

## **Guideline: Orientation of Practice Instructors**

### **PURPOSE:**

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The purpose of this guideline is to outline the orientation process for practice instructors in the NESA/BN-AD Programs.

### **BACKGROUND:**

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- Practice Instructors are Registered Nurses, with current College of Registered Nurses of Alberta (CRNA) licensure and considered to be competent practitioners at the time of hire based on their practice experience, currently held credentials and certifications, and professional references.
- Practice Instructors who have not previously worked on a unit/site, or recently practiced on the unit/site, will have the opportunity to actively observe nursing practice as a Registered Nurse on that unit/site as part of their orientation to the practice setting.
- Failure of practice instructors to be adequately prepare and orientate for the assigned practice setting may result in unsafe or inadequate care or service by instructors as well as students.
- Effectively maintaining the clinical competence of practice instructors for a specific setting requires a collaborative approach between educational institutions and practice partners so that practice instructors are provided an opportunity to obtain access to appropriate continuing educational opportunities consistent with practice setting requirements.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

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N/A

### **GUIDELINE SCOPE:**

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#### **Responsibilities of the Practice Instructor:**

1. Each practice instructor is personally and professionally responsible to ensure they have the necessary clinical competencies to practice safely in a practice setting in the role of practice instructor and Registered Nurse. Based on their review of required competencies and an orientation to the practice setting, practice instructors are expected to ensure that they pursue further development of any knowledge competencies or psychomotor skills which are necessary for them to practice safely in the practice setting.

2. The practice instructor will contact the site/unit manager to negotiate an orientation plan prior to initial student contact day.
3. The practice instructor will initiate, complete, and submit to the appropriate program designate, the *Clinical Instructor – Manager Unit Orientation Checklist – BN/PN Program* form at the beginning of the semester.
4. The practice instructor will ensure that required competencies, registrations, certifications, and vaccinations remain current throughout the practice placement and seek opportunities to update same in a timely fashion.
5. The practice instructor will maintain current working knowledge of site/unit/agency policies and procedures relevant to the practice placement setting.
6. The practice instructor will maintain current working knowledge of all NESAs program policies and guidelines relevant to their role as nursing instructor.
7. The practice instructor will ensure their own fitness to practice at all times.
8. The practice instructor will provide orientation for students to the unit/site and placement area.
9. The practice instructor will ensure demonstration and instruction in only those skills and techniques that are within the scope of the outcomes identified for the course.

**Responsibilities of the Educational Institution:**

1. In collaboration with practice partners, the educational institutions will facilitate opportunities for instructors to acquire appropriate certifications for an assigned practice setting.
2. The educational institution will make every effort to ensure consistency of faculty from one semester to another.
3. The educational institution will ensure instructors are aware of the pre-placement requirements prior to the start of the practice placement.
4. The educational institution will attempt to select and assign practice instructors who have current practical knowledge of the practice setting/unit.
5. The educational institution will inform the practice setting/unit manager of all practice placements including instructor and student names through HSPnet in accordance with the current Student Placement Agreement (SPA, 2013).

**SPECIFICS OF THE GUIDELINE:**

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1. In preparation for student learning, all practice instructors have the option to orientate to nursing practice on the assigned site/unit or practice setting.
2. All practice site/unit orientations are arranged by the practice instructor in consultation with the site/unit manager.

3. Whenever possible, orientation to the assigned practice setting will be completed at least two weeks prior to the start of the placement.
4. The orientation period for practice instructors may vary depending on the setting and instructor experience; however, it should include consideration of the following:
  - a. Practice instructors new to the setting will arrange full orientation by actively observing one day shift and one evening shift to familiarize themselves with unit routines, policies, and facilities. These shifts are paid time by the educational institution and shall be **observation only**. Additional unpaid observation shifts may be arranged at the request of the practice instructor.
    - i. *Hands-on* nursing care will only be provided by nursing instructors within the context of student instruction (patient assigned to the student and activities within the student scope of practice). Nursing instructors will not provide hands-on nursing care during orientation.
  - b. Returning practice instructors are responsible for determining their orientation requirements and ensuring these needs are met prior to the start of the placement. Orientation shifts for returning practice instructors are unpaid.
  - c. Practice instructors who have been absent from the assigned practice setting for greater than twelve (12) months will arrange a full orientation.
  - d. Practice instructors will seek available opportunities to orientate to the *teaching* role. This may include, but is not limited to, participation in the Clinical Workshop offered at Lethbridge Polytechnic and discussion with Practice Course Coordinator at Lethbridge Polytechnic or Assistant Dean at the University of Lethbridge.

#### **APPENDIX:**

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Lethbridge Polytechnic/University of Lethbridge Clinical-Instructor Orientation Checklist

Instructor Scope of Practice and Competency in a Clinical Setting Acknowledgement Form

#### **RELATED POLICIES/ASSOCIATED GUIDELINES:**

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Guideline: Practice Instructor Role

#### **REFERENCES:**

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Alberta Health Services. (2013). *Student Placement Agreement*. Retrieved from <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/careers/cp-stu-spa.pdf>

**NOTE: NESAs Guidelines exist within organizational frameworks of policy for Lethbridge Polytechnic and the University of Lethbridge, and within agreements established with practice partner organizations. If and when NESAs guidelines are found**

*to differ from such policies and agreements, it is important to note that such policies/agreements will take precedence over NESAs guidelines or policies.*

<b>Revised By/date:</b>	<b>Approved by/date:</b>
Policy Review Committee: April 2015	NESA Joint Faculty Council: May 12, 2015
Policy Review Committee: April 2016	Not Required: editorial and formatting changes
Policy Review Committee: March 2017	Not Required: editorial and formatting changes
Policy Review Committee: January 2018	Not Required: link update
Policy Review Committee: April 2019	Not Required: no change
Policy Review Committee: November 2019	Not Required: editorial changes
Policy Review Committee: November 2020	Not Required: editorial changes
Policy Review Committee: April 2022	Not Required: no change
Policy Review Committee: February 2024	NESA Joint: April 2024

**University of Lethbridge**  
**Faculty of Health Sciences**  
**Instructor Scope of Practice and Competency in a Clinical Setting**  
**Acknowledgement Form**

**Scope of Practice While Instructing Students:**

An instructor must not demonstrate any skill, technique, practice, or exercise unless: (1) it is within the instructor's scope of practice as defined by **CRNA**; (2) the instructor is competent in the skill, technique, practice, or exercise; and (3) the skill, technique, practice, or exercise is within the scope of the outcomes identified for the course.

An instructor must not permit a student to engage in any skill, technique, practice, or exercise unless the student has the requisite knowledge and skills to do so without compromising anyone's health or safety, and the above three conditions are met.

These limitations are necessary for legal, ethical, and liability (i.e. risk-mitigation) reasons. Even if an instructor is legally allowed to engage in, and is competent in, a particular skill, technique, practice, or exercise, and even if a student has demonstrated exceptional ability, instructors must adhere to the course outcomes, which establish the agreed-upon expectations of students, instructors, and placement employers and ensure the safety and wellbeing of students, instructors, and their patients.

**Practice Competency:**

As a member of a regulated health profession under *Alberta's Health Professions Act*, university instructors who are licensed by **CRNA** are responsible for maintaining their registration in good standing with their respective regulatory body, and for maintaining their competency in their area of practice, including the skills, techniques, practices, and exercises to be demonstrated to students.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the above information as it relates to my employment as a University of Lethbridge instructor.

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Instructor (Print Name)

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Date

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Instructor (Signature)