GUIDE TO CONTINUING COMPETENCY PROGRAM

Knowledge,
Professional Competence,
Self-Directed Lifelong Learning
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Introduction

Purpose of this Guide

This guide is intended to support Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta understand and implement the Continuing Competency Program (CCP).

Purpose of CCP

This program is intended to assist Licensed Practical Nurses to reflect on practice, assess individual competence, identify gaps and learning needs and plan learning. CCP can be used as a guide to track learning for future review. Understanding CCP is necessary to meet the requirements of professional nursing practice and annual registration.

Program Overview

CCP is self-directed and focuses on individual learning goals throughout one’s nursing career. Through annual participation in the Program, Licensed Practical Nurses maintain knowledge and enhance skills and attitudes through professional development. Although everyone participates in the same program, nurses will develop an individual set of competencies, depending on their role and responsibilities in practice.

Use this guide as a reference and as part of your continuing competence records. Learning records should be maintained at a minimum of four years. These documents can be used to build an ongoing “Professional Portfolio”.

Licensed Practical Nurses are lifelong learners who continually reflect and improve their nursing practice through education and alignment with best practices. Meeting the CLPNA Continuing Competency Program requirements each year provides an opportunity to continue self-directed learning.
The Continuing Competency Program

What is continuing competence? Continuing competence is the ability to continually enhance and expand your knowledge, observable behaviors and performance of skills to practice safe, competent and ethical care.$^1$

In our evolving health care system, nurses must continually enhance and expand their knowledge and abilities to maintain a level of competence equal to their role, responsibilities and practice setting.$^2$ As a Licensed Practical Nurse, you have a professional and legal responsibility to ensure that your practice and conduct meet current health care demands.

The Continuing Competency Program (CCP) offers you an opportunity to engage in activities that contribute to the development of nursing competencies that achieve optimum personal and professional growth throughout your career. Annual assessment of competence will help you to determine personal strengths and areas you would like to strengthen through self-reflection, lifelong learning and the integration of learning into practice. CCP provides a formal means to address learning needs, set a realistic timeline, participate in learning at every opportunity, and successfully complete a learning plan each year.

CCP is a mandated by the Health Professions Act (HPA), Section 50 (1) (2a), 2000.$^3,4$ Under HPA, every regulatory college supports their members in meeting their learning needs and professional obligations. Your commitment to both your profession and CCP reflects your pledge to lifelong learning.
The 5-Step Model of CCP

The CCP is based on a 5-step model. To clearly understand the complete program, it is beneficial for nurses to follow each step every year prior to registration renewal. Each step plays a key purpose in the CCP and for ease of use the steps align with the nursing process.

Continuing Competency Program: The 5-Step Model

Step One, at the base of the flight of stairs, is annual reflection and self-assessment. Annual assessment is an active process that critically examines knowledge, skills and competence to recognize areas of strength and identify learning needs. Reflection provides nurses with an opportunity to review the results of their assessment and to consider new/existing influences/emerging trends that impact or may impact their practice. Although reflection is an individual assessment, peer review can assist in providing effective and useful feedback. It can be very beneficial to discuss your reflection or self-assessment with a colleague.

Reflection encourages you to identify your knowledge of a subject including life experiences you may have encountered to determine learning needs. Learning occurs when a connection is made between new information to existing knowledge and experiences. According to Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985):

“Reflection is an important human activity in which people recapture their experience, think about it, mull it over and evaluate it. It is this working with experience that is important to learning.”
Reflection helps to:

- Focus on new experiences
- Achieve greater understanding of own nursing practice
- Think about the knowledge and skills achieved
- Make sense of what we learned, why we learned it, and how learning took place
- Identify strengths and areas for further development
- Create a learning plan for future practice
- Take action

**Step Two** is planning and setting of learning goals. An acceptable learning plan is an outline of how learning needs can be met within the current registration year. This plan should be based on the results of either an annual self-assessment or through reflection of identified areas for further development. It should include:

a) At least two specific learning objectives, chosen from the Competency Profile, to provide overall direction for learning

b) Resources and/or strategies for meeting the objectives such as; in-services, workshops, books, internet research, conferences, courses, etc.

c) Timeline for completing the learning plan

d) Success indicators outlining how you will know you have met the learning objectives and how this learning has changed your practice. Keep in mind you may only partially complete a learning objective during the year. Learning is ongoing in many areas of practice.

A Plan which is focused and specific, is more likely to be followed and met. A simple rule to remember in development of a Learning Plan is to be SMART:

S Specific - to your needs and applicable to your practice
M Measurable - real objectives that can be achieved through planned learning
A Attainable - learning that can be accessed by you where you are
R Realistic - real for you to fit your learning needs, your life and work environment
T Timely - achievable within the next few months or within the current registration year
Table 1: Resources and Strategies for Learning Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>FORMAL:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Professional Committees (for example)</strong></th>
</tr>
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| **Academic (for example)** | ▪ CLPNA Committees  
▪ CLPNA Board Member  
▪ Education Standards Advisory Committee  
▪ Toastmasters Club |
| ▪ University/College program/diploma  
▪ Distance continuing education/course  
▪ Teaching or lecturing formal courses | |
| **Specialty Certification (for example)** | **Preceptorship and/or Mentorship (for example)** |
| ▪ Advanced Foot Care  
▪ Immunization  
▪ Perioperative  
▪ Orthopedic  
▪ Dialysis | ▪ Nursing student  
▪ New employee |
| **Certificate or Diploma Courses (for example)** | **INFORMAL/SELF-DIRECTED:** |
| ▪ Wound care  
▪ Lactation Consultant  
▪ Gerontology  
▪ Mental Health Disorders  
▪ Leadership  
▪ Pediatric Nursing  
▪ Trauma Nursing  
▪ Home Care Nursing | |
| **Conferences/Teleconferences/Seminar/Workshop (for example)** | **Independent Learning (for example)** |
| ▪ Video/Podcast/Webinar/Telehealth session  
▪ CLPNA Annual General Meeting & Conference  
▪ Primary Care Conference  
▪ MacEwan University Nursing Symposium  
▪ Addictions & Mental Health | ▪ Lectures  
▪ Internet research (patient teaching materials, medications, diseases)  
▪ Reading relevant journal articles/newsletters/books (communication skills, critical thinking, hypoglycemia, cancer treatments, cardiac surgery) |
| **Employer/Unit Education and Activities (for example)** | **Involvement in Research** |
| ▪ Fire and Safety  
▪ Nursing/Physician rounds  
▪ Infection Prevention & Control  
▪ Wound care  
▪ Learning modules (Infusion therapy, medication administration, health assessment, pressure ulcers, documentation)  
▪ In-services (new equipment/procedure, ECG training, lab values, clinical skills day) | ▪ Collaborate with research team to plan, conduct and evaluate nursing research |
**Step Three** is to implement educational goals from your learning plan throughout the licensure year. Through a commitment to lifelong learning, nurses act on identified learning needs by completing chosen learning objectives. These may include mandatory annual employer education or self-directed continuing education that enhances nursing practice.

Each year, as part of CCP, LPNs must complete (or partially complete) a minimum of two objectives selected from the Competency Profile. If you cannot complete your chosen objectives, it is acceptable to rethink, revise and implement the revised learning plan.

**Step Four**, consists of the ongoing evaluation of continuing competence in nursing practice. While competence may be easy to understand, it can be hard to define in measurable terms. The ultimate goal is to achieve a point of acceptable performance. It is vital to understand if there has been a transfer of knowledge or change in nursing behavior with completion of the learning objective(s).

Learning activities can influence learning outcomes. When one learning activity is used, such as a workshop or conference, the learning outcome can be met immediately. Similarly, participating in small, frequent learning activities over the current year allow evaluation of learning along the way. Using a learning plan to map learning objectives over the practice year allows the nurse to easily complete activities in a timely manner, recognize the results, and provide an evaluation when a learning outcome is met or accomplished.

Evaluation is an activity to measure change and should define the areas of practice that have advanced, remained static or require improvement.

As part of your evaluative practice, review the following questions to summarize learning:

1. What learning occurred?
2. How did learning change thinking and behavior in practice?
3. How will this learning improve ones nursing practice?
4. Give examples of how learning influenced, impacted, and enhanced practice
5. Will learning affect future practice, explain?

Ongoing evaluation is the key to successful record keeping.

Finally, **Step Five** is record keeping; the ability to track and document learning and any changes in your nursing practice. Record this information using the online Record of Learning, a word document on a personal computer, or the Record of Professional Activities form. It is recommended to keep records in an organized and detailed manner.

Steps 4 and 5 are performed annually by every professional nurse as part of CCP. These steps will prepare you for the Continuing Competency Program Validation (CCPV). Validation is an annual event of providing proof of your participation in CCP, and a formal means of evaluating the learning you have completed in the previous two years. A random group of LPNs is selected each year for CCPV. For ease of participation in CCPV, tracking your learning makes it easy to report to CLPNA.
Tools for CCP

There are several new and updated documents to support Licensed Practical Nurses in understanding and applying the principles of CCP:

- **Reflection Tool** – A question based tool to guide self-reflection.
- **Self-Assessment Tool** – A systematic template to self-assess competence using the Standards of Practice.
- **Learning Plan** – An outline of how you will manage identified learning needs you have chosen through reflection and/or self-assessment.
- **Tracking Tool** – Tools to evaluate what you learned and how you completed this learning.

Completion of these tools is optional but highly recommended to fully embrace your CCP. They will help guide you through the 5-Step Model of CCP and create your mandatory learning plan required for registration with CLPNA.

CCP is continuous and begins as soon as you obtain registration with CLPNA. It is an ongoing process with learning completed throughout the year and goals revisited and assessed annually at registration renewal. The process is confirmed when you participate in CCPV.

If you have questions, please contact the CLPNA at 1-800-661-5877 or visit our website at [www.clpna.com](http://www.clpna.com).
Glossary

The CCP supports the following definitions:

**Competence** – the ability of the licensed practical nurse to integrate and apply the knowledge, skills, behaviors, attitudes and judgment required in nursing practice in their role and responsibility, and includes both entry level and continuing competence.

**Competencies** – the specific knowledge, skills and clinical judgment required for a licensed practical nurse to be considered competent to practice safely and ethically in his/her role and practice setting.

**Continuing Competence** – the ability of the licensed practical nurse to continually enhance and expand their knowledge, observable behaviors and performance of skills to practice safe, competent and ethical care.

**Continuing Competency Program (CCP)** – offers the licensed practical nurse the opportunity to engage in activities that contribute to the development of nursing competencies and achieve optimum personal and professional growth throughout their careers. Their commitment to both their profession and the Continuing Competency Program reflects their pledge to lifelong learning.

**Continuing Competency Program Validation (CCPV)** – is a means to evaluate the learning the licensed practical nurse has completed in the previous two years by measuring its impact on their professional practice. Through self-assessment and reflection, they measure how learning was transferred into on-the-job behavior. It is also a process of providing proof of their participation in learning to the College.

**Health Professions Act** – Legislation that governs regulated professionals and provides the authority and powers of the regulatory organization.

**Learning Activities** – an action that the learner performs with intention to enhance or improve knowledge, skills and competence.

**Learning Goals** – is a term interchangeable with learning outcomes; is the core of assessment for learning and identified needs.

**Reflection** – identifying knowledge of a subject in addition to life experiences encountered, recapturing, thinking about and evaluating experiences.

**Resources & Strategies** – the how and what used to accomplish a learning goal.

**Self-Assessment** – to critically examine knowledge, skills and competence to recognize areas of strength and identify learning needs.
References


Additional References

