



Supervision Standards

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Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline the **SUPERVISION**¹ authorizations and expectations for a **REGISTRANT** supervising

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. a student in a health services program of studies other than an approved nursing program;
4. a **NURSE PRACTITIONER STUDENT** in an approved nurse practitioner (NP) program leading to initial entry-to-practice as an NP; and
5. a registrant 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

- College of Registered Nurses of Alberta (CRNA) requirements for each **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.

The *Supervision Standards* apply at all times to all registrants regardless of role or practice setting. The standards are grounded in the foundational *Practice Standards for Registrants* (CRNA, 2023) and the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) *Code of Ethics* (2017). The directions, concepts, and principles in this document align with the CRNA's *Restricted Activities Standards* (2022b). The *Supervision Standards* inform the requirements for supervision as outlined in the *Nursing Education Program Approval Standards* (CRNA, 2022a).

Legislation

The *Health Professions Act* (HPA, 2000) provides authority to the regulatory college to adopt standards of practice that set minimum expectations for how a registrant performs the **RESTRICTED ACTIVITY**, who is permitted to perform the restricted activity under the supervision of a registrant, and how a registrant must supervise persons who provide restricted activities under the registrant's supervision. 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.

¹ Words and phrases displayed in **BOLD CAPITALS** upon first mention are defined in the Glossary.

Nursing students and UNEs are not registrants of the CRNA. However, nursing students and UNEs are permitted to perform the restricted activities set out in the *Health Professions Restricted Activity Regulation* (Alta Reg 22/2023, s 60) under the supervision of a registrant who is authorized to perform those restricted activities and has consented to supervise the restricted activities. Registrants are authorized through these standards to supervise nursing students, UNEs, students from other health services programs of study, NP students, and registrants on the provisional register.

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

GRADUATE NURSES (GNs) and **GRADUATE NURSE PRACTITIONERS** (GNPs) are registrants on the provisional register. The restricted activities that GNs and GNPs are authorized to perform are identified in *Health Professions Restricted Activity Regulation* (Alta Reg 22/2023, s 60). Registrants on the provisional register must be supervised in accordance with the condition specified by the registrar or Registration Committee, and as authorized by these standards.

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, and employer requirements.
7. Supervision facilitates continuity of care.
8. Direction and guidance are provided as required to the individual being supervised by answering questions, consultation, oversight and constructive feedback.

Standards for Supervision of Restricted Activities

These standards for supervision identify the minimum expectations of the CRNA registrants. The criteria describe how registrants of the CRNA must meet each standard and are not listed in order of importance.

Standard 1: Supervision of Nursing Students

A registrant can only supervise a nursing student performing a restricted activity when the registrant 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.

Criteria

The registrant 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 employer requirements and only supervise a restricted activity that is appropriate to the practice setting;
- 1.5 collaborate with the faculty member for 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 registrant who is a nursing faculty member must

- 1.7 decide the type of supervision required in collaboration with the registrant 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 registrant can only supervise a UNE performing a restricted activity when the registrant is authorized to perform the restricted activity and consents to supervising the UNE performing that restricted activity.

Criteria

The registrant 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 community settings;
- 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; and
- 2.6** comply with employer requirements and only supervise a restricted activity that is appropriate to the practice setting.

Standard 3: Supervision of Students from Other Health Services Program of Studies

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

Criteria

The registrant 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 employer requirements and only supervise a restricted activity that is appropriate to the practice setting;
- 3.5** collaborate with the faculty member for 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 NP 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 registrant on the RN 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 the 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 the *Health Professions Restricted Activity Regulation* (Alta Reg 22/2023, s 60);
- 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 for the NP student performing a restricted activity; and
- 4.7 comply with employer requirements and only perform a restricted activity that is appropriate to the practice setting.

The registrant 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 requirements 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 registrant who is the faculty member of the NP student must

- 4.13** decide the type of supervision required in collaboration with the registrant 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 Registrants on the Provisional Register

GNs and GNPs are registrants on the provisional register.

Graduates of an approved or recognized entry-level nursing education program or internationally educated nurses (IENs) can apply for registration. Applicants who have not yet met all the requirements for RN or NP registration may be approved by the registrar and a provisional permit issued.

Registrants on the provisional register can practise nursing and be employed as a GN or a GNP, while they progress toward meeting all the requirements for registration on the RN register or the NP register.

Standard 5: Supervision of Registrants on the Provisional Register

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

Criteria

The registrant on the provisional register must

- 5.1** have a current CRNA provisional practice permit;
- 5.2** have, at minimum, indirect remote supervision in all practice settings;
- 5.3** be supervised by a registrant or a person who provides health services and is authorized by a regulation under the HPA (2000) to perform that restricted activity;
- 5.4** not supervise students, UNEs, or other regulated or unregulated health-care providers;
- 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 registrant 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
 - e)** practice setting level of risk for the registrant on the provisional register performing the restricted activity; and
- 5.7** comply with employer requirements and only perform a restricted activity that is appropriate to the practice setting.

The registrant providing supervision must

- 5.8** provide, at minimum, indirect remote supervision;
- 5.9** supervise the registrant 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 registrant on the provisional register performing the restricted activity.

Glossary

APPROVED NURSING PROGRAM – A nursing education program in Alberta approved by the Nursing Education Program Approval Committee in accordance with nursing education standards and criteria approved by the Council.

CLIENT – Refers to patients, residents, families, groups, communities, and populations.

COMPETENCIES – The integrated knowledge, skills, abilities, and judgment required to practise nursing safely and ethically.

GRADUATE NURSE(S) – A graduate of an approved or recognized entry-level nursing education program or an internationally educated nurse (IEN) applicant who is on the provisional register and is in the process of meeting the CRNA's RN registration requirements.

GRADUATE NURSE PRACTITIONER – A graduate of an approved nurse practitioner program who is on the provisional register and is in the process of meeting the CRNA's 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 practitioner.

HEALTH SERVICE(S) – “A service provided to people

- i. to protect, promote or maintain their health,
- ii. to prevent illness,
- iii. to diagnose, treat or rehabilitate, or
- iv. 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 – An RN who is currently enrolled in an approved nursing program leading to initial entry-to-practice as a nurse practitioner.

NURSING STUDENT – A person enrolled in an approved nursing education program leading to initial entry-to-practice as an RN, re-entry-to-practice as an RN, or initial entry-to-practice as an NP.

QUALITY PRACTICE ENVIRONMENT – Practice environments that have the organizational and human support allocations necessary for safe, competent and ethical nursing care (CNA, 2017).

REGISTRANT – Includes registered nurses (RNs), graduate nurses, certified graduate nurses, nurse practitioners (NPs), graduate nurse practitioners, and RN or NP courtesy registrants on the CRNA registry.

RESTRICTED ACTIVITY – High risk activity that requires specific competencies and skills to be carried out safely and are listed in the HPA (2000) and the *Health Professions Restricted Activity Regulation* (Alta Reg 22/2023, s 60) that are part of providing a health service. Restricted activities are not linked to any particular health profession and a number of regulated health practitioners may perform a particular restricted activity.

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

TYPE OF SUPERVISION – Direct, indirect and indirect remote:

- Direct supervision: The registrant providing supervision must be present in the practice setting where care is being provided; they are at the side of the person being supervised.
- Indirect supervision: The registrant 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 registrant 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: The registrant 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 registrant 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

Canadian Nurses Association. (2017). *Code of ethics for registered nurses*. <https://www.cna-aiic.ca/en/nursing/regulated-nursing-in-canada/nursing-ethics>

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Health Professions Act, RSA 2000, c H-7.

Health Professions Restricted Activity Regulation, Alta Reg 22/2023, s 60.