



COLLEGE OF  
**LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSES**  
OF ALBERTA

# Practical Nurse Program Approval Standards and Indicators

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Approved by Council September 27, 2024, with an effective coming into force date of January 1, 2025



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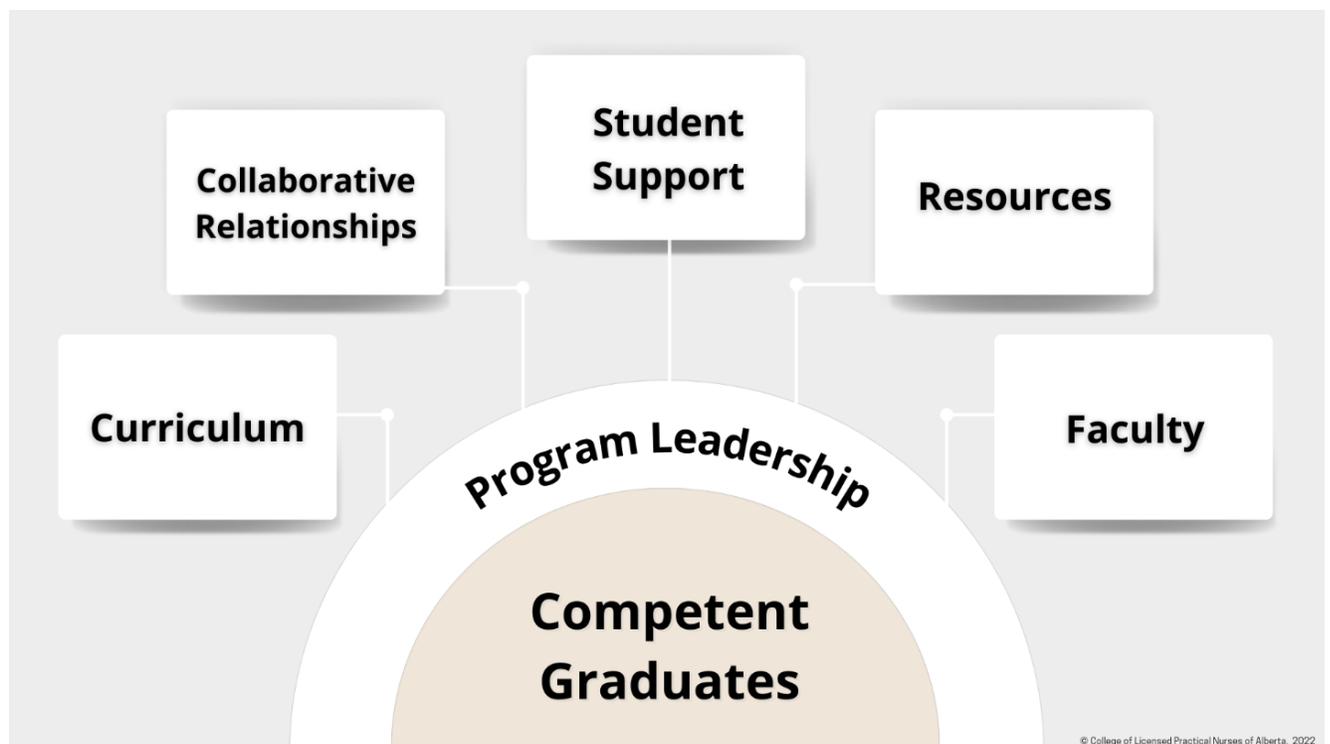


## Program Review Mission Statement

The College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta (CLPNA) conducts reviews of practical nurse diploma, advanced practice, and refresher programs to safeguard public interest. The purpose of program review is to support the delivery of quality programming, thereby facilitating competent graduates to the provincial workforce.

## Program Review Framework

The program review framework is the lens through which all practical nurse programs are reviewed. Six broad standards have been identified as contributing to a program's ability to produce competent graduates.



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FIGURE 1.1 FRAMEWORK



## **Standard 1: Program Leadership**

Program leadership is the foundation for which all other standards are supported. The leadership team has control over a program budget, has autonomy to make decisions regarding the program, and engages in ongoing program evaluation and improvement. A minimum of one member of the leadership team holds an active practice permit in nursing in the province of Alberta. In addition, the leadership team is comprised of individuals with related industry, academic and administrative experience to set the program's mission, and provide the strategic direction to address immediate and long-term goals and challenges.

### ***The following indicators apply to ALL Practical Nursing programs***

- 1.1 The program has a defined leadership team comprised of individuals with industry, administrative, and/or academic experience.
- 1.2 A minimum of one member of the leadership team holds an active practice permit, free from restrictions from either the CLPNA, CRNA or CRPNA.
- 1.3 The leadership team has the authority to direct and manage the program budget and resources.
- 1.4 The leadership team engages in ongoing program evaluation and quality improvement.
- 1.5 The leadership team demonstrates continued learning, growth and development related to leadership.

### ***The following indicator applies to Practical Nurse Diploma and Refresher programs ONLY***

- 1.6 A minimum of one member of the leadership team holds a master's degree or higher in health administration, a health-related discipline or education (for example, Nursing, Education, Public Health, Health Administration).

## **Standard 2: Resources**

The program has adequate space, financial, human, and technical resources in addition to relevant clinical-placement capacity to facilitate student learning and practical experiences. The program has the infrastructure and security to support the maintenance, cataloging and retrieval of student records.

### ***The following indicators apply to ALL Practical Nursing programs***

- 2.1 The program has the physical and/or technological resources to facilitate in-person and or online learning.
- 2.2 The program has access to infrastructure that simulates care settings and students are provided with adequate laboratory supplies and time to achieve learning outcomes.
- 2.3 The program has the infrastructure needed to maintain, catalog, and retrieve student records.
- 2.4 The program has adequate faculty to deliver the program.
- 2.5 The program has clinical and preceptorship placements to support student enrollment.



***The following indicators apply to Practical Nursing Diploma programs ONLY***

- 2.6 The program provides students with clinical learning opportunities to care for diverse patient populations throughout different care settings (long-term care, acute, medical, etc.) to support entry to practice.
- 2.7 The program uses simulation to augment the attainment of learning outcomes.

***The following sub-indicators apply to Practical Nursing Diploma programs replacing clinical hours with simulation***

- 2.7.1 The program provides students with an orientation to simulation prior to using the experience to replace clinical learning.
- 2.7.2 The program does not exceed 50% clinical hour replacement with high quality simulation and counts the simulation to clinical hour ratio at a maximum of 1:2.
- 2.7.3 Faculty responsible for facilitating simulation as a replacement of clinical hours have training in simulation best practices.
- 2.7.4 The program's simulation center is accredited by an external organization such as the Society for Simulation in Healthcare (SSH).
- 2.7.5 The program reports annually on simulation replacement experience, with a focus on students' ability to achieve learning outcomes in current and subsequent clinicals and preceptorship, and demonstrates responsive action when gaps are identified.

***The following indicator applies to Advanced Practice programs ONLY***

- 2.8 The program provides students with adequate clinical learning opportunities to support students assuming an advanced practice role.

### **Standard 3: Curriculum**

The curriculum has a logical sequencing which allows for development of knowledge, skills, behaviours, and attitudes. The program curriculum demonstrates mapping to the related scopes of practice and entry-level competencies. Student evaluation and program outcomes align with the scope of practice, entry-level competencies, as well as legal and professional expectations. The program has a formalized method to engage in an ongoing review of the curriculum and subject matter experts are consulted as a part of curriculum changes.

***The following indicators apply to ALL Practical Nursing programs***

- 3.1 The program curriculum is structured in such a way as to allow for the progression and consolidation of knowledge, skills, behaviors, attitudes, and judgments.
- 3.2 Course learning outcomes are mapped to the most current version of the CLPNA's entry-level competencies.
- 3.3 Specific learning outcomes for program courses are measurable and accessible to students.



- 3.4 The program has a formalized process in place that provides a cyclical review of the entire curriculum a minimum of every five years.
- 3.5 The program has a process in place to monitor emerging industry trends, best practice and incoming health regulation and adapts curriculum to reflect the realities of current practice.

***The following indicators apply to Practical Nursing Diploma programs ONLY***

- 3.6 The curriculum contains a minimum of two 3-credit courses in arts, sciences and/or humanities, which **transfers** to an **approved program of study** at a university.
- 3.7 The program uses a variety of assessments which demonstrate a diverse evaluation of competencies.
- 3.8 The program applies exam blueprinting.
- 3.9 The program demonstrates a consistent trend of being equal to or above the national and provincial pass rate for first-time CPNRE writers.

***The following indicators apply to Practical Nursing Diploma and Refresher programs ONLY***

- 3.10 The curriculum includes a concentrated clinical practice of no less than 225 hours occurring at the end of the program.
- 3.11 The program seeks out the realities of practice by engaging Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN) in the ongoing review of program content.

***The following indicators apply to Advanced Practice programs ONLY***

- 3.12 The program evaluates students' comprehension and readiness to perform advanced practice skills prior to clinical practice.
- 3.13 The program seeks input from subject matter experts when reviewing and updating program content.

## **Standard 4: Faculty**

**Program faculty** have instructional and clinical experience relevant to their role in the program. Faculty have practical knowledge of the scope of practice, challenges and opportunities facing the profession. Faculty also have and are supported in further developing facilitation skills to administer the program's curriculum. The program supports faculty in maintaining industry connections and currency in nursing practice. The program has a formalized method to gather and respond to trends in faculty attrition and faculty feedback regarding courses, teaching practices, program structure, policies, and procedures.

***The following indicators apply to ALL Practical Nursing programs***

- 4.1 Program faculty assigned to designated nursing courses hold active practice permits from either CLPNA, CRNA, or CRPNA.
- 4.2 The program provides an orientation to all faculty prior to facilitating any in-person, online or clinical teaching.
- 4.3 The program faculty are supported by the program in maintaining currency in practice and or subject matter expertise.



- 4.4 Faculty receive feedback on performance.
- 4.5 The program tracks attrition of faculty and is responsive to any sudden increase of faculty attrition.
- 4.6 Faculty are engaged at minimum annually to provide feedback on teaching and learning experiences and the program monitors feedback to inform program improvement.

***The following indicators apply to Practical Nursing Diploma and Refresher programs ONLY***

- 4.7 Faculty demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of CLPNA entry-level competencies, code of ethics and standard of practices.

***The following indicator applies to Advanced Practice programs ONLY***

- 4.8 Faculty demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of advanced practice competencies and LPN scope.

## **Standard 5: Student Support**

The program has policies, procedures, and resources in place to support students from application through to end of their program. The program demonstrates consistent application of the admission criteria and sound assessment of individual competency when awarding prior learning (PLAR). The program has a formalized method to gather and respond to trends in students' outcomes and student feedback regarding courses, teaching practices, program structure, policies, and procedures.

***The following indicators apply to ALL Practical Nursing programs***

- 5.1 The program has a documented admission criteria and the selection process is available to applicants.
- 5.2 Students are provided with an orientation document(s) (for example, a student handbook) inclusive of all clinical requirements, student expectations and relevant program policies and procedures at the beginning of the program.
- 5.3 The program provides students with ongoing feedback (both formative and summative) in theory, lab, and clinical courses, as well as opportunities for remediation.
- 5.4 The clinical and preceptorship faculty to student ratio supports safe clinical supervision and instructor availability.
- 5.5 Students are engaged in providing formal feedback on teaching and learning experiences and the program monitors both formal and informal feedback to inform program improvements.
- 5.6 The program monitors **student attrition** and uses the data to inform program improvement.
- 5.7 The program has a method in place to monitor, respond to **near misses** and **errors** in clinical practice.

***The following indicators apply to Practical Nursing Diploma programs ONLY***

- 5.8 The program has a documented process to award prior learning (PLAR) which is communicated to students at the beginning of the program.

***The following sub-indicator applies to any Diploma Practical Nursing program which awards PLAR, or credit based on a previously awarded credential opposed to individual assessment.***



- 5.1.1 The program uses evidence to support the recognition of prior certification and/or work experience as a course equivalence.

***The following indicator applies to Practical Nursing Diploma and Refresher programs ONLY***

- 5.9 The program supports student experiences by providing both assigning managers and preceptors with orientation material that includes at minimum the roles of the preceptor, student and faculty advisor/liaison and a clear method to contact the program and the advisor/liaison.

## **Standard 6: Collaborative Relationships**

The program cultivates relationships with industry, external stakeholders such as the Government of Alberta, graduates, and the regulatory college. The program maintains current placement agreements with clinical partners and seeks opportunities for students to practice in a variety of clinical settings. External stakeholder feedback, graduate preparedness and industry needs are collected and analyzed as a part of the ongoing program evaluation.

***The following indicators apply to ALL Practical Nursing programs***

- 6.1 The program has formal clinical placement agreements in place identifying the responsibilities of the program/institution and clinical partners.
- 6.2 The program collaborates and seeks out the CLPNA to provide information, feedback, and support in program delivery. (For example, submissions of Notices of Change.)
- 6.3 The program collaborates with and seeks out additional external stakeholders (for example, preceptors, government, patient safety groups,) to provide program feedback.
- 6.4 The program seeks out feedback from clinical partners, employers, and program graduates to validate program outcomes.



## Appendix A: Definitions

**Approved Program of study:** A program that has been formally assessed by Alberta Advanced Education and approved by the Minister or licensed by the Private Career Colleges.

**Errors:** An event that occurred in clinical practice which resulted in patient harm because of a student's action or inaction.

**High Quality:** Simulation experience provided to students with a high degree of realism and clinical problem solving. High Quality also includes a process to monitor and validate student outcomes. Please note high quality does not equate to high fidelity.

**Near Misses:** An event that occurred in clinical practice which could have resulted in patient harm because of a student's action or inaction.

**Program Faculty:** Any individual who is involved in direct student instruction in the theory, laboratory, or clinical setting.

**PLAR:** Prior learning assessment and recognition

**Student attrition:** Students who have withdrawn from or have failed a course or program.

**Transfers:** A course which has deemed to be equivalent at another approved program of study.