



COLLEGE OF  
LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSES  
OF ALBERTA

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# ESAC Standards for Approval

Diploma Level Practical Nurse Programs Alberta

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Approved: May 2019





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**NB: These standards apply to Diploma Level Practical Nurse Education which is herein known as “the Practical Nurse Education Program” or alternatively “the Program”.**



## **STANDARD 1: MISSION/GOALS, ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE**

The administration of the educational institution has a statement of mission and goals for the Practical Nurse (PN) Education Program, demonstrates ongoing planning, and has explicit policies that describe the organizational structure and governance processes.

### **1.1 Strategic/Organization Planning and Ongoing Quality Improvement**

The PN Education Program participates in strategic/organization planning and ongoing quality improvement processes to address immediate and long-term program goals/objectives that ensure there are adequate human, operating and capital resources to support the development and continued operation of the program.

### **1.2 Clinical Placement Agreements**

Formal clinical placement agreements are in place identifying the responsibilities of the educational institution and the clinical placement sites. Written agreements define the relationships between the PN Education Program and clinical placement sites, specifying that the students are to remain under the responsibility and direction of the program's appointed faculty members. At a minimal, clinical placement/partnership agreements are to include:

- 1.2.1 Mutual responsibility of the clinical placement site and education faculty members for creating and maintaining an appropriate environment conducive to learning and resolution of any conflicts.
- 1.2.2 Provisions for student and faculty access to resources to meet education requirements.
- 1.2.3 Recognition of the authority of the faculty members to oversee the academic expectations for the clinical placement program of studies.

### **1.3 Partnership Agreements**

Formal partnership agreements are in place identifying the responsibilities of both educational institutions when they form brokering partnerships or other types of partnerships.

- 1.3.1 Practical Nurse Education Program contracts and authority matrixes are in place and current for all brokering arrangements and partnerships.
- 1.3.2 There is a documented process for conflict resolution between parties to any brokering or partnership agreement.

### **1.4 Terms of References and Policy/Procedure Statements**

The PN Education Program disseminates terms of reference or policy/procedure statement documents that define the roles and responsibilities of the administration, faculty, students, and *institutional* committees in the governance process.

### **1.5 (C) Maintenance of Program Standards Requirements**

**The education institution ensures that the PN Education Program meets and maintains the standards requirements of the ESAC for Diploma Level PN Education Programs.**



## **STANDARD 2: NURSING LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION**

The educational institution has an appropriate number of nursing faculty members in leadership/senior management positions with the knowledge, skills, and administrative support needed to achieve the goals and maintain the integrity of the PN Education Program.

### **2.1 Leader Qualifications**

The person with the direct responsibility (the Lead) for the PN Education Program meets the education qualifications (Master's Degree), licensure, and years of related experience to provide effective leadership and to meet the academic and administrative demands of the education program.

### **2.2 Access and Authority of the Practical Nurse Education Program Leadership**

The organization and committee structure of the educational institution defines the lines of authority and communication between the program and the educational institution. The leadership of the PN Education Program has sufficient access to the institutional authority to achieve the mission and mandate of the education program.

### **2.3 Sufficient Senior Administrators**

The PN Education Program consists of sufficient numbers of qualified senior administrators at the different organization unit levels and protected time required to meet the mission/goals of the education program.

### **2.4 Efficient Faculty Integration**

The faculty members appointed to the PN Education Program are included in the operations and maintenance of the program quality and efficiency through administrative responsibilities such as committees, shared governance and decision-making processes at the *program* level.

## **STANDARD 3: SUFFICIENT INFRASTRUCTURE AND EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES**

The educational institution has sufficient fiscal, human, infrastructure, and educational resources available and accessible to meet the PN Education Program needs.

### **3.1 Viability of Financial Resources**

The immediate and long-term financial resources result from secure and ongoing sources of funding that are sufficient to maintain consistent institutional and PN Education Program's goals/objectives.

### **3.2 Leader Authority/Resources for Practical Nurse Education Program Management**

The Lead of the PN Education Program has appropriate finances and budgetary authority/resources to manage and evaluate the educational aspects of the program (e.g., curriculum, teaching and assessment).

### **3.3 Sufficient Facilities, IT Services and Equipment Infrastructure**

The PN Education Program has the use and access to sufficient administrative and education facilities, Information Technology services, and equipment infrastructure to achieve the program's educational goals/objectives.



### 3.4 Clinical Placement and Instructional Resources

The PN Education Program has the use and access to appropriate instructional resources and type of clients during the students' clinical placement in designated ambulatory and inpatient settings.

### 3.5 Library Staff and Services

The PN Education Program has appropriate access to library materials and electronic resources that are comprehensive and current to meet the program's educational requirements. Library staff and services meet the data systems expectations of the students and faculty members.

### 3.6 Study/Lounge Areas and Safe/Secure Environments

The PN Education Program ensures that students have adequate study and lounge areas and safe/secure environments both on campus and during clinical placements.

### 3.7 (C) Required Notice of Planned Change to the PN Education Program

**The PN Education Program notifies ESAC of significant changes to fiscal, human, infrastructure, and educational resources that alter the program. The program will submit to ESAC a completed notice of change form prior to implementation.**

## **STANDARD 4: CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES AND COMPETENCY PROFILE**

The PN Education Program designs curriculum objectives and content that outlines the knowledge, skills, behaviors, attitudes and judgments required by students to achieve upon graduation, and meets the expectations to practice in accordance with the Licensed Practical Nurse Regulation<sup>1</sup>, the Standards of Practice<sup>2</sup> and the Competency Profile<sup>3</sup> as defined by the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta (CLPNA).

### 4.1 Intent of Education Program's Curriculum

The PN Education Program includes a comprehensive curriculum that:

- 4.1.1. Reflects the vision, mission statement and philosophy of the educational institution.
- 4.1.2 Has a stated purpose and goals and objectives or learning outcomes.
- 4.1.3 Has a clearly stated framework to organize and guide the curriculum.

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<sup>1</sup> Government of Alberta. (2011). *Licensed Practical Nurses Profession Regulation, 81/2003*. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Queen's Printer.

<sup>2</sup> Canadian Council for Practical Nurse Regulators. (2013). *Standards of Practice for Licensed Practical Nurses in Canada*. Author. Retrieved from [http://www.clpna.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/doc\\_CCPNR\\_CLPNA\\_Standards\\_of\\_Practice.pdf](http://www.clpna.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/doc_CCPNR_CLPNA_Standards_of_Practice.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta and Alberta Health and Wellness. (2015). *Competency Profile for Licensed Practical Nurses, (3rd ed.)*. Edmonton, AB: Author.



## 4.2 Curriculum Design of the Education Program

- 4.2.1 Is structured in such a way as to allow for progression and consolidation of knowledge, skills, behavior, attitudes and judgments.
- 4.2.2 Demonstrates that key concepts and processes are threaded throughout the program. These include but are not limited to the following: nursing process; professionalism; problem solving; critical thinking; critical inquiry; communication; diversity; inter-professional collaboration; eHealth; safety and leadership.
- 4.2.3 Has a program length that is pedagogically and androgogically congruent with the achievement of identified program outcomes and consistent with the policies of the educational institution, provincial standards, and evidence informed practice.
- 4.2.4 Nursing courses comprise at least 60% of the curriculum.
- 4.2.5 Course hours are identified as theory, laboratory, simulated practice and clinical practice.
- 4.2.6 Theory courses include a minimum of two 3 credit liberal education courses from the arts, sciences and/or humanities that transfer to an accredited University.

## 4.3 Curriculum Implementation

- 4.3.1 Course learning outcomes are clearly stated and measurable.
- 4.3.2 Course content reflects current trends in health care delivery, nursing practice and nursing education and prepares practitioners to adapt to future demands of the health care system.
- 4.3.3 The PN Education Program has a process to archive course outlines/syllabi for each academic year.

## 4.4 Program Outcomes and Diploma Level Competencies

- 4.4.1 (C) The curriculum is structured to provide the required learning opportunities for students to meet the designated program outcomes and CLPNA Diploma level competencies.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Indicators marked with a (C) are Critical Elements of program performance.





## 4.5 Clinical Placements

4.5.1 The curriculum plan includes instructor-led and preceptored clinical experiences.

4.5.2 Clinical placements provide a broad range of learning activities in a variety of health care settings, working with clients who span the life cycle, have a variety of health problems and varying levels of illness.

4.5.3 The maximum instructor student ratio in the clinical area is 1:8 for instructor led and 1:16 faculty advisor/liason in a preceptored practicum.

**4.5.4 (C) There is a method of tracking and scheduling clinical hours and placements for each student to ensure that all students have clinical practice with clients across the lifespan, in a variety of clinical settings, and meet the Diploma Level Competencies<sup>5</sup>.**

4.5.5 A concentrated clinical practice experience of not less than 225 hours occurs at the end of the program to allow for consolidation of theory and transition to the graduate PN role.

4.5.6 There is evidence that clinical sites are evaluated on a regular basis to ensure they enable students to meet program outcomes.

4.5.7 The educational institution has documented criteria for preceptor selection.

4.5.8 Orientation, material and resources are available for the preceptors that include, but are not limited to, specific descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of the student, preceptor and faculty advisor/liason.

## 4.6 Social/Cultural Awareness

The PN Education Program curriculum provides opportunities for students to learn about common social and diverse cultural health related issues, and recognize and address intercultural competency in themselves, others, and in the delivery of health care.

## 4.7 Healthcare Ethics

The PN Education Program curriculum provides opportunities for instruction in healthcare ethics and societal values before and while engaging in the care of patients and communicating with patients' families and other healthcare team members.

## 4.8 eHealth

The PN Program provides instruction and access to eHealth resources and technology appropriate to current practice in health care delivery.

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<sup>5</sup> Indicators marked with a (C) are Critical Elements of program performance.



#### **4.9 Effective Communication and Collaborative Care**

The PN Education Program curriculum provides opportunities for instruction in developing effective communication and collaboration skills as they relate to interactions with patients, their families, colleagues, and other healthcare providers.

#### **4.10 Self-Directed/Continuous Learning**

The PN Education Program curriculum provides opportunities for instruction that promotes self-directed/continuous learning experiences and scheduled time for independent study to promote the development of ongoing/continuous learning.

### **STANDARD 5: TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**

The educational institution ensures that its PN Education Program provides a respectful, professional, and engaging academic and learning environment that promotes students' attainment of competencies through recognized and effective instructional methods and teaching strategies.

#### **5.1 Focused Instruction in Healthcare**

The faculty members of the PN Education Program ensure that instruction provided includes hands-on or simulated exercises whereby students address questions about patient care options. Instructional strategies support learning environments in the basic scientific and ethical principles of clinical, best-practice and patient safety in healthcare practice.

5.1.1 Students demonstrate their ability to provide safe nursing care through simulated learning experiences prior to clinical practice.

#### **5.2 Clinical Placement Supervision/Education**

The PN Education Program ensures that supervision, instruction, and learning experiences of students during the clinical placements are the responsibility of the designated instructor(s) and includes consideration of formative and summative feedback provided by preceptors or other identified healthcare members from the placement site.

#### **5.3 Clinical Assignments, Supervision and Client Safety**

The PN Education Program faculty members ensure that students in clinical placement learning situations that involve patient care are appropriately supervised at all times to ensure patient and student safety, and that the level of responsibility given to the students reflects their level of education, skills and scope of practice.

#### **5.4 Variety of Student Achievement Measures Used**

The PN Education Program ensures that there is a variety of measures used consistently for the assessment of students' achievement (beyond written examinations) that include students' acquisition of the knowledge, clinical skills, behaviors, and attitudes as specified in the PN Education Program curriculum.

5.4.1 Teaching, learning and assessment strategies contribute to active learner participation in the learning process, development of critical thinking, critical inquiry, problem solving skills and enhancement of student self-assessment.



## 5.5 Formative Feedback/Summative Assessment

The PN Education Program has in place a system of fair and timely formative and summative assessment of student achievement in each course and clinical placement. The PN Education Program ensures that all students are assessed and provided with formative and summative evaluations during their program to allow for sufficient time for remediation.

## 5.6 Learning Environment/Professionalism

The PN Education Program ensures that the learning environment is conducive to the ongoing development of appropriate and respectful professionalism for all students, faculty, and staff on campus and at clinical placement sites. The faculty members of the PN Education Program are responsible for identifying and reporting violations of professional behaviors or unsafe learning environments to the PN program chair or lead.

## 5.7 Student Expectations

The institution will outline student expectations and provide each student with access to the code of professional conduct for students, faculty-student relationships, and approved policies that address violations of the code of conduct (e.g., discrimination, incidents of harassment/abuse). The PN Education Program clearly articulates the student code of conduct expected in professional nursing practice.

## 5.8 Diversity Programs and Policies

The PN Education Program has in place policies, practices, and ongoing recruitment and retention activities that support diversity for students, faculty members, senior administrators, administrative staff, and other members engaged in the PN Education Program.

## **STANDARD 6: PROGRAM AND CURRICULUM REVIEW, EVALUATION, AND IMPROVEMENT**

The PN Education Program participates in regularly scheduled curriculum reviews and course/program evaluation activities to verify currency and quality of the program. This provides opportunity for students to successfully achieve curriculum objectives and competency profile requirements for practice.

### 6.1 Education Program/Curriculum Management

The PN Education Program adopts a methodology to review and evaluate the PN Education Program in order to achieve improvement of the organization and quality of the curriculum, and program delivery.

6.1.1 Formative and summative evaluation methods are used to evaluate the program and evidence is presented to show that the outcomes of evaluations are used in program maintenance and updating.

6.1.2 (C) Students are partners in the teaching and learning process and provide formal feedback on the quality of the teaching and learning experience.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Indicators marked with a (C) are Critical Elements of program performance.



## 6.2 Curriculum Design, Development, Implementation

The faculty members are responsible for the design, development, and implementation of all curriculum components of the PN Education Program including the learning objectives for each course/clinical placement requirement, use of appropriate instructional and assessment methods to demonstrate achievement of curricular objectives, and ongoing review and evaluation of curriculum delivery.

## 6.3 Evaluations to Enhance Practical Nurse Education Program

The PN Education Program uses a regularly scheduled and formal evaluation method to collect data on the quality of the PN Education Program and a process to use this information to enhance the program and balance student workload.

### ***STANDARD 7: STUDENT SELECTION AND ADMISSION PROCESS***

The educational institution implements and publishes the admission requirements for applicants to the PN Education Program and incorporates effective policies and procedures for the selection and admission process.

#### 7.1 Authority of Admission Committee

The lead of the PN Education Program sets the admission requirements as part of the curriculum planning process. The procedures for admission to the PN Education Program are governed by specified terms of references or other program or institutional policies.

#### 7.2 Pre-Education Program Requirements

The PN Education Program outlines its requirements for admission and has methods in place to assess prior learning of applicants both academic and experiential. These processes are clearly articulated and communicated to students in the application process.

- 7.2.1 Student policies and procedures are clearly stated and published in the educational institution published documents, website and/or the Student Handbook.

#### 7.3 Student Recruitment, Admission and Selection

- 7.3.1 The PN Education Program information, website, and other content materials used in advertising and recruiting represent an accurate representation of the mission and objectives of the PN Education Program, and describe all required courses offered by the program.
- 7.3.2 Admission requirements (e.g., GPA, English language proficiency) and selection process are clearly stated and communicated to applicants.
- 7.3.3 The PN Education Program has established policies and procedures for student selection. The PN Education Program makes this information available to stakeholders including the criteria used to set these standards, policies, and procedures.
- 7.3.4 Policies and procedures are in place to ensure students entering clinical experience meet all agency requirements for immunizations, Police Information Check (and vulnerable sector checks), safety (infectious and environmental hazards) policies, and other clinical pre-requisites (Fitness to Practice). The PN Program makes the policies and procedures available to applicants and other stakeholders.



7.3.5 Applicants have access to resources including but not limited to career counseling, learning resources and financial aid.

## **STANDARD 8: STUDENT PROGRESS RECORDS AND ACADEMIC SUPPORT**

The educational institution provides appropriate and ongoing records of student progress throughout their education program and provides all students with access to academic support services to assist in achieving the PN Education Program objectives and advice about career options.

### **8.1 Advancing Student Progress**

Policies and procedures pertaining to student evaluation, academic progression and graduation are in place and communicated to staff and students. These mechanisms provide evidence of student progress toward meeting program outcomes. The PN Education Program ensures a formal, timely and fair process for an appeal with procedures to allow the student an opportunity to defend an adverse decision related to dismissal or graduation.

**8.1.1 (C) Records regarding student enrollment, attrition, returning students and program completion are recorded and accessible <sup>7</sup>**

### **8.2 Students' Assignment/Placement**

The PN Education Program facilitates the placement of students to course sections and clinical placements. Efforts are made to have student input into clinical placement selection.

### **8.3 Academic Advising/Counseling**

The educational institution has an appropriate process and resources in place for providing academic advising/counseling for students.

### **8.4 Career Advising/Counseling**

The educational institution has appropriate processes and resources in place for advising/counseling students in choosing career options, and options available for post-graduation PN positions.

### **8.5 Confidentiality of Student Records**

The educational institution ensures that all students' personal and educational records are collected, used and disclosed in accordance with applicable privacy legislation and that appropriate safeguards are in place to ensure the confidentiality of students' records.

### **8.6 Student Access to Review Educational Records**

The educational institution has policies and procedures in place that allow students' to review and potentially challenge or appeal a test result or grade, if they deem the information or evaluation to be inaccurate or incorrect.

### **8.7 Financial Aid Counseling**

The educational institution provides students with financial aid counseling.

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<sup>7</sup> Indicators marked with a (C) are Critical Elements of program performance.



## **8.8 Student Access to Health Care Services**

The educational institution has in place an effective system of personal counseling for the students that includes promotion of their well-being; facilitate adjustment to the demands of the education program, timely access to medical and health services.

## **STANDARD 9: FACULTY EFFECTIVENESS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The faculty members of the educational institution are qualified through their educational credentials, clinical training, and practice experience, and ongoing professional development to provide the leadership and program support necessary to attain the institution's administrative, teaching, and service expectations.

### **9.1 Faculty Numbers and Qualifications**

- 9.1.1 All faculty members teaching courses designated as nursing courses are committed to the role and scope of practice of the Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) and have a full knowledge of the Licensed Practical Nurses Profession Regulation (2003), the Standards of Practice for Licensed Practical Nurses in Canada (2013) and the Competency Profile for Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta (2015).
- 9.1.2 To serve as PN role models and provide guidance in understanding scope of practice, a minimum of 15% of the nursing faculty must be licensed practical nurses (LPNs).
- 9.1.3 Clinical instructors and all faculty members teaching courses designated as nursing courses have theoretical nursing knowledge and clinical skills consistent with their teaching responsibilities. They have at least one year of current, relevant nursing experience and hold current registration in an Alberta professional nursing regulatory body.
- 9.1.4 Institutional policies and procedures related to selection, orientation, evaluation, and professional development of faculty members are in place.
- 9.1.5 Policies and processes are in place for initial and ongoing verification of registration status of nursing faculty members with their appropriate licensing College.

### **9.2 Sufficient Faculty**

The PN Education Program has in place a sufficient number of qualified faculty members and time required to provide instruction that meets the curriculum objectives.

### **9.3 Faculty Appointment Policies**

The PN Education Program has clear policies and procedures in place for faculty appointment, renewal of appointment, promotion, remediation, and dismissal. The institution provides written information about term of appointment, responsibilities, lines of communication, privileges and benefits, performance evaluation and remediation.

### **9.4 Faculty Feedback**

The PN Education Program provides faculty members with regular and timely feedback from the lead (or designate) of the program on their academic performance (including student evaluation feedback) and progress toward promotion.



## 9.5 Faculty Professional Development

The PN Education Program provides opportunities for faculty professional development in the areas of curricular content and instructional methods, student assessment and evaluation methods, simulation, and mentoring and leadership abilities.

### ***STANDARD 10: ONGOING STUDENT AND GRADUATE ASSESSMENT, AND CLIENT SAFETY***

The educational institution ensures that comprehensive, and consistent formative and summative measurement processes exist throughout the program and that no evaluation process will be used if it compromises clients' safety.

#### **10.1 Graduates of the Practical Nurse Education Program achieve the program outcomes.<sup>8</sup>**

- 10.1.1 (C) Processes are in place to map student progress and to verify that the student has completed the curriculum and achieved the Diploma Level Competencies and all other outcomes for graduation<sup>9</sup>.
- 10.1.2 (C) Program success rates for first time writers' of the Canadian Practical Nurse Registration Examination (CPNRE) are monitored in comparison to the Provincial and National averages.<sup>10</sup>
- 10.1.3 (C) Annual feedback from new graduates indicates they are prepared to meet requirements for practice as outlined in the Licensed Practical Nurses Profession Regulation (2003), the Standards of Practice for Licensed Practical Nurses in Canada (2013) and the Competency Profile for Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta (2015).<sup>11</sup>
- 10.1.4 (C) Annual feedback from employers indicates new graduates meet service sector needs and possess the knowledge, skills, behaviors, attitudes and judgments addressed in the Licensed Practical Nurses Profession Regulation (2003), the Standards of Practice for Licensed Practical Nurses in Canada (2013) and the Competency Profile for Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta (2015).<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Indicators marked with a (C) are **Critical Elements** of program performance.

<sup>10</sup> Indicators marked with a (C) are **Critical Elements** of program performance

<sup>11</sup> Indicators marked with a (C) are **Critical Elements** of program performance

<sup>12</sup> Indicators marked with a (C) are **Critical Elements** of program performance