

Practice Directive

Mentoring/Preceptorship

College of Registered Nurses of Prince Edward
Island

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Background

Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners have a professional and ethical obligation to assist colleagues, students, and other professionals to acquire new knowledge. RNs and NPs must ensure that learning environments are supportive and allow the learner to practice within their own set of individual competencies. RNs and NPs must always consider the needs and safety of all clients under their care when sharing client care responsibilities with learners.

The purpose of this practice directive is to provide a guide to RNs and NPs who will be mentoring or participating in a preceptorship experience in the practice setting. The RN or NP mentor is required to continue to work in accordance with the employer policies and guidelines.

Mentor/Preceptor

Mentoring is the provision of guidance by a more experienced or more knowledgeable person in a certain area of expertise [nursing], to a less experienced or less knowledgeable person. The role of a mentor can be either formal or informal. A formal mentorship is structured and has defined objectives for the learner. An informal mentorship has less structure and may be initiated by either the mentor or mentee. Objectives or goals are not clearly defined, however, the mentee gains knowledge, wisdom, and support from the interaction.

Participating in a preceptorship experience is when an experienced practitioner teaches and supervises students or less experienced practitioners. The preceptor is responsible for identifying preceptee learning needs and connecting them with opportunities to meet those needs. This relationship is structured and occurs within a specified timeframe. The relationship concludes when the specified time is completed, goals and objectives have been met by the preceptee or the relationship required termination. Termination of the preceptor/preceptee relationship can be initiated by either party involved, in which case the goals and objectives of the experience may remain unmet.

Learners and Learning Environments

In the clinical environment, RNs and NPs are expected to work with many learners from a variety of different programs. Some learners may be from programs outside of nursing, such as paramedicine, nutrition, respiratory therapy, physical/occupational therapy, and medicine. RNs and NPs must ensure when working with learners from non-nursing programs that they practice within their own scope of practice and scope of employment. Before working with a learner, the preceptor must gather information from the program instructor about course objectives, goals, and specific skills the learner must achieve.

A nursing student is a learner that is in a nursing program that will lead to initial entry-to-practice as a registered nurse. These students are in programs that are of a two or a four-year duration and will receive a Bachelor of Nursing degree upon program completion. A nurse practitioner student is a learner in a post-graduate nursing program that will lead to entry-to-practice as a nurse practitioner. NP programs are usually two years in duration (fulltime) and lead to a master's in nursing.

Internationally educated nurses completing a bridging program are another type of learner. These individuals have knowledge and experience as a registered nurse in their home country. They are completing additional education in Canada to help bridge gaps in knowledge and skill so that they can meet Canadian Entry Level Competencies.

Nursing programs offer a variety of clinical learning opportunities so that students can meet program objectives and entry to practice requirements. Learners will participate in the clinical area as observers or as care providers depending on factors such as the learner's skill level, complexity of client care, and institutional policy.

Keeping learning environments safe is a shared responsibility between the RN/NP, learner, and clinical instructor/faculty advisor. Effective and open communication between the RN/NP, clinical instructor, and learner is key. The RN/NP must communicate clear expectations about responsibilities related to client care, and schedule frequent "check-ins" with the learner. The RN/NP must demonstrate a culture of safety and support learners to report errors, omissions, and adverse events. RNs/NPs must intervene in situations where the safety of the client is at risk and is ultimately responsible for client care.

Reserved Activities

Reserved activities are interventions, treatments, and procedures that can be performed by health care professionals authorized to do so by legislation. For RNs and NPs in PEI, the Regulated Health Professions Act and Registered Nurses Regulations give this authority.

Nursing students, while fulfilling the requirements to become an RN or NP, are authorized to carry out reserved activities that are within their individual competency while under supervision only. A nursing student's competency is based on the knowledge and skill obtained within their program. Supervision must come from an individual that is authorized to perform the reserved activity, and also has the necessary knowledge and skill.

Supervision

Supervision is the act of overseeing the performance of specific requirements (competencies, job expectations) of another individual. Supervision is a component of preceptorship and may be a requirement of a formal mentorship. The supervision of Graduate Nurses, Graduate Nurse Practitioners, and Provisional Registrants is required by legislation and [policy](#). Employers may have additional policies related to supervision in the workplace.

As an RN or NP in a supervisory role, it is important to be cognizant of the expectations regarding:

- when and to whom to report issues or concerns,
- the set number of practice hours the individual must complete,
- the specific tasks or interventions the person cannot perform,
- and the evaluation process.

The RN or NP must also ensure that the individual being supervised understands the expectations.

Supervision can only occur when both the supervisor and supervisee work side by side. This means

they have the same assignment and care for the same clients. The supervisee has an opportunity to ask questions and seek guidance. The supervisor can alert the supervisee of issues the supervisee may have missed due to their inexperience. The GN, GNP, or Provisional Class Registrant must not work independently under any circumstance.

Graduate Nurses

Graduate Nurses and Graduate Nurse Practitioners differ from students/learners in the clinical environment. These individuals have completed their education and hold a graduate registration. They can practice to the full scope of an RN or NP but must always be supervised in practice by an RN or NP.

Provisional Registrants

Provisional Registrants are RNs or NPs that have met all requirements for registration except for currency of practice. They are required to complete a specific number of supervised hours and may have additional conditions placed on their registration. They can practice to the full scope of an RN or NP but must always be supervised in practice by an RN or NP. For more information on Provisional Registration, please see the [Provisional Registration Policy](#).

Employed Student Nurses

Employed Student Nurses are hired by employers and follow a specified job description. A formal mentorship or preceptorship is not required for these positions. The Employed Student Nurse will have an orientation and will be provided with a job description. Student nurses are not regulated by CRNPEI and work under a scope of employment determined by their employer.