

Standards



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Standards and Criteria for Nursing Education Program Approval

**Initial-entry Registered Nurse, Initial-entry Nurse
Practitioner, Re-entry Registered Nurse
Programs**

September 2018

Approved by the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta (CARNA) Provincial Council, September 2018.

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	2
STANDARDS AND CRITERIA	3
Standard One: Program Structure and Sustainability	3
Standard Two: Curriculum	4
Standard Three: Students	5
Standard Four: Graduates	5
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	6

Introduction

The *Standards and Criteria for Nursing Education Program Approval* contain the standards and criteria developed by the Nursing Education Program Approval Board (NEPAB) and approved by the College and Registered Nurses Association of Alberta Provincial Council. The four standards reflect requirements for approval by NEPAB; the criteria reflect the type of evidence required for each standard. Nursing education programs submit reports with specific evidence that NEPAB uses to assess whether nursing programs have met the standards.

Standards and Criteria

Standard One: Program Structure and Sustainability

The nursing education program has sufficient structures and resources – human, clinical, physical, and fiscal – to support students in the a) initial-entry Registered Nursing (RN) program, b) re-entry Registered Nursing program or c) Nurse Practitioner (NP) program.

Criteria:

- 1.1 There are clearly defined governance structures.
- 1.2 There are structured services and strategies to enable student and faculty success.
- 1.3 The program is sustainable.
- 1.4 There are sufficient number of faculty with required qualifications.
- 1.5 The courses are taught by the appropriate faculty members.
- 1.6 There is annual verification that all faculty, instructors, contracted teaching staff, and preceptors are regulated members and in good standing with CARNA.
- 1.7 There are clinical resources and facilities that enable students to meet the relevant practice competencies.
- 1.8 There are written contracts between the nursing education program and any external clinical, simulation or learning facilities.

Standard Two: Curriculum

The curriculum provides the educational experiences for students to a) meet the entry-level competencies as defined by the CARNA for the initial-entry RN program, b) be successful in the re-entry RN program and c) meet the entry-level competencies for the NP program (must be at a Master's level) as defined by CARNA.

Criteria:

- 2.1 The philosophy of nursing, mission of the program, and the conceptual framework guide the development, implementation, and evaluation of the curriculum.
- 2.2 The program outcomes reflect relevant practice competencies.
- 2.3 The curriculum reflects current evidence and emerging trends.
- 2.4 The curriculum follows an overall logical, organizing framework so students meet the relevant practice competencies.
- 2.5 The clinical placements provide sufficient opportunities for students to achieve course objectives, program outcomes, and relevant practice competencies.
- 2.6 There is a clinical preceptorship to consolidate and integrate prior learning.
- 2.7 Preceptors are experientially qualified, supported by the employer to be a preceptor, and are well oriented, mentored, and monitored by faculty.
- 2.8 Each student will have clinical placements relevant to their program.
- 2.9 Nursing faculty members supervise students in all clinical placements.
- 2.10 The nursing faculty member to student ratios in the laboratory, simulation and clinical settings ensure optimum student learning and safe client care.
- 2.11 There is a plan to evaluate the content of courses, delivery modes, and program outcomes.

Standard Three: Students

Students understand how to progress in the program to successfully meet the relevant entry-level competencies.

Criteria:

- 3.1 Students know the requisite skills and abilities for becoming a registered nurse.
- 3.2 There are robust and comprehensive processes and strategies to assess students' progress.
- 3.3 There are admission requirements for RN, RN re-entry, and NP programs.

Standard Four: Graduates

All graduates successfully meet the relevant entry-level competencies.

Criteria:

- 4.1 The students in the initial-entry RN and re-entry RN programs meet CARNA's entry-level competencies, and NP students meet the entry-level NP competencies, by the end of their clinical preceptorship experience.
- 4.2 The employers evaluate graduates within six months of completing the nursing education program.
- 4.3 The graduates of initial-entry RN program self-report on their learning experience, ability to achieve the entry-level competencies, and preparation for the national exam.
- 4.4 The trends in the graduates' performance on the entry-to-practice exam for the initial-entry RN program are on a positive trajectory.

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