



Standards of Practice for HCAs on Continuing Competence

Effective Date: **DATE**

College of LPNs and HCAs of Alberta

INTRODUCTION

The College of LPNs and HCAs of Alberta (CLHA) has the authority under the *Health Professions Act* (HPA) to carry out its activities and govern Health Care Aides (HCAs)¹ in a manner that protects and serves the public interest.

Terms found in the definitions are **bolded** where they appear for the first time in this document.

Standards of Practice and the HPA

The CLHA's continuing competence program (CCP) improves the delivery of care to clients by having a program that requires HCAs to complete education for professional development. The CCP includes the HCA completing a self-directed learning plan, yearly education, and participating in audits and practice assessments. HCAs should read the accompanying *Continuing Competence Program Guide for HCAs* for more detailed program requirements.

HCAs must adhere to their profession's standards of practice, which are **enforceable** under the HPA. Standards of practice provide the minimum standard of behaviour that HCAs are expected to meet in their practice. Non-compliance could result in the registrant being referred to the Conduct Department for a complaint of **unprofessional conduct**.

Please see Part 3 of the HPA for further information about the CCP.

Expected Outcomes

- HCAs improve their **competence** and delivery of **professional services** through self-directed learning.
- HCAs apply the learned knowledge and skills in their practice to improve client outcomes.
- HCAs provide evidence of learning and **compliance** with the CCP as requested by the CLHA.

¹ In this document, "HCA(s)" has the same meaning as "regulated member(s)" in the *Health Professions Act*.

STANDARD 1: HCA Continuing Competence Program

HCAs on the **general register**, as part of their CCP, complete a self-assessment on an annual basis.

Performance Expectations

HCAs must:

- 1.1 **Self-assess** their learning needs using the applicable standards of practice.
- 1.2 Develop a learning plan that states the continuing competence goals for the next registration year and how they will be achieved.
- 1.3 If the learning plan changed from the initial plan, document the updated learning plan and the reason for any changes.
- 1.4 Document the completed learning activities to meet their self-assessed learning needs.
- 1.5 Document how the learning has affected and/or improved their practice.
- 1.6 Keep **evidence** of completing the CCP for the four years prior to the current registration year. This includes:
 - a) keeping a list of self-directed learning taken during the past registration year;
 - b) completion of any mandatory education as directed by Council; and
 - c) practicing for the minimum number of practice hours as established by Council.²
- 1.7 Submit documents requested by the CLHA within the specified timelines outlined.
- 1.8 Complete any required learning activities as set out by the CLHA.

² See the *Continuing Competence Program Guide* for the most current information.

STANDARD 2: Continuing Competence Program Audit

HCAs selected to participate in a CCP audit must prove to the CLHA that they are following the requirements of the CCP.

Performance Expectations

By the deadline specified by the CLHA, HCAs must:

- 2.1 Submit evidence of compliance with the CCP.
- 2.2 Communicate with the CLHA regarding their compliance with the CCP.
- 2.3 Following the completion of a program audit, complete any required **alternative learning** or activities.
- 2.4 Complete any alternative learning or activities at the HCA's own cost.

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STANDARD 3: Practice Assessments

HCAs may be selected for practice assessments and must comply with the requests of the CLHA, **competence committee**, or any person appointed by the competence committee.

Performance Expectations

HCAs must:

3.1 Participate in and meet any requirements as directed by the CLHA which include:

- a) practice visits
- b) interviews
- c) observations
- d) any other assessments outlined in legislation³

3.2 Engage in alternative learning as directed following a practice assessment by the specified deadline.

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³ *Health Professions Act, 50(2)*

DEFINITIONS

Competence: the ability to apply the knowledge, skills, behaviours, judgments, and personal attributes required to practice safely and ethically. Personal attributes include attitudes, values, and beliefs.¹

Competence Committee: a committee responsible for making recommendations to Council on CCP requirements, conducting competence assessments, and addressing related issues/concerns related to CCP.

Compliance: obeying a particular law or rule.

Enforceable: making sure people obey a law or rule.

Evidence: facts, information, documents, etc. that give reason to believe that something is true (e.g. an HCA keeping a record of their learning plan to prove they completed it during their audit).

General register: a register for HCAs who have the required education and have completed the HCA exam for full registration in Alberta.

Professional service: defined in the HPA as a service that falls within the practice of an HCA. This includes one or more of the following:

- assist and support activities of daily living to provide basic personal care and health services,
- assist in teaching a Health Care Aide certificate program approved by the council,
- participate in client education and promotion of client wellness across the lifespan,
- teach health care aide techniques and practices to practitioners in the workplace, and
- provide restricted activities provided by the regulation.

Alternative Learning (Remedial Activities): refers to one or more activities that the CLHA requires the HCA to complete to address and correct the HCA's completion of the CCP. This includes when an HCA fails to complete part of the CCP or misrepresents their completion of the program. Alternative learning activities help HCAs understand their responsibilities and accountabilities, learn from their mistakes, and address gaps in their competencies, skills, and behaviours. An example is completing a specific coursework or summary to demonstrate compliance with the CCP.

Self-Assess: the process of evaluating yourself, work, abilities, or other areas as required.

Unprofessional Conduct: according to the HPA, unprofessional conduct includes displaying a lack of knowledge, skill or judgment to provide professional services, not following the HCA standards of practice and code of ethics, failing to comply with requirements of the CCP, or any other behaviour that is defined as unprofessional conduct under section 1(1) of the HPA.

REFERENCES

¹ College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta (CLPNA), *Standards of Practice for Licensed Practical Nurses on Restricted Activities and Advanced Practice* (2020), Standards & Code - College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta (clpna.com).

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