

Guideline: Practice Instructor Role

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this guideline is to guide faculty members in the practice instructor role.

BACKGROUND:

This guideline is one part of a larger, more general orientation to being an instructor in the NESA BN Programs.

DEFINITION:

Practice instructor: A practice instructor is a person who guides and supports students in hands-on, practical learning experiences, often in a clinical or field setting (Melrose & Perry, 2022).

Nursing Praxis: The integrated “whole” of reflective, relational, professional nursing practice that simultaneously apprehends the uniqueness of each situation, and a critical awareness of relevant theories and patterns.

GUIDELINE SCOPE:

This guideline applies to all faculty and practice instructors of the NESA BN Programs. This guideline is not intended as a framework for performance appraisals of practice instructors. It is not to be interpreted as an assignment of duties under any collective agreement.

SPECIFICS OF THE GUIDELINE:

1. **As a professional role model in the NESA BN Program, the practice instructor is expected to:**
 - a. Wear professional attire appropriate to the setting (See *Practice Instructor Uniform Dress* guideline).
 - b. Adhere to policies and standards of health care agency, employer, and the NESA BN Program.
 - c. Obtain/maintain practice agency/unit-specific certifications/competencies.
 - d. Deliver nursing education in accordance with the current College of Registered Nurses of Alberta (CRNA) *Practice Standards for Regulated Members* (2023), and *Supervision Standards* (2023).
 - e. Maintain professional awareness of current trends and practices within the discipline of nursing.
 - f. Actively participate in all aspects of practice instruction, including faculty orientation, instructor kick-off and wrap-up meetings, and maintain a consistent and meaningful presence in the unit during student practice shifts. Instructors are expected to role model professional commitment by

staying for full scheduled shifts, fostering collaboration, providing mentorship, and supporting student learning and safety across the NESAs BN Programs.

2. General responsibilities of the instructor to the Program and Employer

- a. Maintain documentation of student performance when in the practice agency, on an ongoing basis.
- b. Complete an independent evaluation of student practice performance. Provide evaluation/feedback, by completing the NESAs BN Programs Practice Evaluation Tool (or Course-specific Practice Evaluation Tool if applicable), with the minimum frequency being at mid-term and on completion of the practice rotation.
- c. Address concerns related to a student's practice performance promptly with the student, with the minimum frequency occurring at mid-term and upon completion of the practice experience. Instructor may initiate an Enhancement Plan if the student's current level of practice puts the student in jeopardy of failing the practice course.
- d. Conduct student practice evaluation meetings **at a mutually agreeable time outside of the practice group's schedule**. The meeting will be held in a location that affords privacy and security for both student and instructor. This approach is important in ensuring all students can access the nursing instructor during the practice experience and supports our working relationship with our practice partners.
 - **Community Health** Given the increased number of students in each community placement, the need for the instructor's presence at multiple sites, and their non-involvement in restricted nursing activities, instructors may exercise discretion in making exceptions. Please consider:
 - Students must have access to the instructor at all times.
 - Students must complete the required number of practice hours. Thus, blocking time or a day purely to complete evaluations cannot be done.
 - Final evaluations can be completed during exam week.
- e. Maintain communication with relevant NESAs BN Programs practice faculty, course leaders, and practice course coordinator or assistant dean of nursing regarding students' progress.
 - Provide feedback to NESAs BN Programs faculty regarding the implementation of the curriculum.
 - Seek to develop and maintain a collegial and supportive relationship with fellow faculty members and practice agency staff.
 - Become familiar with the NESAs BN Programs outcomes, mission and values, and curriculum to promote continuity of implementation to student learning.
 - Attend and actively contribute to faculty meetings and professional development sessions as requested/provided by the program.
- f. Maintain practice competencies in area of practice/specialty.
- g. Practice only to the scope of instructor's individual practice/competencies, the practice environment, and the level expected of the students in that particular course.

3. Responsibilities of the Practice Instructor to Students

- a. Guide students' learning, using a variety of strategies that encourage self-direction, critical thinking, and professional development.
- b. Ascertain students' understanding of nursing knowledge that is the foundation for client care.
- c. Utilize the preferred program-approved Same-Day Clinical Assignment approach (alternate approach as decided by the program) for assigning patient care and supporting student learning.
- d. Observe client care that is provided by students to assess competency and for evaluation purposes, while ensuring patient safety at all times.
- e. Provide verbal and written feedback to students in a timely manner.
- f. Provide evaluation feedback, using the NESAs BN Programs Practice Evaluation Tool (or Course-specific Practice Evaluation Tool if applicable) at mid-term and on completion of the practice rotation at minimum.
- g. Review the student's NESAs BN Programs Learning Plan with the student and assist the student to access learning opportunities that enable achievement of objectives.
- h. Support students in their professional growth through positive and collaborative mentorship.
- i. Guide, review and provide feedback on the nursing process tool and medication cards based on the practice area.
- j. Utilize Socratic questioning to draw forth critical thinking, invite them to explore relationships between theory and practice, and examine their assumptions and reasoning.
- k. Respond to reflective journal writing or other written submissions with feedback for the purpose of professional and/or personal growth.
- l. Advocate for students within the practice setting to maximize their learning opportunities/environment, so that they may learn in a safe and supportive environment.
- m. To ensure the highest standard of student learning, safety, and professional mentorship, instructors are required to remain on-site and fully engaged for the entirety of scheduled time. Absences or early departures compromise the quality of student learning and the instructor's accountability to both educational and clinical partners. As such, instructors are expected to:
 - Be physically present and accessible for the full duration of assigned practice shifts.
 - Provide ongoing oversight, support, and formative feedback throughout the clinical day.
 - If an instructor deems it necessary to cancel practice hours or depart early, due to extenuating circumstances, the instructor must inform all affected students, the assigned clinical site, and the Practice Coordinator (LP)/Assistant Dean -Nursing (U of L) before cancelling the shift.

APPENDIX:

N/A

RELATED POLICIES/ASSOCIATED GUIDELINES:

NESA BN Programs Enhancement Plan
NESA BN Programs Professional Conduct Policy
NESA Program Guideline: Practice Day Cancellation

REFERENCES:

College of Registered Nurses of Alberta. (2013). *Practice standards for regulated members*. Retrieved from [practice-standards-for-regulated-members-2023.pdf \(nurses.ab.ca\)](https://www.nurses.ab.ca/practice-standards-for-regulated-members-2023.pdf)

College of Registered Nurses of Alberta. (2019). *Restricted Activities Standards*. [restricted-activities-standards-apr-2019.pdf \(nurses.ab.ca\)](https://www.nurses.ab.ca/restricted-activities-standards-apr-2019.pdf)

College of Registered Nurses of Alberta. (2019). *Supervision standards*. Retrieved from [supervision-standards-apr-2023.pdf \(nurses.ab.ca\)](https://www.nurses.ab.ca/supervision-standards-apr-2023.pdf)

Melrose, S. & Perry, B. (2022). *Clinical teaching in Canadian nursing*. Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing.

NOTE: NESA 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 NESA guidelines are found to differ from such policies and agreements, it is important to note that such policies/agreements will take precedence over NESA guidelines or policies.

Revised By/date:	Approved by/date:
Policy Review Committee: February 2015	Not Required: no change
Policy Review Committee: April 2016	Not Required: editorial changes
Policy Review Committee: May 2018	Not Required: editorial changes
Policy Review Committee: January 2019	Not Required: editorial changes
Policy Review Committee: February 2020	Not Required: editorial changes; link update
Policy Review Committee: March 2021	NESA Joint Faculty Council: May 10, 2021
Policy Review Committee: February 2022	Not Required: editorial changes
Policy Review Committee: February 2024	Not Required: editorial changes; link update
Policy Review Committee: April 2025	NESA Joint Faculty Council: May 2025