CARNA — College & Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta

Standards and Criteria for Nursing Education Program Approval

Initial-entry Registered Nurse, Initial-entry Nurse Practitioner, and 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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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 (CARNA) Provincial Council. The four **standards**[1] reflect requirements for approval by NEPAB; the criteria are "statements that identify the elements that need to be examined in the evaluation of a standard" (Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, 2017). 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 nurse (RN) program, b) re-entry to RN 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 **nursing 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.

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[1] Words or phrases in bold italics are defined in the Glossary.

1.6   There is annual verification that all nursing 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 nursing students to meet the relevant *entry-level 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 entry-level competencies.

2.3   The curriculum reflects current evidence and emerging trends.

2.4   The curriculum follows an overall logical, organizing framework so nursing students meet the relevant entry-level competencies.

2.5   The *clinical placements* provide sufficient opportunities for nursing students to achieve *course objectives*, program outcomes, and relevant entry-level 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 nursing student will have clinical placements relevant to their program.

2.9 *Nursing faculty members* supervise nursing 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

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

Criteria:

3.1 Initial-entry and re-entry nursing students know the *requisite skills and abilities* for becoming an RN.

3.2 There are robust and comprehensive processes and strategies to assess nursing 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 Nursing students meet CARNA's entry-level 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

Glossary

Client – The person, patient or resident who benefits from registered nursing care. A client may be an individual, a family, group, community or population.

Clinical placements – Direct clinical care in settings where nursing students apply knowledge

Clinical resources & facilities – The facilities, agencies, and settings where nursing students spend clinical hours.

Conceptual framework – A set of logically related concepts that provide the structure for the nursing education program and the development of the curriculum.

Course objectives – Statements which describe what the learner is expected to achieve as a result of instruction. May also be referred to as course outcomes, learning objectives or outcomes, enabling objectives, educational objectives, performance objectives, or aims.

Curriculum – "…the totality of philosophical approaches, curriculum goals, overall design, strategies to ignite learning, delivery methods, interactions, learning climate, evaluation methods, curriculum policies, and resources. The curriculum includes all matters that affect nursing students' learning and progression and that are within the [level of] authority of the school of nursing." (Iwasiw & Goldenberg, 2014. p. 6)

Entry-level competencies – Observable abilities of a registered nurse at entry-level that integrates the knowledge, skills, abilities, and judgment required to practice nursing safely and ethically. (College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta, 2019)

Laboratory – Educational settings that are not clinical placements, but where nursing students practice nursing skills, including simulation

Nursing faculty members – A regulated member in good standing with the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta who is employed (full-time, part-time, contract) in an educative role (theory or practice).

Nursing student – Person enrolled in an initial-entry to RN, re-entry to RN, or initial-entry to NP program.

Preceptor – An individual who is a regulated member as per the *Health Professions Act* who is employed in a practice setting, but is not a faculty member in this role.

Preceptorship – The final clinical practicum that consolidates a student's learning by integrating concepts from the curriculum.

Program – A planned, coordinated group of activities, including the system of resources and structures to deliver the curriculum.

Program outcomes – The expected end results of a curriculum that describes the specific knowledge, skills or attitudes that the learners are required to achieve by the completion of the nursing education program.

Requisite skills & abilities – The basic skills and abilities necessary to attain the entry-level competencies, begin to practice as a registered nurse, and provide safe, competent, and ethical nursing care in the best interest of the public. (College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta, 2011)

Simulation – Conditions are created to replicate or mimic real nursing practice situations to promote a student's learning (International Nursing Association for Clinical & Learning, 2016)

Standard – Agreed-upon expectations to measure quantity, extent, value and educational quality. (Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, 2017)

References

Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing. (2017) *Accreditation Manual: Glossary* (2nd ed.). Retrieved from: http://www.acenursing.net/manuals/Glossary.pdf

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