

Career Ladder Frequently Asked Questions

Important Note: The information contained in this document is subject to change. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review this document regularly for the most up-to-date information. To ensure clarity and version control, each release of this document will include a revision date. Always refer to the most recent version when preparing your submission.

Application Basics

- 1) Can I submit more than the 12 required points?
 - a) Yes, we encourage you to submit more than 12 required points but no more than 18 points.
- 2) How many years can I 'look back' on for points for the initial application?
 - a) Applicants may include qualifying activities completed during the three years immediately preceding the application deadline.
 - Example: For the December 31, 2026 application deadline, eligible activities are those completed from December 31, 2023, through December 31, 2026
- 3) Can I use an activity in more than one category?
 - a) No, there is no double dipping of points. You cannot claim a point(s) for the same activity in more than one category.
 - Example: Attending a vaccine clinic for 3 weeks can only be counted as 1 point, not 3 points.
 - Example: The main project cannot also be claimed as a quality improvement project in Education.
- 4) What if I forget a form?
 - a) Submissions will be reviewed for incomplete or incorrect forms and sent back to the applicant for correction if they are submitted at least 3 business days prior to the deadline. Portfolios submitted less than 3 days prior to the deadline will not be reviewed for completeness. Unorganized or handwritten forms will be returned to the applicant.
- 5) Do I have to provide evidence for every point I claim?
 - a) Yes, every activity should have a cover sheet with documents included to support the activity.
- 6) Who should I ask to sign my activity cover sheets?
 - a) Your current manager must sign each activity coversheet submitted.
- 7) I have switched jobs within UC Davis Health and I am claiming activity points from my previous department. Who should sign my coversheet?
 - a) If the activity has occurred in the last 3 years, you can claim the points. Your previous manager can co-sign the activity coversheet. Your current manager must also sign the activity coversheet.

- 8) What resources are available to assist me with my initial submission, project, or patient exemplar?
- Center for Nursing Science: <https://health.ucdavis.edu/cnr/>
 - Center for Professional Practice of Nursing: <https://health.ucdavis.edu/cppn/>
 - APA formatting, Style guide and Citations APA 7th Ed., Purdue OWL
 - Nursing theory and frameworks or models. <https://nurseslabs.com/nursing-theories/Framework-QI, Six Sigma-DMAIC, Diffusion of Innovation, Change Theories>
- 9) Can I appeal the CLRC decision?
- Yes, any nurse denied CN III status twice has the right to appeal the decision of the Career Ladder Review Committee (CLRC) as described below.
 - Nurses must submit an appeal within 30 days of notice of denial of CNIII promotion.
 - The appeal cannot be submitted with additional information not in the original submission.
 - If the decision of CLRC is reversed, the CNIII step pay will be retroactive to the effective date associated with the original application presentation.
 - Any nurse can resubmit an application with new documentation at the next submission date.
- 10) If I have a second job outside of UC Davis Health, can I use that job's activities as points?
- No.
- 11) When will I see the difference in pay after my promotion is approved?
- Refer to the career ladder main intranet page for the most updated information for effective dates once CNIII promotion has been granted.
- 12) I have questions about my application that I just submitted, who do I contact?
- You can contact: careerladder@health.ucdavis.edu
- 13) My application is done but the submission date is in two months. Can I submit my application early?
- Yes, you can submit your application at any time. Your application will be reviewed during the next review period.
- 14) I am thinking about applying, where should I start?
- Review the documents and links listed on the Career Ladder website.
 - Attend a Career Ladder workshop. We highly recommend this and you will be most successful if you attend.
 - Talk with your leadership team.
 - Reach out to a career ladder superuser. These are individuals who have either advanced through the career ladder or are knowledgeable with the career ladder committee and process. I've formatted the information into a clean table for easier reference:

Name	Email	Role/Unit
Michelle Adams	msadams@health.ucdavis.edu	RN Case Manager, Cancer Center
Jay Metica-Rezonov	jmeticarezonov@health.ucdavis.edu	CN III, ED

Name	Email	Role/Unit
Christina Matson	cimatson@health.ucdavis.edu	AN II, T7 MSICU Gold
Diane A. Boyer	dboyer@health.ucdavis.edu	AN II, E6
Michael Sudh-Brondstatter	gsudhbrondstatter@health.ucdavis.edu	CN III, PM&R Clinic
Kelly Gallegos	kmgallegos@health.ucdavis.edu	CN III, Hospice
Teri H. Nguyen	leanguyen@health.ucdavis.edu	CN III, Peri-Op/PACU
Leeanna Miller	lcmill@health.ucdavis.edu	CN III, Women's Pavilion
Mary Beth Penfold	mepenfold@health.ucdavis.edu	CN III, Women's Pavilion
Carole Jarone	csleija@health.ucdavis.edu	CN III, Cancer Center
Dajanae Gresham-Ryder	dgreshamryder@health.ucdavis.edu	CN III, East 3 Adult Annex
Truc Cao	mycao@health.ucdavis.edu	CN III, Burn ICU

Project Questions

- 1) My project isn't finished yet; can I still apply? How soon can I submit my project as part of my initial portfolio submission?
 - a) Yes, you can submit. The project must be initiated. You will need to have at least one data point identified and already collected. You can continue to collect new data and include new data or a change in focus of the data at the time of presentations.
- 2) Can I submit a synthesis table or project proposal as my project?
 - a) No, you must have a project which is initiated with at least one data point identified and collected.
- 3) I presented my project at a conference; can I claim points for the conference presentation or is that double dipping?
 - a) If presenting to a conference is included in your project write-up for your application, then you cannot claim those points.
 - b) If presenting is not a part of your project plan, then you can claim points for presenting the project at a conference.
- 4) I worked on a project with a group; can I still use the project for my application?
 - a) Yes, you can still use the project for your submission if you were the primary leader for specific section of the project. You must be able to illustrate how your role was separate from others and demonstrated leadership. If the project was largely group work, you may want to identify another project.

Professional Development Section Questions

- 1) Can I claim points for any specialty certification?

- a) No. While there are many excellent nationally recognized specialty and sub-specialty certifications, you can only claim points for specialty certification that are recognized and approved by UC Davis Health. You can find that list here:
<https://ucdavishealth.ellucid.com/documents/view/1778>
- 2) Is there a process to get my specialty certification submitted for consideration to be added to the approved specialty certification list for UC Davis Health?
 - a) Yes, there is a process. See policy
<https://ucdavishealth.ellucid.com/documents/view/1790>
- 3) What are some eligible professional nursing or healthcare-related organizations that can be claimed on the application under professional development?
 - a) The following is a very short list of the many organizations that are acceptable to be claimed. These include membership to the local, state, or national levels.
 - National Black Nurses Association
 - National Association of Hispanic Nurses
 - Philippine Nurses Association
 - Emergency Nurses Association
 - Oncology Nursing Society
 - Association of Medical Surgical Nursing
 - Oncology Nursing Society
 - b) Applicants must provide proof of membership, such as a verification certificate or membership card. Membership length or term is not considered as part of the eligibility requirements.
- 4) I completed an Evidence-Based Practice course through the Center for Nursing Science, can the work I did with EBP be used in this section?
 - a) Yes. Work completed through EBP programming may be claimed in this section or in the Leadership section, depending on the specific rubric line item. Please see question 10 in the Leadership section below for additional options. Serving as an EBP mentor or EBP Project Lead would count in the Leadership section depending on the scope of that work.
 - b) To receive points for EBP programming, complete the online Microsoft Form linked here:
 - https://forms.cloud.microsoft/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=W2GR1xtOsEiMURAWiOGZm_AkSmhBpXJKru-48jrMU_BUMeg4NklIURElwMVVYUkZQQ01VMFJVM1ZOUC4u
 - Provide the requested information and supporting documents. The EBP Specialist will review your submission and, once approved, you will receive a PDF that includes your submitted information and approval. Submit this PDF, along with the supporting documents you uploaded to the form, with your CN3 Clinical Ladder application.
 - c) Below is guidance on the EBP programming activities that align with the rubric:

- EBP Fellowship: Requirements for application documentation include completion of the EBP Fellowship seminars and submission of the final validated synthesis tables, including the final evidence-based recommendation, and PDF from the approved Microsoft Forms submission from the EBP Specialist confirming completion of the EBP Fellowship with related work product.
- EBP Intensive: Requirements for application documentation include completion of the four-day EBP Intensive course, submission of the final validated synthesis table, including the final evidence-based recommendation, and PDF from the approved Microsoft Forms submission from the EBP Specialist confirming completion of the EBP Intensive with related work product.

Leadership Section Questions

- 1) How long do I have to be on a committee to claim points?
 - a) You would need to be a member of a committee or group for 6 months or more and have attended at least 75% of the meetings.
 - b) You would need to be a chair/co-chair for 6 months or more and have attended at least 75% of the meetings during your time as chair/co-chair.
 - c) A letter (template on the main Career Ladder page) must be submitted to verify attendance/participation as a member, chair, and/or co-chair. These verification letters are to be completed by the committee's chair, co-chair, or committee executive sponsor. You cannot complete your own verification letter.
- 2) Can you give some examples of hospital/ambulatory wide committees, unit-based practice committee, and a Professional Governance Council?
 - a) Hospital/Ambulatory wide committee examples: Sustainability Committee, Fall Committee, CAUTI Committee, Patient Experience Committee, Nursing Pharmacy Medication Safety Committee.
 - b) Unit-based Practice Council examples: Practice Council (formerly known as UBPC) and any committee that is addressing issues for just your unit such as Relief Charge Nurse committee, Preceptor committee, Tracheostomy Discharge workgroup, etc.
 - c) Professional Governance Councils are: Clinical Practice Council, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council, EMR Council, Evidence-Based Practice and Research Council, Professional Governance Council, Nursing Excellence Council, Professional Development Council, and Quality and Safety Council.
- 3) How can I claim points for being relief charge nurse on my unit?
 - a) Relief charge role can be claimed under the Leadership category "Any other leadership role per management approval." To claim a point for relief charge role, you must complete both requirements below:
 - A brief statement from your manager that validates the frequency and competencies required to function in that role in your area.

- Attach proof of successful completion of approved training specific to leadership (approved training listed below, only need to complete 1 CPPN course or 2 hours of E-Learnings)
 - (1) Classes offered through CPPN (only 1 course needed)
 - (a) Leading an Empowered Organization (LEO)
 - (b) Reigniting the Spirit of Caring (RSC)
 - (c) See Me as a Person (SMAAP)
 - (2) UC Learning -Leadership Coursework (complete a minimum of 4 e-learnings totaling 2 hours)
 - (a) Developing Influence Through Positive Leadership (28 min)
 - (b) Unlocking Personal Power Through Influence (24 min)
 - (c) Promoting a Positive Work Environment (27 min)
 - (d) Enhancing Patient Experience: Communicating with Purpose (30 min)
 - (e) Building Up Your Emotional Intelligence (21 min)
 - (f) The Essential Practices of Emotionally Intelligent Leaders (28 min)
 - (g) Leading through Inspiration (22min)
- 4) How can I earn a point for Practice Council Clinical Inquiry submission?
 - a) This activity allows nurses to earn a point when they escalate a clinical issue, concern, or improvement idea to their department's Practice Council.
 - b) To receive credit for the CN3 initial application or annual maintenance, the submission must be completed using the SBAR format on the official form available on the CN3 website. The completed SBAR form should clearly describe the situation, relevant background, the nurse's assessment of the issue, and the recommended action or improvement.
- 5) I am a new grad preceptor but I don't see it listed on the rubric, can I still earn points?
 - a) Yes, the new graduate nurse preceptor is now known as a Transition to Practice Preceptor (TPP). A TPP is a formally trained preceptor who has completed the following coursework:
 - Blended Virtual Introduction to Precepting (CPPN class)
 - See Me As A Person
 - b) To claim points for being a TPP you must have:
 - Taken all the coursework listed above and included transcripts of completed in submission
 - Been a primary TPP for one New Graduate Residency Nurse (2pts per new graduate nurse, 4 points max). Experienced nurses and student precepting does not count for TPP. Designation as a TPP, without precepting a new graduate nurse, does not meet the criteria for this point.
 - Submit a letter from the educator/manager confirming your status as a TPP for your unit and that you were the primary preceptor. Alternatively, you can submit the

name of the preceptee with evidence of number of hours worked with the new graduate nurse during their orientation.

- If you were not a primary preceptor but were a 'back-up' preceptor for more than one new graduate nurse, you can submit multiple preceptee names and orientation length/responsibility details to claim points.
- c) Precepting experience that does not involve a new graduate nurse is not eligible for points in this category; however, it may be counted toward points in the Education section.
- 6) Can I claim points for being on the Professional Practice Council?
- a) Yes, this can be claimed as a hospital wide committee in the leadership section and a point can be earned if you have been a member for 6 months or more and attended 75% of the meetings.
- 7) What are the requirements to receive credit for being an "Active mentor for the nurse residency program"? (Please note: This is not casual mentoring of new staff on the unit.)
- a) You must have completed the Art of Mentoring Workshop Blended Learning class from CPPN and mentored a new graduate nurse for a full year
- b) Submit a letter from the educator/manager, with the mentee's name and time period of mentorship.
- c) Mentoring requires a formal check-in process with documentation through a CPPN-sponsored online portal.
- 8) I write our unit's newsletter, does this count for a professional/healthcare newsletter?
- a) This work is better claimed in the education section for education tools for staff.
- b) A professional healthcare newsletter submission refers to an article, column, or other written work that has been submitted to and published by a healthcare-related organization, professional association, or industry publication, typically available online. Examples include, but are not limited to, Nursing Times, Notes on Nursing, and Daily Nurse. Publications appearing in organizational newsletters, annual reports, or similar professional healthcare publications, such as the UCD Nurse, UCD Nursing Annual Report, or Children's Hospital Annual Report, are also considered eligible.
- 9) I help with doing audits on my unit. Can I use this activity?
- a) Possibly. If you are a member of a committee or workgroup where conducting audits is an expected responsibility of members, you may not claim points for both committee membership and another associated rubric activity. You must choose the section that best represents your contribution and claim the activity in only one category.
- b) Provided you have not already claimed points for committee membership related to the same auditing activity. Your submission should clearly explain how the auditing work aligns with the category for which you seek credit and describe your role, contributions, outcomes, and any resulting improvements or action plans. Your submission must also include a letter from your manager confirming your role as an auditor and validating your contributions to the initiative.

- For example, if you are claiming points for CAUTI audits in the leadership section under 'Any other leadership role per management approval, your description of the activity needs to outline the auditing process, outcomes, and how your efforts contributed to quality improvement and demonstrated leadership.
 - Alternatively, if you are claiming points for CAUTI audits under the Education section as a "Champion a Unit Quality Improvement Activity," your submission should clearly describe the auditing process, including the frequency of audits, findings, and outcomes. The description should also explain how your efforts contributed to quality improvement, influenced staff practice, or led to the implementation of additional action plans based on audit results. Supporting documentation should demonstrate your active involvement in monitoring compliance, providing feedback, and promoting sustained improvements in patient care and safety.
- c) The submitted documentation should clearly demonstrate how your auditing activities extended beyond routine job expectations and contributed to improving patient care, staff practice, compliance, safety, or operational outcomes.
- 10) I completed an Evidence-based Practice course through the Center for Nursing Science, am serving as an EBP Mentor, or am implementing an EBP project . Can I use this EBP work to earn points in this section?
- a) Yes. Work completed through formal EBP courses may be claimed in this section or in the Professional Development section, depending on the specific rubric line item. Please see question 4 in the Professional Development section above for additional options. Serving as an EBP mentor or EBP Project Lead would count in this section depending on the scope of that work.
- b) Below is guidance on EBP-related activities that align with the rubric for this section (For EBP Programming activities, see Professional Development):
- EBP Project Lead: Points may be claimed in this section when an employee leads the implementation of an evidence-based recommendation into practice. The recommendation may come from your own EBP work or from an EBP project completed by another individual or team. Clinical Ladder credit is based on your role in leading the implementation of the recommendation. Examples of implementation activities may include: stakeholder engagement, education, workflow changes, policy/procedure changes, development of tools or resources, communication strategies, audit and feedback. To claim these points, documentation must demonstrate that the project has been implemented. See approval requirement in part c below
 - EBP Mentor: Points may be claimed in this section when an employee has formally mentored other employees through the Center for Nursing Science. To qualify for Clinical Ladder points, the EBP Mentor role must be assigned through a formal Center for Nursing Science EBP program or coordinated and approved in advance by the EBP Specialist. See approval requirement below.

- c) To receive points for EBP programming, serving as an EBP Mentor, or an EBP Project Lead complete the online Microsoft Form linked here:
https://forms.cloud.microsoft/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=W2GR1xtOsEiMURAWiOGZm_AkSmhBpXJKru-48jrMU_BUMeg4NklUREIwMVVYUkZQQ01VMFJVM1ZOUC4u
- Provide the requested information and supporting documents. The EBP Specialist will review your submission and once approved, you will receive a PDF that includes your submitted information and approval. Submit this PDF, along with the supporting documents you uploaded to the form, with your CN3 Clinical Ladder application.

11) I've contributed to a policy but my name isn't listed on the reviewer's section. Can I get credit for this?

- a) Yes, you may receive credit if you submit the policy changes with tracked changes enabled. If your review determined that the policy remains appropriate and no revisions are needed, please provide supporting research or literature demonstrating that the current policy aligns with evidence-based practice. If updates are warranted, include references that support the proposed revisions and their alignment with current research.

Education Section Questions

1) What is required for the mini-exemplar?

- a) The mini-exemplar should describe care that goes above and beyond the typical patient-nurse experience and demonstrate advanced clinical judgment, coordination, advocacy, innovation, or problem-solving. For example, if you work on a stroke unit, describing routine care of a patient with a stroke would not generally meet the intent of this criterion. A more appropriate example would be detailing the preoperative planning and multidisciplinary coordination required for a highly complex patient with behavioral or special care needs that had to be addressed before arrival for surgery.
- b) The mini-exemplar must include references that are relevant to the patient situation and support the nursing interventions, clinical decision-making, and patient outcomes described in the exemplar. References should demonstrate the evidence and theoretical foundation that guided the care provided and align with the complexity of the patient scenario being presented.
- One evidence-based practice (EBP) reference
 - One nursing theory/theorist reference

2) Are there requirements to claim points for developing patient or caregiver education materials?

- a) All materials patient/caregiver facing must be professional and type written.
- b) Any patient/caregiver education materials which are created and will be dispersed broadly (example: Medication Management Guide for New Oncology Patients) need to follow the guidelines outlined in [Policy 2880 Development, Coordination, and Review of Patient Education Materials](#).

- c) Alternatively, a personalized wound care guide for an individual patient may be submitted if it addresses highly complex wound management and dressing changes. The guide must be professionally prepared, typewritten, and organized in a manner that supports safe and effective patient care. Clear photographs, illustrations, diagrams, or other visual aids should be included when appropriate to enhance understanding and demonstrate the complexity of the wound care plan. Handwritten sketches or informal drawings should be avoided.
- 3) What is the difference between being a primary preceptor and a Transition to Practice Preceptor (TPP)?
 - a) Refer to Leadership section, question # 5 regarding what is a TPP.
 - 4) What type of precepting can I claim for the primary preceptor role in the education section of the application?
 - a) A Primary Preceptor is a nurse who serves as the primary preceptor for a new nurse, an experienced nurse, or a nursing student and is responsible for coordinating and overseeing the orientation or learning experience.
 - b) Precepting an experienced nurse who is new to UC Davis Health or new to your unit may be claimed under this category.
 - c) Serving as a TPP (Transition to Practice Program) preceptor may be claimed under this category if you choose to use the activity for Education points rather than Leadership points. The same activity may not be claimed in multiple sections.
 - d) Student Nurse Precepting may be claimed when serving as the designated preceptor for a nursing student during an intensive clinical experience, typically involving 150 or more hours with one primary preceptor. This does not include students completing routine or short-term clinical rotations on the unit.
 - e) If you serve as a back-up preceptor rather than the designated primary preceptor, you may still be eligible to claim one point by submitting documentation for multiple preceptees. Documentation should include the names of the preceptees, orientation dates, length of time served as a back-up preceptor, and a description of your responsibilities during the orientation process.
 - f) Student nurse experiences associated with brief clinical rotations, observational experiences, or short-term unit placements are not considered Primary Preceptor activities for this criterion and are not eligible for points under this category.
 - 5) I help with doing audits on my unit. Can I use this activity?
 - a) Possibly. If you are a member of a committee or workgroup where conducting audits is an expected responsibility of members, you may not claim points for both committee membership and another associated rubric activity. You must choose the section that best represents your contribution and claim the activity in only one category.
 - b) Provided you have not already claimed points for committee membership related to the same auditing activity. Your submission should clearly explain how the auditing work aligns with the category for which you seek credit and describe your role, contributions, outcomes, and any resulting improvements or action plans. Your submission must also

include a letter from your manager confirming your role as an auditor and validating your contributions to the initiative.

- For example, if you are claiming points for CAUTI audits in the leadership section under 'Any other leadership role per management approval, your description of the activity needs to outline the auditing process, outcomes, and how your efforts contributed to quality improvement and demonstrated leadership.
 - Alternatively, if you are claiming points for CAUTI audits under the Education section as a "Champion a Unit Quality Improvement Activity," your submission should clearly describe the auditing process, including the frequency of audits, findings, and outcomes. The description should also explain how your efforts contributed to quality improvement, influenced staff practice, or led to the implementation of additional action plans based on audit results. Supporting documentation should demonstrate your active involvement in monitoring compliance, providing feedback, and promoting sustained improvements in patient care and safety.
- c) The submitted documentation should clearly demonstrate how your auditing activities extended beyond routine job expectations and contributed to improving patient care, staff practice, compliance, safety, or operational outcomes.

Maintenance Phase

- 1) What are the requirements to maintain a CN3 status?
 - a) The CN III criteria must be maintained and will be evaluated annually during the performance appraisal period.
 - b) A total of 8 or more points must be earned annually during the annual performance appraisal period, which begins on May 1st of the previous year and ends April 30th of the current year. A minimum of two points must be achieved in each activity with two additional points to come from the activity of the employee's choice.
 - c) The CN III must submit proof of project progression of an ongoing project annually during the performance appraisal period.
- 2) Can Managers approve the same project for multiple years?
 - a) Yes, as long as the project is progressing and has grown to include additional initiatives. Discuss with your manager to determine what is acceptable.
- 3) How long do I need to be on a committee or be an active member of an organization to earn points in the maintenance phase?
 - a) Ongoing annual performance appraisal is May 1st to April 30th. Yearly evaluation of CN3 points for membership and participation in committee work will be qualified by 6 months or more and at least 75% attendance of the meetings held.
- 4) When will I be evaluated for my CN3 role?
 - a) Ongoing CN3 evaluation will occur annually with the performance appraisal process. The look back will be the 12 months prior in alignment of the performance appraisal process which occurs annually from May 1st to April 30th.

- b) It is recommended that a CN III meet with their manager or a member of the leadership team at least twice per year (approximately every six months) to review progress toward role expectations, discuss professional development goals, and assess ongoing compliance with CN III requirements.
- 5) What happens if a CN3 doesn't have a project or enough points at the time of the performance appraisal?
- a) If the employee does not meet their required annual points or project during their annual performance appraisal, they will receive a 'does not meet' in the CN3 section of the performance appraisal. At the time of the appraisal, an Employee Development Worksheet or similar plan will be discussed and outlined with employee by the manager. The employee and manager will meet in 6 months to evaluate if deficiencies were corrected. If deficiencies are not fully corrected, then the employee will be downward reclassified to CN2 from CN3.
- 6) I took a leave of absence for 3 months; I don't know how I am going to get all my points done on time. What are my options?
- a) In the event of an extended leave of absence, the employee will be evaluated within the time the employee worked. If a leave is greater than 6 months of the performance appraisal timeframe, the annual 8-point requirement and project will be deferred to the next performance appraisal period. If the leave has been greater than 2 months but no more than 6 months, the annual point requirement will be reduced to a required 4 points across minimally two categories and the project.
- 7) Do I need to submit a full application to the careerladder@health.ucdavis.edu yearly?
- a) No, you do not need to submit any documents to the main career ladder email after you have promoted to CN3. You will need to meet with your leadership team to review your completed rubric, project approval form, and any documents to support the rubric points. The documents should be scanned into the evaluation platform/website yearly.