the minimum number of hours associated with your budgeted position.

**ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

1. Minimum of 2 years of clinical (RN) experience (at least one year at UTMC)
2. Annual Performance Appraisal overall score of 3.0 or higher with no 1's or 2's
3. A registered nurse working in an hourly position
4. Salaried staff are not eligible for this program

## **PLANNING FOR ADVANCEMENT**

The nurse who is seeking advancement in the PEN program should become familiar with the criteria for advancement to the Clinical Nurse III or IV level. A letter of intent will need to be completed by the applicant with the approval from their Nursing Director and submitted to the Chair of the PEN Review Board. A member of the PEN Review Board will then be assigned as a mentor throughout the application process.

The mentor will review the activities planned to ensure applicability. Most of the criteria need to be completed within the calendar year prior to applying for advancement. The applicant should be involved in the activities selected to qualify for advancement and in collecting the documentation needed. The mentor is a guide and not responsible for your content or ensuring your content is complete or in your packet.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

Letter of Intent must be turned into nursing administration at least 3 weeks prior to deadline; once a letter of intent is received a mentor will be assigned.

There are two application periods each year. Applications can be accessed at <http://utmc.utoledo.edu/depts/nursing/index.html>. Applications will be accepted after February 1st for the Spring application period and after August 1st for the Fall application period.

Applications are to be submitted to Maura Luettker, Nursing Administration, Room 245, Mulford Library Annex. The PEN committee is not responsible for applications mailed through inter-office mail. Hand delivery is recommended.

DEADLINE – Deadline for submission of application is 5:00pm on the dates posted on the PEN website

Applications must be completed by the deadline date and time. ***No exceptions will be made for any applicant. Any material missing at the deadline will result in a denied packet.***

## **MATERIAL SUBMITTED**

The PEN Review Board has established certain standards for the material submitted. These standards have been set because we believe that professional nurses need to be able to communicate effectively in writing. Applications not meeting these standards may, at the discretion of the PEN Review Board, be rejected.

Applications not meeting the following standards may be denied advancement:

1. Material must be legible. Typed computer-generated attachments are required.
2. There should be few spelling or grammatical errors.
3. Answers should specifically address each question asked. Number your answers to match the number of the question and provide sufficient information to address each section. Each section or submitted question needs to be addressed.
4. Original application forms, including peer evaluations should be submitted, not copies. **Ensure that all documents are signed as required.**
5. Missing required documents will result in a denied packet.
6. Make sure you provide all materials such as awards, degrees, proof of attendance, ect.

The ***PEN Clinical Ladder Reference Manual*** details all of the requirements for each performance criteria available. You must use it as your guide in completing the application packet. It can be accessed at <http://utmc.utoledo.edu/depts/nursing/index.html>.

## **INTERVIEW PROCESS**

All initial applicants must arrange for a brief interview with the PEN Review Board. The interview will allow the committee to clarify any aspects of your application or to obtain additional information in areas that are not clear. Interviews will be short and last only 5-10 minutes.

You will be contacted via email by the Chair of the PEN Review Board within 7 days of the close of the application period to arrange your interview time. In the event that you are unable to attend your scheduled interview, your application packet will be reviewed for content as is.

## **Guidelines**

**Performance Appraisal:** To be eligible for advancement in the PEN program, your most recent Performance Appraisal(s) must meet the following criteria:

1. The Performance Appraisal **must** be signed by the employee and director/manager (someone who has 24-hour accountability for departmental operation, develops and implements plans and policies that support the organizations operational budget).
2. Appraisal covers the previous year's performance period.
3. Must have a total overall score of 3.0 or higher and no 1's or 2's.
4. Performance Appraisals may not be appealed.

**Résumé:** To meet the requirements for advancement in the PEN program, you must submit a résumé.

1. Résumé is to be typed and professional in appearance.
2. Indicates how many years you have been practicing as a registered nurse.
3. Be sure to have the correct contact information. The address submitted will be the address used to correspond with you.

**Peer Evaluations:** To meet the requirements for the PEN program, you need to have 2 peer evaluations that meet the following criteria:

1. A peer is another registered nurse. Do not use a nurse manager/director, physician or other professional (ie. Respiratory therapist, advance practice nurse, etc.)
2. The peer knows you personally and has observed you in a professional role.
3. The peer must have worked with you for the previous 12 months.
4. The peer evaluation must be completed independently by the peer and returned to the applicant in a sealed envelope with signature across the seal.
5. \*EXCEPTION: in the event you are the only registered nurse in your department, you may select a licensed professional to complete your peer evaluation. The individual must be someone you work closely with on a routine basis and must be someone other than the person who completes your performance appraisal.

6. \*EXCEPTION: If you work in an area with fewer than 6 registered nurses, only 1 peer evaluation is required.

SLC 05-2024