

OPERATING STANDARD

SUBJECT/TITLE: Supervision of Clinical Competencies for Undergraduate Nursing Students		PAGE: 1 of 4
RELATED OPERATING STANDARD: Medication Preparation and Administration for Undergraduate Nursing Students		DATE ESTABLISHED: May 6, 2021
AUTHORIZATION: Practice Procedure and Guidelines Sub-Committee Undergraduate Programs Committee Nursing Council	DATE LAST REVIEWED: November 13, 2025 November 19, 2025 March 25, 2026	DATE LAST REVISED: November 13, 2025

PURPOSE

- To promote the delivery of quality patient/client care and maintaining standards for safety.
- To comply with the Health Professions Act (2025) and associated legislation regarding competency to practice.
- To clarify nursing student scope of practice and supervision guidelines relating to clinical competencies.
- To provide a basis for ongoing discussions between Nursing Student, Nursing Instructor, Primary Nurse, Preceptor(s), Unit Management, and Faculty Advisor to deliver patient care as appropriate in clinical settings.
- To understand the supervision expectations for nursing student leading to initial entry to practice as a registered nurse (RN).

DEFINITIONS

Supervision: – the consultation, guidance, and oversight by a regulated member in the practice setting. Supervision may be direct, indirect, or indirect remote (CRNA 2022)

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.” (CRNA 2022, p. 13)

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)". (CRNA 2022, p. 13)

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." (CRNA 2022, p. 13)

Restricted Activity refers to "...high risk activities performed as a part of providing a health service that requires specific competencies to be carried out safely by authorized persons" (CRNA, 2022, p.3).

Nursing Student refers to an individual who is registered in a course or program of study in the Faculty of Nursing.

Nursing Instructor refers to any faculty member who teaches an undergraduate level on-campus or off-campus practice course within the Faculty of Nursing and are a regulated member.

Faculty Advisor refers to a faculty member in Term 8 who acts as a resource for consultation, teaching and overall evaluation of student progress.

Preceptor is "an experienced practitioner who provides supervision during clinical practice and facilitates the application of theory to practice for students and staff learners. A preceptor works with the learner for a defined period of time to assist the learner in acquiring new competencies required for safe, ethical, and quality practice. They assist the learner by setting expectations, providing effective feedback about their performance, and providing appropriate opportunities to meet their learning objectives" (Dalhousie University, n.d.).

Unit Manager refers to an individual who is accountable for the effective management of human resources and maintenance of Unit best practice standards and quality patient care (Alberta Health Services, 2021)

Supervision of Restricted Activities

According to the CRNA Supervision Standards (2022): "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."

In accordance with these standards "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" (CRNA, 2022, p. 5.).

<https://www.nurses.ab.ca/media/l25lhiyt/supervision-standards-2022.pdf>

OPERATING STANDARD STATEMENT

This operating standard is to provide guidelines of the supervision expectations for nursing students, including roles and responsibilities for nursing students.

The principles of supervision as outlined by the Supervision Standards (CRNA, 2022, p 5-6.) include:

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.

OPERATING STANDARD

The nursing student must follow the CRNA Supervision Standards and be aware of the CRNA Entry-level Competencies for the Practice of Registered Nurses (2019). 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.

These standards apply at all times to all nursing students within the undergraduate nursing program regardless of role or practice setting. The standards are grounded in the foundational Supervision Standards CRNA (2022) and the Canadian Nurses Association Code of Ethics (2025).

The regulated member who is a nursing faculty member must:

- 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

The regulated member must in collaboration with the faculty of nursing instructor:

- only supervise the restricted activities they are authorized to perform;
- only supervise restricted activities they are competent to perform;
- provide the type of supervision required;

- comply with organizational policy and only supervise a restricted activity that is appropriate to the practice setting;
- collaborate with the faculty member related to the student performing a restricted activity; and
- address and manage any competence issues of the nursing student in the performance of the restricted activity.

Roles and responsibilities of the student

- The expectations for the role and the performance of each nursing students are also based on the clinical placement settings expectations and demands.
- The nursing students is accountable to assess their own level of competence, to recognize the patient's health needs and to consult with the preceptor, nurse educator, nurse manager and faculty advisor.
- The student will need to assess their actual knowledge, skills and abilities or level of competence in consultation with faculty before proceeding with supervision learning activities (Alberta Health Services, n.d.).
- The student has completed all recommended learning modules as agreed upon by UCalgary Faculty of Nursing, and the practice site Unit Manager or designate.
- Nursing students in each term need to complete the required educational components prior to performing nursing skills in clinical practice.
- It is the responsibility of the student to seek and obtain supervision by a qualified healthcare provider for conducting restricted activities.
- The student will not engage in performing a high-risk restricted activity without the direct supervision of the preceptor/regulated healthcare provider.
- The supervising qualified healthcare provider co-signs the restricted activity/clinical competency documentation within the patient's record.
- The student must complete the learning activities related to the clinical competency as mandated by Alberta Health Services (AHS) or placement site prior to participating in the activity, and, if applicable, any other facility/organization requirements for student preparation.
- For high-risk activities, we recommend that preceptors directly supervise students every time.

REFERENCES

Alberta Health Services. (n.d.). [AHS Competencies: How You Can Use Them.](#)

Canadian Nurses Association. (2025) Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses. Author. <https://www.cna-aiic.ca/en/nursing/regulated-nursing-in-canada/nursing-ethics/2025-coe>

College of Registered Nurses of Alberta (2019). Entry-Level Competencies for the Practice of Registered Nurses. Author. <https://www.nurses.ab.ca/media/5ndpyfar/entry-level-competencies-for-the-practice-of-registered-nurses-mar-2019.pdf>

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Province of Alberta, Alberta King's Printer. Registered Nurses Professional Regulation: Health Professions Act: (2023). https://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/regs/2005_232.pdf

Historical reference: Alberta Health Services, Document #: CP-c-09 (2016): Specialized Clinical Competencies: Qualification and Performance.