



POLICY

SUBJECT/TITLE: Specialized Clinical Competencies for Undergraduate Students (Calgary Campus and Medicine Hat College Site)		PAGE: 1 of 3
RELATED POLICY: *Medication Preparation and Administration for Undergraduate Nursing Students	DATE ESTABLISHED: December 2011	
AUTHORIZATION: Practice Policy and Procedure Committee Undergraduate Programs Committee Nursing Council	DATE LAST REVISED: October 24, 2018 (editorial revisions) December 6, 2016 December 12, 2016	

PURPOSE

- To maintain standards for safety and quality patient/client care.
- To comply with the Government Organization Act (2000) and associated legislation regarding competency to practice.
- To address the learning needs of 4th year nursing students enrolled in Nursing 589 and Nursing 599 who are transitioning to independent practice and to identify the requirements for learning specialized clinical competencies in nursing practice
- To provide a basis for discussion between Student, Preceptor(s), Unit Management, and Faculty Advisor.

*This policy supersedes the “Medication Preparation and Administration for Undergraduate Nursing Students” policy when all conditions are met for the Specialized Competency to be performed by the student.

DEFINITION

Specialized Clinical Competency

Specialized Clinical Competencies (SCCs) are “those nursing competencies that require application of expert level knowledge, skills, judgment, critical thinking, and personal attributes that have been acquired through additional education and practice. The theory underlying some of these competencies may have been taught in basic nursing education programs, but the clinical competence required to perform these skills, however, has not been sufficiently developed without additional education and supervised practice” (Calgary Health Region, n.d.). SCCs include, but are not limited to, restricted activities as defined by the Government Organization Act, RSA 2000, Chapter G-10, Schedule 7.1. Specialized Clinical Competencies require preparation beyond entry-level practice.

POLICY STATEMENT

- Students will be supervised by a Preceptor who is certified in the specific SCC.
- “Students and instructors/preceptors understand that students cannot accept responsibility for the complex assessment, critical thinking and clinical decision-making skills that are associated with SCCs; such responsibility must remain with the preceptor/instructor (AHS Policy S-3(b), p. 6.)”.
- It is the responsibility of the **student** to seek and obtain supervision by their Preceptor(s)/Nursing Instructor (who must also be qualified) for conducting SCCs each and **every time** the competency is performed.
- The authorization to perform a specialized clinical competency is **not transferable** from one unit to another nor is the student considered certified in the SCC.

POLICY

Nursing 589 (TERM 7)

Nursing 589 (Term 7) students may participate in learning specialized clinical competencies only when all of the conditions below are met:

- Nursing 589 students may take on SCCs when it is deemed to be an integral aspect of nursing practice on the designated practice unit. The identification of SCC for NURS 589 students occurs in conjunction between the Nursing Instructor, the Nursing Practice Course Coordinator and Unit Managers/Educators.
- Strict adherence to AHS policy or facility organizational policy and procedures for SCCs is the responsibility of the student engaged in performing this competency.
- In NURS 589 the U of C/MHC Nursing Instructor must be certified in the SCC and is willing to **directly supervise** the student at all times when performing the SCC. This means that the U of C/MHC Nursing Instructor is **at the elbow** of the student any time the student performs the SCC. The Nursing Instructor **co-signs** the documentation of the SCC.
- The student has completed all mandatory **learning modules** as agreed upon by U of C/MHC Faculty of Nursing, Alberta Health Services (AHS) or any other agencies.

Nursing 599 (TERM 8)

Final Preceptorship Students in Nursing 599 (Term 8) may participate in learning specialized clinical competencies only when all of the conditions below are met:

- Strict adherence to AHS policy or facility organizational policy and procedures for specialized clinical competencies is the responsibility of the student engaged in performing this competency.
- The Unit Manager or designate has agreed to allow the student to perform the specialized clinical competency while completing a final practicum on the unit (see exception below). It is up to the discretion of the Preceptor and/or Unit Manager to determine student readiness to conduct the SCC and/or if the clinical situation is appropriate for the student to conduct the SCC.

- The Preceptor is certified in the specialized clinical competency and is willing to **directly supervise** the student at all times when performing the specialized clinical competency. This means that the Preceptor will supervise **“at the elbow”** of the student any time the student performs the specialized clinical competency. The student will not engage in performing an SCC without the direct supervision of the preceptor at all times. The Preceptor **co-signs** the specialized clinical competency documentation within the patient’s record.
- The student has completed all **learning modules related to the SCC** as mandated by Alberta Health Services (AHS) or placement site, and, if applicable, any other facility/organization requirements for student preparation.

Exceptions:

The following 3 Alberta Health Services practice areas have existing AHS organizational policies regarding students and SCCs, which the student is responsible for adhering to:

- Critical Care: Nursing – Preceptorship of 4th Year Students (Calgary Health Region, Critical Care, n.d.)
- PACU: Position Statement: 4th Year Nursing Students Participation in the Performance of PACU Specific Specialized Clinical Competencies (AHS, 2010)
- SARP (Southern Alberta Renal Program/Hemodialysis): Nursing Student Practicum in SARP (AHS, 2015)

REFERENCES

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

College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta (2005). *Health Professions Act: Standards for registered nurses in the performance of restricted activities*. Edmonton, AB. Author.

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 (2005). *Standards for supervision of nursing students and undergraduate nursing employees providing client care*. Edmonton, AB: Author.

Government Organization Act, RSA 2000, Chapter G-10, Schedule 7.1.