



Self-Study Guide

This guide contains information to help you prepare for our Magnet 4th Designation site visit. Being prepared will make this site visit successful and enjoyable!

Vanderbilt was initially designated a Magnet organization in 2006. At that time, it was officially recognized that our organization met the stringent criteria to deserve that designation. During this 4th Designation visit, the appraisers will be looking to observe how the practice of professional nursing at Vanderbilt has grown since that first designation.

Etiquette Information for the Visit:

- The appraisers are very familiar with Vanderbilt – they have read the entire narrative document that was submitted as evidence of our meeting Magnet criteria. *This visit is your chance to **validate, verify, and amplify** what is covered in the document.*
- Keep the conversation on a professional level and ask questions if you don't understand something.
- Unlike accreditation surveys when you tend to “answer only what is asked,” this is your chance to promote what you are proud of in your work at Vanderbilt.
- Be truthful; don't try to “snow” an appraiser.
- Reply to appraisers' questions directly, concisely, and with pride and enthusiasm.
- Never “bend a rule” for an appraiser.

Tips for a Successful Interview:

1. Practice:
 - Ask each other questions like those included in the sample questions on our Magnet website www.vumc.org/nursing-magnet.
 - Convey confidence and a collaborative focus.
2. If you don't know the answer to a question:
 - Ask the appraiser to repeat or clarify the question, this gives you more time to formulate a response.
 - Reply "I've never had to deal with that situation, but if I did I would . . ." then answer appropriately with either calling a staffing leader, supervisor, or administrator or finding the answer in a resource (online policy/ procedure).
 - Help each other out, if one of your peers is stumbling, jump in and help answer the question.
3. Staff should take turns responding to the questions. Include as many staff as possible and include disciplines other than nursing.
4. Channel concerns to appropriate people to address issues. The Magnet visit is not a time to air grievances.
5. *Magnet appraisers don't expect us to be a perfect organization.* If you are asked a question about something that you think we don't do as well as we could, accentuate the positive about where we are – and add comments about what we continue to work on. A commitment to continual improvement is important. Frame comments in the most positive way possible.
6. Staff should avoid looking to the manager for approval to answers or for validation of the responses given. Be confident.
7. Post any needed props around the conference room where the interview will take place. It is okay to refer to a chart on the bulletin board, particularly those items about quality and the great things your area is doing.

Environment/Safety:

1. While the Magnet appraisers are not here to evaluate our physical environment, impressions about our work environment are important.
2. Call Environmental Services or designated service for:
 - Dirty hallway that needs cleaning
 - Full sharps containers
 - Unattended cleaning cart
 - Unattended oxygen tanks must be stored in a holder
 - Any equipment in front of electrical panels; gas control valves.
3. If you see food/ drink in work areas where it doesn't belong, remove it.

When Appraisers Visit Your Work Area:

"The site visit is like an open house. You welcome attendees into your home and show off points of interest with pride."

1. You will know the schedule ahead of time for when the appraisers will be in your work area. We will be hosting 3 or 4 appraisers for a 2 to 4 day visit. Once they have come to your area, it is not likely they will return to ask more questions. Staff Nurse Magnet Champions will be the Escorts for the appraisers. This group will be receiving special training to prepare them for this role.
2. To prepare for the visit:
 - Magnet Champions and unit leaders should have a unit-based plan that includes:
 - A designated location to be able to sit and talk with appraiser if that is needed (make sure the space is tidy and in good repair).
 - Identify staff to be available to talk with the appraiser– should include nurses, care partners, and any other staff (other disciplines) who are active in the care of patients on your unit...this would be a good place to introduce a carefully selected physician who can speak to the work of nurses in the area.
3. Be prepared. When the appraisers arrive (schedules will be closely maintained and you will be notified of any changes ahead of time) – you should be waiting and ready to greet them. This is a great time to share your enthusiasm and pride.

Preparation:

- Ask yourself why you think your entity is a Magnet organization. Practice your answer with colleagues, family, and friends.
- Think about the main points you want the appraisers to know about your entity.
- Develop a list of questions you DON'T want them to ask. Think of your answers and you'll be surprised how much this will relieve any anxiety.
- Develop a list of questions you DO want them to ask. Think about your answers and don't hold back your enthusiasm and sincerity.
- Role play several times. Find a colleague to discuss these issues with and role play. You'll be surprised how much this will help.

During the visit:

- Be prepared. Take time in advance of your shift to go over all the above.
- Don't be scared. This is a wonderful opportunity to tell the appraisers about nursing.
- Don't guess at answers. Say you'll find out and make sure you follow up in a timely manner.
- Be truthful and sincere in all your interactions. This is a good rule to follow in any situation anyway.
- Be punctual (if not 15 minutes early to each scheduled activity).
- Be succinct in your conversation. Take a few minutes to make your point and likely the appraiser will use that as a springboard to continue the conversation.

Appearance:

- Make eye contact/be friendly and confident
- Smile
- Don't chew gum
- Watch your posture
- Watch your body language to make sure you are welcoming and approachable.
- If you wear a lab coat, jacket, etc. make sure it looks professional and polished. Your appearance says a lot about you...disorganized, sloppy, careless vs. professional, organized, detail oriented.
- Turn your cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices to vibrate.

Review the Resources:

- [Magnet Website](#) • [Magnet Website Toolkit](#) • [Practice Questions Link](#) •
- [VUMC Shared Governance Endorsed Evidence-Based Practice \(EBP\) Model](#) •