



UMC'S CLINICAL LADDER

Mission

The clinical ladder program at University Medical Center (UMC) was developed to promote professional enrichment and growth of our nurses. Nursing excellence is a top priority in meeting UMC's mission of excellence in patient care, education, research and community service. The clinical ladder promotes the PRIDE values in support of these goals including personal responsibility, respect for self and others, innovation through teamwork, dedication to caring and excellence in customer service. As a Magnet hospital, UMC strives to provide opportunities for development and recognition of nursing excellence. The clinical ladder program encourages nurses to take the initiative for professional growth and development in their clinical field, thereby enhancing quality of care, improving patient outcomes and promoting nursing satisfaction.

Outcomes

- Achieve quality clinical outcomes by increasing expectations for professional and clinical performance.
- Achieve outstanding patient satisfaction and customer service through the delivery of high-level clinical care.
- Be the employer of choice by enhancing nurse recruitment and retention while providing for rewarding professional growth.
- Achieve high standard of care delivery related to evidence based practice.

Clinical Ladder Parameters

- **Voluntary Participation & Progression**
Each RN may choose whether they wish to participate or advance to the next ladder level.
- **Annual Performance Review**
All RNs participate in the annual performance review and are eligible for merit increases whether they advance in the clinical ladder or not.
- **Ladder Progression**
The RN must meet the criteria for advancement to progress to the next level. Each level must be completed in sequence.
- **Maintaining Clinical Ladder Criteria**
An RN may fall back a level if they do not continue to meet the current requirements of their assigned level over the course of one year.
- **Application**
All RNs may apply to the Clinical Ladder Program. Each RN candidate must have successfully completed the initial 6-month probationary period as outlined in HR policy #202.0 in order to apply.

RNs with one (1) or more years of RN experience at UMC may apply to the Clinical Ladder at Level II.

RNs may not have any written or higher level of disciplinary action at the time of application to the Clinical Ladder (Applies to disciplines one year or less from date issued).

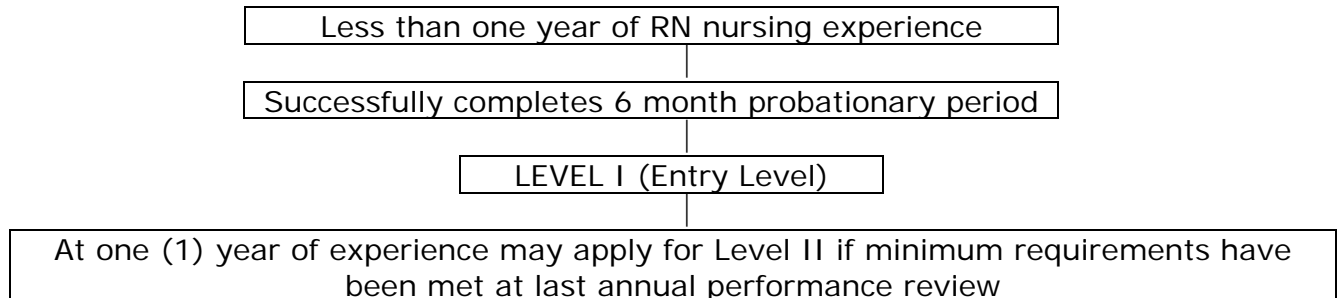
An RN may advance one level per year.

Clinical Ladder Levels

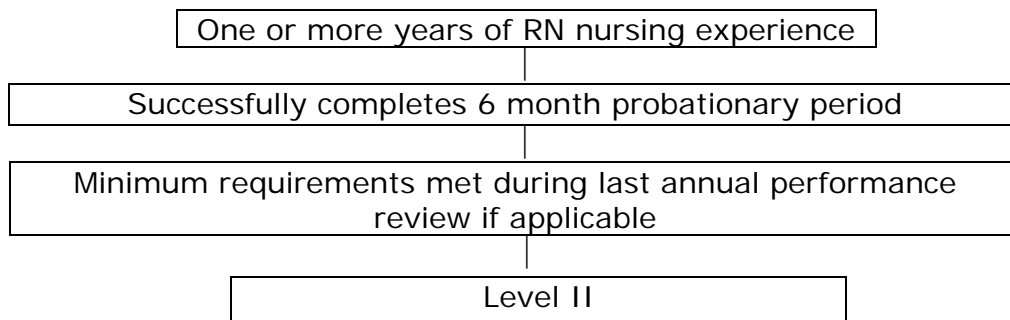
- **Level I**
The level I nurse is able to deliver safe, competent care.
- **Level II**
The level II nurse is able to identify and respond to advanced clinical issues.
- **Level III**
The level III nurse is able to act as a resource, recommend change and is viewed as a mentor.
- **Level IV**
The level IV nurse is able to demonstrate professional advancement through evidence based practice and research.

Program Parameters

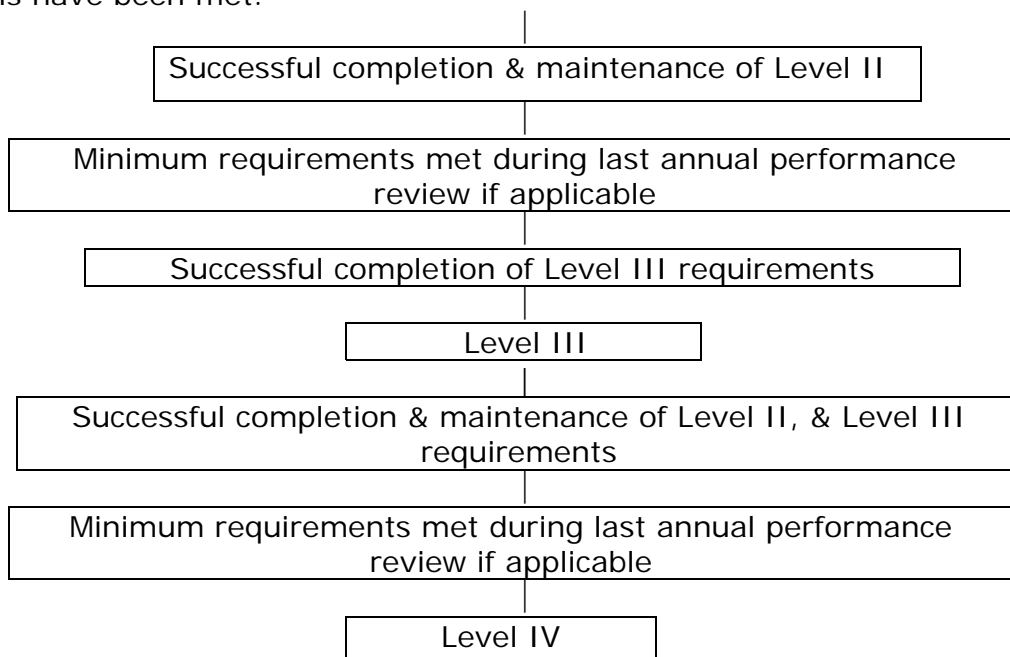
- RNs with less than one (1) year of RN nursing experience: May apply to Level I (New Graduate or Entry Level) on the Clinical Ladder. After one (1) or more years of experience, the RN may apply for Level II, if minimum requirements for Level I have been met during the last annual performance review.



- RNs with one (1) or more years of RN nursing experience may apply to Level II on the Clinical Ladder.



- Advancement to Level III or IV may be accomplished once requirements for previous levels have been met.



Application and Selection Overview

- To apply for a promotion in the clinical ladder, an application with supporting documentation must be submitted which outlines clinical expertise as defined in the core competencies.
- The application process is ongoing throughout the year.
- Applicants will be notified of their outcome within four (4) weeks of application submission.

Evaluation Process

Patient Care Manager and Clinical Leader Evaluation

The Patient Care Manager (PCM) and a shift Clinical Leader (CL) will share their professional impression of the nurse's practice. The evaluation will document examples of behaviors demonstrated by the applicant reflecting quality of practice. It should include comments regarding professional growth and development within the specified time frame per level. SPECIFIC examples of practice are very useful in the evaluation of the applicant's practice and should reflect the Clinical Level for which the nurse is applying.

Tips on facilitating PCM & CL evaluation:

- Timeliness is key; allowing the PCM & CL maximum time to complete the evaluation is extremely helpful.
- Meetings with the PCM & CL are encouraged while completing the application process. This will allow ongoing review of your progress and provide opportunities to discuss clinical situations that you may have experienced. Schedule a time with your PCM &/or your CL to review and discuss your portfolio.

Peer Feedback

Peer feedback is an opportunity for the applicant's peers to support advancement by way of an objective, specific form for evaluation of the applicant's PRIDE values. Two peer feedback evaluations are required for submission by the applicant. The applicant selects one peer reviewer and the CL selects the other.

Tips on facilitating Peer Feedback evaluation:

- Applicants should select a peer who can objectively and clearly speak to clinical experiences for the specified time frame per level. Specific anecdotal examples are more helpful than general statements.
- Timeliness is most important in peer selections. There may be multiple applicants seeking peer support at each application cycle.

Self-Evaluation

The Self-Evaluation section of the application process provides the applicant an opportunity to speak directly about behaviors by citing specific examples of how each behavior has been demonstrated in clinical practice.

Tips on facilitating Self-Evaluation:

- Begin collecting anecdotes early in the Clinical Ladder process.
- The documentation will be evaluated based on content vs. length.
- All areas must be addressed including specific examples.
Areas not presently demonstrated must include a statement for future development plans.

Criteria to Promote

- The minimum mandatory requirements for professional development including year(s) experience, Contact Hours and level requirements must be met.
- Application and supporting documentation must be complete and organized when submitted.

Maintaining Level Requirements

- Validation of Clinical Ladder levels will occur on an annual basis on the same cycle as the annual performance evaluation.
- Four (4) weeks prior to the annual performance evaluation, the employee will complete a self-evaluation including supporting documentation of mandatory level requirements.
- Four (4) weeks prior to the annual performance evaluation the employee will submit two (2) Peer Feedback evaluations. The employee selects one peer reviewer and the CL selects the other.
- During the annual performance evaluation the PCM &/or CL validates the employees self and peer feedback evaluations. The manager and employee will sign the form.
- If an employee does not meet the criteria to sustain the Clinical Ladder level at the annual performance evaluation the following should occur:
 - * A 90-day action plan will be developed.
 - * At 90 days, the employee and PCM &/or CL will review the action plan and supporting documentation.
- If an employee fails to meet the requirements at the level, the employee will be moved back one level on the Clinical Ladder.
 - * The appeal process is the same as with a standard annual evaluation.