

*Standards*

**CARNA** College & Association of  
Registered Nurses of Alberta

# **Supervision Standards**

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## Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline the **supervision**<sup>1</sup> expectations for:

1. a **nursing student** in an **approved nursing program** leading to initial entry-to-practice as a registered nurse (RN);
2. a nursing student employed as an **undergraduate nursing employee** (UNE);
3. students in a health professions program of studies, other than an approved nursing program;
4. a **nurse practitioner student** in an approved nurse practitioner program leading to initial entry-to-practice as a nurse practitioner (NP); and
5. a **regulated member** on the **provisional register**.

The supervision expectations for the five groups listed above are outlined in separate sections within this document, and provide direction for making supervision decisions based on:

- CARNA requirements for **type of supervision**;
- assessment of potential risks to **clients**, staff, and students;
- assessment of resources available in the practice setting;
- staffing patterns; and
- the ability to provide adequate oversight.

These standards apply at all times to all regulated members regardless of role or practice setting. The standards are grounded in the foundational *Practice Standards for Regulated Members* (2013) and the Canadian Nurses Association *Code of Ethics* (2017). The directions, concepts, and principles in this document align with the *Restricted Activities Standards* (2019).

These standards inform the requirements by the Nursing Education Program Approval Committee (NEPAC). NEPAC has additional requirements for approving both RN and NP entry-to-practice programs that include appropriate:

- professional qualifications for teaching students; and
- student-to-supervisor ratio.

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<sup>1</sup> Words or phrases in bold italics are listed in the Glossary. They are displayed in bold italics upon first reference.

## Supervision of Restricted Activities

The *Health Professions Act* (HPA, 2000) provides authority to the regulatory college to make a regulation that authorizes those restricted activities in Schedule 7.1 of the *Government Organization Act* (2000) that its regulated members may perform and any conditions or supervisory requirements. Restricted activities are high risk activities performed as part of providing a health service and require specific **competencies** to be carried out safely by authorized persons. The *Registered Nurses Profession Regulation* (2005) authorizes the restricted activities regulated members may provide. The expectation for members performing a restricted activity, are outlined in the *Restricted Activities Standards* (CARNA, 2019). The restricted activities that regulated members are authorized to perform, are listed in Appendix A.

Nursing students and UNEs are not regulated members of CARNA. However, students and UNEs are permitted to perform the restricted activities set out in section 15(1) under the supervision of a regulated member who is authorized to perform those restricted activities and has consented to supervise the restricted activities. Supervision of students is outlined in section 17 and 17.1 of the *Registered Nurses Profession Regulation* (2005) (Appendix B).

**Graduate nurses** (GN) and **graduate nurse practitioners** (GNP) are regulated members on the provisional register. The restricted activities that GNs and GNPs are authorized to perform are identified in section 15 of the *Registered Nurses Profession Regulation* (Appendix A). Regulated members on the provisional register must be supervised in accordance with the condition specified by the Registrar or Registration Committee.

Nurse practitioner students participating in a clinical practicum in Alberta are required to have current RN registration on the registered nurse register or the courtesy register.

## Principles of Supervision

1. The focus of supervision is the provision of safe, competent, and ethical care to clients.
2. Assessment of client needs and safety risks are the priority considerations for supervision decisions and requirements.
3. Effective communication between members of the health-care team is required for appropriate supervision and safe client care.
4. Appropriate supervision assists in the consolidation of knowledge and skill in practice.

5. A **quality practice environment** supports and facilitates supervision and safe client care.
6. Supervision is supported by:
  - a. clear role and job descriptions;
  - b. identification of the learning or performance expectations and objectives for the individual or health-care provider;
  - c. comprehensive orientation and mentoring by staff; and
  - d. ready access to resources, policies and procedures.
7. Supervision facilitates continuity of care.
8. Direction and guidance is provided as required to the individual being supervised by answering questions, consultation, oversight and constructive feedback.

## Supervision of Restricted Activities Standards

These standards state the expectations when regulated members provide supervision of restricted activities. The **criteria** illustrate how the standard must be met, and all criteria must be met in order to achieve the standard. The criteria are not written in order of importance.

### Standard 1: Supervision of Nursing Students

A regulated member can only supervise a nursing student performing a restricted activity when the regulated member is authorized to perform the restricted activity and consents to supervising the nursing student performing that restricted activity.

This standard and criteria also applies to those applicants for registration who are required by the Registrar or Registration Committee to take a course that includes a clinical component. Section 17.1 of the *Registered Nurses Profession Regulation (2005)* authorizes them to perform restricted activities when in the clinical component of the course.

#### Criteria

##### The regulated member must:

- 1.1 only supervise the restricted activities they are authorized to perform;
- 1.2 only supervise restricted activities they are competent to perform;
- 1.3 provide the type of supervision required;
- 1.4 comply with organizational policy and only supervise a restricted activity that is appropriate to the practice setting;
- 1.5 collaborate with the faculty member related to the student performing a restricted activity; and
- 1.6 address and manage any competence issues of the nursing student in the performance of the restricted activity.

##### The regulated member who is a nursing faculty member must:

- 1.7 decide the type of supervision required in collaboration with the regulated member providing supervision at the point of care, based on the:
  - a. assessment of client health-care needs,
  - b. current competencies of the nursing student,

- c. nursing care required,
- d. course requirements,
- e. restricted activity to be performed,
- f. practice setting, and
- g. level of risk in the student performing the restricted activity.

## Standard 2: Supervision of Undergraduate Nursing Employees

A regulated member can only supervise a UNE performing a restricted activity when the regulated member is authorized to perform the restricted activity and consents to supervising the UNE performing that restricted activity.

### Criteria

#### The regulated member must:

- 2.1 only supervise the restricted activities they are authorized to perform;
- 2.2 only supervise restricted activities they are competent to perform;
- 2.3 provide direct or indirect supervision in all practice settings, including the community;
- 2.4 only supervise a UNE in the performance of a restricted activity:
  - a. that is outlined in the UNE job description, and
  - b. the UNE has attained the competencies for in their approved nursing education program;
- 2.5 use their critical judgement to decide whether direct or indirect supervision is required based on:
  - a. assessment of client health-care needs,
  - b. current competencies of the UNE,
  - c. nursing care required,
  - d. restricted activity to be performed,
  - e. practice setting, and
  - f. level of risk in the UNE performing the restricted activity;

- 2.6 comply with organizational policy and only supervise a restricted activity that is appropriate to the practice setting.

### Standard 3: Supervision of Students from Other Health Professions Program of Studies

A regulated member can only supervise students in a health professions program of studies, other than an approved nursing program, when the regulated member is authorized to perform the restricted activity and consents to supervising the student performing that restricted activity.

#### Criteria

##### The regulated member must:

- 3.1 only supervise the restricted activities authorized for **both** professions;
- 3.2 only supervise restricted activities they are competent to perform;
- 3.3 use their critical judgement to decide the type of supervision required based on the:
- a. assessment of client health-care needs,
  - b. current competencies of the student,
  - c. care required,
  - d. restricted activity to be performed,
  - e. practice setting, and
  - f. level of risk in the student performing the restricted activity;
- 3.4 comply with organizational policy and only supervise a restricted activity that is appropriate to the practice setting;
- 3.5 collaborate with the faculty member related to the student performing a restricted activity; and
- 3.6 address and manage any competence issues of the student in the performance of the restricted activities.

## Standard 4: Supervision of Nurse Practitioner Students

An NP student can only perform a restricted activity under the supervision of a person who is authorized to perform the restricted activity and who has consented to supervising the NP student performing that restricted activity.

### Criteria

#### The NP student must:

- 4.1 be a regulated member on the registered nurse register or the courtesy register;
- 4.2 be currently enrolled in an approved NP education program leading to initial entry-to-practice as an NP;
- 4.3 meet any other requirements established by Registration Committee if they are enrolled in an NP education program outside of Canada and are in Alberta for a clinical practice experience;
- 4.4 only perform the restricted activities that NP students are authorized to perform in section 15(1) and 15(5) of the *Registered Nurses Profession Regulation* (Appendix A);
- 4.5 be supervised by an NP or other regulated health-care professional who is authorized to perform the restricted activities that the NP student is performing;
- 4.6 collaborate with the faculty member related to the NP student performing a restricted activity; and
- 4.7 comply with organizational policy and only perform a restricted activity that is appropriate to the practice setting.

#### The regulated member supervising the NP student must:

- 4.8 only supervise the restricted activities they are authorized to perform;
- 4.9 only supervise restricted activities that they are competent to perform;
- 4.10 provide the type of supervision required;
- 4.11 comply with employer policy and only supervise a restricted activity that is appropriate to the practice setting; and
- 4.12 address and manage any competence issues of the NP student in the performance of the restricted activity.

**The regulated member who is the faculty member of the NP student must:**

- 4.13** decide the type of supervision required in collaboration with the regulated member or other regulated health-care professional providing supervision at the point of care based on the:
- a.** assessment of client health-care needs,
  - b.** current competencies of the NP student,
  - c.** nursing care required,
  - d.** course requirements,
  - e.** restricted activity to be performed,
  - f.** practice setting, and
  - g.** level of risk in the NP student performing the restricted activity.

## Standard for Supervision of Regulated Members on the Provisional Register

Individuals on the provisional register are regulated members.

Graduates of an approved nursing or NP nursing education program who have not written or passed the registration exam or who are awaiting the results, and have not met the jurisprudence requirement, may apply to be registered on the provisional register. If the applicant meets requirements, provisional registration is approved by the Registrar and a provisional practice permit is issued. The applicant can then practise nursing and be employed as a GN or a GNP, while they progress toward meeting all the requirements for registration on the registered nurse register or the nurse practitioner register.

Graduates of an approved nursing or NP education program who are eligible for a provisional practice permit may decide to take the registration exam first. Upon passing, and meeting all registration requirements, they may apply for initial RN or NP registration.

Regulated members on the provisional register may be graduates from a recognized program in Canada or internationally educated nurses who met the education requirements.

### Standard 5: Supervision of Regulated Members on the Provisional Register

Regulated members on the provisional register must be supervised in accordance with the conditions on their practice permit.

#### Criteria

**The regulated member on the provisional register must:**

- 5.1** have a current CARNA provisional practice permit;
- 5.2** have, at minimum, indirect remote supervision in all practice settings;
- 5.3** be supervised by a regulated member or a person who provides health services and is authorized by a regulation under the HPA to perform that restricted activity;
- 5.4** not supervise students, UNEs, or other regulated or unregulated health-care providers;

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- 5.5** acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to provide safe, competent and ethical care, and only perform restricted activities they are authorized and competent to perform;
- 5.6** collaborate with the regulated member supervising them at the point of care to confirm the type of supervision they require, in accordance with the condition on their practice permit. This collaboration should include consideration of the following factors:
- a.** assessment of client health-care needs,
  - b.** their current competencies,
  - c.** nursing care required,
  - d.** restricted activity to be performed, and
  - e.** practice setting level of risk for the regulated member on the provisional register performing the restricted activity; and
- 5.7** comply with organizational policy and only perform a restricted activity that is appropriate to the practice setting.

**The regulated member providing supervision must:**

- 5.8** provide, at minimum, indirect remote supervision;
- 5.9** supervise the regulated member on the provisional register in the performance of restricted activities they are competent to perform; and
- 5.10** use their critical judgement to decide if further supervision is required based on the:
- a.** assessment of client health-care needs,
  - b.** their current competencies,
  - c.** nursing care required,
  - d.** restricted activity to be performed, and
  - e.** practice setting level of risk for the regulated member on the provisional register performing the restricted activity.

## Glossary

**Approved nursing program** – An Alberta nursing education program approved by the Nursing Education Program Approval Committee in accordance with approved standards and criteria.

**Assignment** – The selective designation of specific responsibilities for client care within employer policies, legislative scopes of practice, competencies of the health-care provider, and environmental supports.

**Client** – The term client(s) can refer to patients, residents, families, groups, communities, and population (CARNA, 2013).

**Competencies** – The integrated knowledge, skills, abilities, and judgment required to practise nursing safely and ethically (CARNA, 2013).

**Consultation** – Conferring with, seeking information, advice, or direction.

**Criteria** – Outcomes that must be achieved in order to meet a particular standard; a standard cannot be achieved if each criterion has not been met.

**Graduate nurse** – A regulated member on the provisional register who is in the process of meeting CARNA registered nurse registration requirements.

**Graduate nurse practitioner** – A regulated member on the provisional register who is in the process of meeting CARNA nurse practitioner registration requirements. These individuals may be graduates from an approved nurse practitioner program leading to initial nurse practitioner registration or internationally educated nurse practitioners.

**Health service** – A service provided to people to protect, promote or maintain their health; to prevent illness; to diagnose, treat or rehabilitate or to take care of the health needs of the ill, disabled, injured or dying (HPA, 2000).

**Mentoring** – The provision of guidance by a more experienced or more knowledgeable person in a certain area of expertise to a less experienced or less knowledgeable person.

**Nurse practitioner student** – A registered nurse who is currently enrolled in an approved nursing program leading to initial entry-to-practice as a nurse practitioner.

**Nursing student** – A student currently enrolled in an approved nursing program leading to initial entry-to-practice as a registered nurse.

**Provisional register** – Regulated members on the provisional register are in the process of meeting registration requirements.

**Quality practice environment** – An environment that supports professionalism when registered nurses have the autonomy to make decisions with their scope of practice; when registered nurses have a voice and influence practice and organizations; and when practice is based upon evidence (RNAO, 2007).

**Regulated member** – a registered member of a regulated health profession authorized to perform certain restricted activities and governed by the standards of their College. In nursing education, the regulated member supervising a student in a program leading to initial entry to practice as a registered nurse, must be an RN or NP.

**Restricted activity** – High risk activities performed as part of providing a health service that requires specific *competencies* and skills to be carried out safely. Restricted activities are not linked to any particular health profession and a number of regulated health practitioners may perform a particular restricted activity. Restricted activities authorized for registered nurses are listed in the *Registered Nurses Profession Regulation* (2005).

**Responsibility** – Obligation to provide for the needs of implied or explicit nursing care in accordance with professional and legal standards.

**Standard** – An authoritative statement that describes the required behavior of every nurse and is used to evaluate individual performance.

**Supervision** – the consultation, guidance, and oversight by a regulated member in the practice setting. Supervision may be direct, indirect, or indirect remote.

**Type of supervision** – Direct, indirect and indirect remote

- Direct supervision means the regulated member providing supervision must be present in the practice setting where care is being provided. This means they are at the side of the person being supervised.
- Indirect supervision means the regulated member providing supervision must be available for guidance, consultation, and oversight but is not required directly at the side of the person being supervised. This means they are readily available on the unit or in the same location where the care is being provided and must have the opportunity to observe the nursing practice as required. In community health settings, being readily available in the same location where the care is being provided means that the regulated member providing supervision is physically present in the practice setting (for example, at an influenza immunization clinic the RN or NP would be present in the same room where the nursing student or UNE would be immunizing clients).
- Indirect remote supervision means that the regulated member providing supervision must be available for consultation, guidance, and oversight, is not

physically present where the care is being provided, and is able to be contacted through the use of technology. The regulated member providing supervision may be available in a nearby unit, within the building, or by phone, pager, or other information communication technology methods when the person being supervised needs support or guidance.

**Undergraduate nursing employee** – A nursing student, who has the competencies attained in their approved nursing program, required for the role of undergraduate nursing employee (UNE) as outlined in the employer job description and has been employed to provide nursing care.

## References

College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta. (2013). *Practice standards for regulated members*. Edmonton, AB: Author.

College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta. (2019). *Restricted activities standards*. Edmonton, AB: Author.

*Government Organization Act*, R.S.A. 2000, Sch. 7.1.

*Health Professions Act*, R.S.A. 2000, c. H-7.

Registered Nurses Association of Ontario. (2007). *Professionalism in nursing best practice guidelines*. Ottawa, ON: Author.

*Registered Nurses Profession Regulation*, Alta. Reg. 232/2005.

## Appendix A: Restricted Activities Authorized for Regulated Members

### Registered Nurses Profession Regulation, Alta. Reg. 232/2005.

The restricted activities that regulated members are authorized to perform are identified under section 15 of the *Registered Nurses Profession Regulation*:

#### Restrictions

- 14.1(1)** Despite sections 15 to 18, regulated members must restrict themselves in performing restricted activities to those activities that they are competent to perform and to those that are appropriate to their area of practice and the procedures being performed.
- (2)** A regulated member who performs a restricted activity must do so in accordance with the Standards of Practice.
- (3)** A regulated member or other person shall not supervise the performance of a restricted activity unless the regulated member or person is authorized or permitted to perform the restricted activity without being supervised.
- (4)** A regulated member or other person who supervises the performance of a restricted activity under sections 15 to 18 must do so in accordance with the Standards of Practice.
- 15(1)** A regulated member registered on any register may, within the practice of registered nursing, perform the following restricted activities:
- (a)** to cut a body tissue, to administer anything by an invasive procedure on body tissue or to perform surgical or other invasive procedures on body tissue below the dermis or the mucous membrane;
- (b)** to insert or remove instruments, devices, fingers or hands
- (i)** beyond the cartilaginous portion of the ear canal,
  - (ii)** beyond the point in the nasal passages where they normally narrow,
  - (iii)** beyond the pharynx,
  - (iv)** beyond the opening of the urethra,
  - (v)** beyond the labia majora,
  - (vi)** beyond the anal verge, or
  - (vii)** into an artificial opening into the body;
- (c)** to insert into the ear canal under pressure, liquid, air or gas;
- (d)** to reduce a dislocation of a joint;

- (e) subject to subsection (2), to compound or dispense a Schedule 1 drug or Schedule 2 drug;
- (f) to administer a vaccine or parenteral nutrition;
- (g) to compound or administer blood or blood products;
- (h) to administer diagnostic imaging contrast agents;
- (i) to administer radiopharmaceuticals, radiolabelled substances, radioactive gases or radioaerosols;
- (j) to prescribe or administer nitrous oxide, for the purposes of anaesthesia or sedation;
- (j.1) to order or apply non-ionizing radiation in ultrasound imaging, other than the application of ultrasound to a fetus;
- (k) to perform a psychosocial intervention with an expectation of treating a substantial disorder of thought, mood, perception, orientation or memory that grossly impairs
  - (i) judgment,
  - (ii) behaviour,
  - (iii) capacity to recognize reality, or
  - (iv) ability to meet the ordinary demands of life;
- (l) to manage labour or deliver a baby.

(2) Despite subsection (1)(e), a regulated member registered on any register performing the restricted activity described in subsection (1)(e) shall not distribute, trade or barter for money or valuable consideration, or keep for sale or offer for sale, a Schedule 1 drug or a Schedule 2 drug but may distribute or give away a Schedule 1 drug or a Schedule 2 drug without expectation or hope of compensation or reward.

(2.1) A regulated member registered on the registered nurse register may, within the practice of registered nursing perform the restricted activity of ordering any form of ionizing radiation in medical radiography.

(2.2) A regulated member registered on the registered nurse register who meets the requirements approved by the Council and who has been authorized to do so by the Registrar may, within the practice of registered nursing, perform the restricted activity of prescribing a Schedule 1 drug.

(4) A regulated member registered on the registered nurse register or on the certified graduate nurse register may, within the practice of registered nursing, perform the restricted activity of applying non-ionizing radiation in ultrasound imaging to a fetus, but

only under the supervision of a person who provides health services and who is authorized by this Regulation or another regulation under the Act or by another enactment to apply ultrasound to a fetus.

**(5)** A regulated member registered on the nurse practitioner register and a regulated member registered on the courtesy register as a nurse practitioner and a regulated member registered on the provisional register as a graduate nurse practitioner may perform the restricted activities listed in subsection (1) and the following additional restricted activities when practising as a nurse practitioner:

- (a)** to set or reset a fracture of a bone;
- (b)** to prescribe a Schedule 1 drug;
- (c)** to prescribe blood or blood products;
- (d)** to prescribe diagnostic imaging contrast agents;
- (e)** to prescribe radiopharmaceuticals, radiolabelled substances, radioactive gases and radioaerosols;
- (f)** to order or apply any form of ionizing radiation in medical radiography;
- (g)** to order any form of ionizing radiation in nuclear medicine;
- (h)** to order non-ionizing radiation in magnetic resonance imaging;
- (i)** to order or apply non-ionizing radiation in ultrasound imaging, including any application of ultrasound to a fetus.

**(6)** In this section,

- (a)** Schedule 1 drug means a Schedule 1 drug within the meaning of Part 4 of the Pharmacy and Drug Act;
- (b)** Schedule 2 drug means a Schedule 2 drug within the meaning of Part 4 of the Pharmacy and Drug Act.

### **Restriction**

**16(1)** Despite section 15, regulated members must restrict themselves in performing restricted activities to those activities that they are competent to perform and to those that are appropriate to the member's area of practice and the procedures being performed.

**(2)** A regulated member who performs a restricted activity must do so in accordance with the standards of practice.

## Appendix B: Regulations for Students Performing Restricted Activities

*Registered Nurses Profession Regulation, Alta. Reg. 232/2005.*

### Students

#### Supervision of students

- 17(1)** A nursing student who is enrolled in an approved nursing program and who is participating in a clinical practicum in Alberta or is employed as an undergraduate nursing employee in Alberta is permitted to perform the restricted activities set out in section 15(1) and (3) under the supervision of a regulated member who is authorized to perform those restricted activities and has expressly consented to supervise the restricted activity.
- (2)** A nursing student who is enrolled in a nursing education program in a province or territory of Canada other than Alberta leading to initial entry to practise as a registered nurse and who is participating in a clinical practicum in Alberta or is employed as an undergraduate nursing employee in Alberta is permitted to perform the restricted activities set out in section 15(1) and (3) under the supervision of a regulated member who is authorized to perform those restricted activities and has expressly consented to supervise the restricted activities.
- (3)** A nursing student who
- (a) is enrolled in a nursing education program in a jurisdiction outside Canada that is approved in that jurisdiction, and
  - (b) has been authorized by an educational institution in Alberta to participate in a clinical experience of an approved nursing program in Alberta offered by the educational institution is permitted to perform the restricted activities set out in section 15(1) and (3) under the supervision of a regulated member who is authorized to perform those restricted activities and has expressly consented to supervise the restricted activities.
- (4)** A regulated member who is registered on the registered nurse register or registered as a registered nurse on the courtesy register and who is enrolled in a nurse practitioner education program approved by the Council is permitted to perform the restricted activities referred to in section 15(5) as part of the clinical practicum of the nurse practitioner education program if the regulated member is under the supervision of a person who is authorized to perform those restricted activities and has expressly consented to supervise the restricted activities.

- (5) A student enrolled in a nurse practitioner education program in a province or territory of Canada other than Alberta is permitted to perform the restricted activities set out in section 15(5) if the student
- (a) is registered as a regulated member on the registered nurse register or courtesy register, and
  - (b) is supervised by a person who is authorized to perform those restricted activities and has expressly consented to supervise the restricted activities.
- (6) A student enrolled in a nurse practitioner education program outside Canada is permitted to perform the restricted activities set out in section 15(5) if the student
- (a) is registered as a regulated member on the registered nurse register or courtesy register,
  - (b) meets any requirements established by the Council for the purposes of this section, and
  - (c) is supervised by a person who is authorized to perform those restricted activities and has expressly consented to supervise the restricted activities.
- (7) A student in a health services program of studies, other than an approved nursing program, who is authorized by an enactment to perform a restricted activity set out in section 15(1), (3) or (5) is permitted to perform that restricted activity under the supervision of a regulated member who is authorized to perform that restricted activity and has expressly consented to supervise the restricted activity.
- (8) Supervision under this section must be carried out in accordance with the standards of practice.

### **Supervision of applicants for registration**

**17.1** An applicant for registration as a regulated member who is required by the Registrar or Registration Committee to take a course that includes a clinical component is, when engaged in the clinical component of the course and to the extent necessary to fulfil the requirements of the clinical component of the course, permitted to perform the restricted activities set out in section 15(1), (3) or (5) under the supervision of a person who is authorized to perform those restricted activities.