

Nursing Programs Handbook 2026-2027



Welcome to the Nursing Programs! We are delighted to welcome you as you begin a new academic year and take the next step in your nursing journey.

Throughout your studies, you will engage in meaningful learning experiences that will challenge you, inspire you, and help you develop the knowledge, clinical judgment, and professional skills required for success in practice. Each course and practicum experience has been carefully designed to support your growth as a future nurse.

As you begin the semester, remember that you are part of a supportive community. Our faculty and staff are committed to your success and are here to assist you with academic guidance, program resources, and any challenges you may encounter along the way.

We encourage you to make the most of the opportunities available both inside and outside the classroom. Participate in campus activities, connect with your peers, and take advantage of the many resources and networking opportunities that will enrich your educational experience.

There will be moments of challenge, but there will also be many opportunities for learning, achievement, and personal growth and we are confident that, with your dedication and commitment, you will thrive.

We look forward to supporting you throughout your nursing education and celebrating your accomplishments in the years ahead.

Warm regards,

Hilde

Hilde Zitzelsberger, RN, PhD

Associate Professor and Associate Dean, Nursing

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IMPORTANT NOTE

The Nursing Programs Handbook is intended to supplement, not replace, the Ontario Tech University Academic Calendar. The Handbook is NOT a substitute for the Academic Calendar. Students are responsible for consulting both resources and remaining informed of current University and program requirements.

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this handbook at the time of publication. However, in the event of any discrepancy or inconsistency between this handbook and the regulations, policies, or procedures established by the Faculty of Health Sciences, Academic Council, or the Ontario Tech University Board of Governors, the official University regulations, policies, and procedures shall prevail.

The Faculty of Health Sciences reserves the right to modify, update, or discontinue any information, policies, procedures, or requirements contained in this handbook, in print or electronic form, without prior notice.

Students are expected to remain informed of current University and Nursing Program policies, regulations, procedures, and requirements by regularly reviewing communications distributed through their university email account and other official channels.

Students are responsible for ensuring they meet all degree and program requirements, including enrolling in the appropriate courses and monitoring their academic progress toward program completion.

1. ABOUT OUR NURSING PROGRAMS & COURSES

Ontario Tech University offers a variety of nursing programs in collaboration with Durham College. Links to individual program maps are provided below so that students can be familiar with programs and their individual program maps.

[Collaborative BScN Nursing Program](#) – Ontario Tech - Durham College

This is a four-year program, and students may enter directly from high school. The program is offered in Oshawa and is a fully integrated collaborative program (faculty from both sites teach across all four years of the program).

[Advanced Entry BScN Program](#) – Ontario Tech - Durham College

This is a three-year program designed as a pathway for Registered Practical Nurses to complete their BScN and become eligible for RN licensure. Students attend for eight consecutive semesters, including the spring and summer. This collaboration is also a fully integrated program offered in Oshawa.

[Master of Science in Nursing](#) – Ontario Tech University

The Master of Science in Nursing (MScN) at Ontario Tech University is a graduate program focused on professional practice leadership and preparing nurses to contribute to an increasingly complex health-care system. The program integrates mentorship, interdisciplinary learning, and experiential opportunities through research, projects, and course work to support the development of advanced nursing knowledge and leadership capacity.

Professional practice leaders play a key role in advancing expert practice, supporting professional development, engaging in research and evidence-informed practice, and contributing to quality assurance and patient safety initiatives. The MScN program is designed to build expertise in these areas and prepare graduates for leadership roles across clinical, educational, administrative, policy, and research settings.

2. VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES & STRATEGIC GOALS

Vision - Lead and challenge the boundaries of nursing education, practice, and research, in order to improve and promote the human health experience.

Mission - To envision, innovate, and embrace opportunities to deliver caring, dynamic nursing education.

Values:

- **Caring:** Have empathy, presence, expertise, and embrace a caring philosophy
- **Innovation:** Create and implement new ideas that improve health
- **Collaboration:** Engage in respectful dynamic interactions
- **Integrity:** Be authentic, professional, and accountable
- **Social Justice:** Value holistic care that embraces practice diversity, equity, and advocacy

2.1 Strategic Goals

Community

- Foster opportunities that strengthen engagement, interaction, and collaboration among students, faculty, and staff within the program.

Communication

- Enhance communication strategies to better meet the needs of learners, faculty, and staff and support timely, clear information sharing.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (EDI-B)

- Develop a shared understanding of EDI-B within the nursing program that promotes a strong sense of belonging for all students, faculty, and staff.

Curriculum

- Strengthen curriculum and learning supports to further improve student success and NCLEX readiness.

Culture

- Enhance opportunities for faculty and sessional instructor development and strengthen both formal and informal mechanisms of support.

2.2 Program Goals

Graduates of the Collaborative BScN Nursing Program and the Advanced Entry BScN Nursing Program will:

1. Demonstrate **safe, competent, ethical, and compassionate nursing practice** that is theory-guided, evidence-informed, and in accordance with regulatory standards (CNO).
2. Actualize **professional caring relationships** with individuals, families (of origin or choice), groups, communities, and populations; and, with nursing and interdisciplinary colleagues.
3. Synthesize **critical inquiry, scientific inquiry, research, and other ways of knowing** to develop nursing knowledge and to demonstrate the professional contributions of nursing in healthcare.
4. Champion **social justice**, in partnership with vulnerable populations; respecting the autonomy of individuals, families (of origin or choice), groups, communities, and populations.
5. Demonstrate **leadership** within the domains of practice, policy, and quality of work-life for innovation and advancement of healthcare.
6. Commit to **critically reflective practice** and self-directed learning, within the regulatory context and accountability to the public, to support life-long learning.
7. **Advocate** with and for people (including self-advocacy), the nursing profession, the healthcare system, and the environment.

2.3 Undergraduate Program Philosophy

The Nursing Program philosophy applies to both the Ontario Tech University – Durham College Collaborative BScN Program and the Advanced Entry BScN Program. It is supported and enlightened by pluralistic philosophies/worldviews, including but not limited to positivist, phenomenological, postmodernist, feminist, and critical social theories, which focus on society's changing health care needs. These perspectives give rise to the core concepts of the nursing program—that of caring and nurturing relationships through being, knowing, and doing (praxis). This philosophy reflects its deep roots in the Caring Curriculum (Bevis & Watson, 1989; Hills et al., 2021; Cara et al., 2020), as well as our own unique context and perspective. The following six core concepts are described: Caring in Nursing, Nursing, People, Environment, Health-Healing, and Teaching-Learning.



Nursing Program Philosophy

2.3.1 Caring in Nursing

Caring is a central component of the human experience and foundational to nursing practice. While caring may be thought of as present in all aspects of everyday life, caring in nursing requires intentionality; self- and other-awareness; and active, thoughtful, and skilled engagement in concern for others and the world around us.

2.3.2 Nursing

Nursing occurs within the context of intentional human caring from the nurse to the nursed, other human beings, and all life. It requires the skilled utilization, application, and evaluation of knowledge, mediated by multiple ways of knowing/being/doing, in partnership with the recipient of nursing care. This knowledge is drawn from nursing, natural sciences, social sciences, arts, and humanities, and is uniquely employed within

each specific nurse-person situation to promote and preserve caring, health-healing, dignity, and comfort.

2.3.3 People

People include individuals, families, groups, populations, and local and global communities, existing within the wholeness and complexities of our lives. The uniqueness of people is both limitless and a core characteristic of being human. This awareness requires that nursing champion equity, diversity, and inclusion as a moral imperative. For this to be achieved, people need to have insight and understanding when it comes to historicity, truth, and reconciliation of individuals who are racialized and marginalized. People make choices about their lives and their health-healing based on many factors, including but not limited to their life experiences, values, hopes, and aspirations. We recognize and value the innate human capacity for caring (Watson, 2020), and the primal human desire to be seen and to be heard (Paterson & Zderad, 1976).

2.3.4 Environment

Environment consists of all elements, internal or external to people (individuals, families (of origin or choice), groups, and communities) that influence people and/or the situation. Environmental elements may be experienced as positive, neutral, or negative. People both influence and are influenced by their environment. Examples of environmental factors include, but are not limited to, physical, social, psychological, and economic. Rights and freedoms, both entrenched in the law and as perceived by people, are part of their lived environment. We acknowledge the traditional territory of Indigenous peoples in Canada.

2.3.5 Health

Health-healing is a constantly changing, holistic human experience that transcends all phases of life and living. It encompasses all circumstances of living, as experienced, defined, and made meaningful by the individual, family, group, or community. In understanding that health-healing is defined and made meaningful by the client, we move away from a normative, often ableist, view of health versus illness. Rather, health-healing is viewed not as a singular state, but rather a process of moving towards wholeness, wellness, harmony, and balance. Our conception of health-healing is grounded in our appreciation of theoretical pluralism, while consistent with the caring curriculum. Health-healing has physical, socio-cultural, psycho-spiritual, political, and economic aspects. Health-healing is preserved and promoted through caring relationships that are affirming, enabling, empowering, and collaborative.

2.3.6 Teaching-Learning

Teaching-learning in nursing is a dynamic, transformative process which occurs both formally and informally, and within a context of intentional caring. Teachers, nurses, students, and people requiring nursing care are co-learners and partners in a collaborative learning process. Learning occurs over time and through a variety of approaches. It is a life-long process of personal and professional growth, which builds on experience, stimulates reflection, and transforms the meaning of life experiences. As teachers, we are committed to fostering a stance of inquiry with students. Teacher-learner engagement, in all settings, always reflects our values of mutual respect, mutual intentional human caring, and mutual civility (Clark, 2022). Within the Nursing Program, teaching-learning is conceived of as an active process, whereby all participants take responsibility for fully engaging across a continuum of active learning approaches (Tanner, 2006).

3. PROFESSIONAL FRAMEWORK

Nurses are dedicated to advocating for, and working to meet, the health care needs of the public; obtaining the best possible outcome for the patient is always paramount. There is an expectation throughout the program that students will perform competencies that meet the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) standards and guidelines and the [College of Nurses of Ontario Entry to Practice Competencies for Registered Nurses](#) (2019) so that they are prepared for the clinical environment upon graduation. In addition, students meet the competencies outlined by [Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing National Nursing Education Framework](#) (2022).

This section outlines a set of guidelines which form a framework of expectations for students within the classroom, lab, simulation, and practicum learning environments that support students in meeting these professional standards as well as the expectations of the University.

3.1 Overriding Principles

The following are overriding principles that all students are expected to consistently follow throughout their program.

3.1.1 Accountability

Students are expected to ensure that their practice and conduct meet the requirements of the nursing program, the standards of the profession, and that they practice within legislative, university, and program requirements and standards at all times. Students'

understanding of accountability will be developed and nurtured throughout the program.

Over the course of the program, students will make decisions that will affect their academic success and, ultimately, their success in the profession of nursing. While students may look for advice from their family and friends, nursing students enrolled in the Collaborative BScN and Advanced Entry programs are expected to be accountable and responsible for their own choices and actions. Consistent with this principle, students are expected to:

- Be accountable for their own learning and for facilitating the learning of others. To maximize valuable learning opportunities, consistent participation and preparation in all learning activities and experiences are expected.
- Within the practicum setting, while engaging in patient/client care, students will identify the need for, and act to obtain, appropriate supervision from instructors or preceptors.
- Submit pre-practicum requirements by the timelines communicated.
- Self-assess their [requisite skills and abilities](#) for nursing practice and seek accommodation when required.
- Be honest, and demonstrate integrity, even when a mistake has been made.
- Students must report any error, accident, or incident immediately to the clinical sessional instructor/preceptor/co-assigned nurse so that appropriate measures can be taken.
- Engage in the creation and maintenance of a supportive environment within which the clinical sessional instructor /preceptor/clinical sessional instructor/co-assigned nurse(s) assist the student to problem-solve is particularly important when a mistake or incident occurs. It is the student's responsibility to learn from any error and to demonstrate consistent improvement.
- Recognize their own knowledge level, skills and abilities, limits of responsibilities, legislative authority and supervision requirements, and to understand and clarify their role in the provision of care with the professor/clinical sessional instructor/preceptor / co-assigned nurses(s).

3.1.2 Professionalism and Respect

Students are expected to practice in a manner consistent with CNO standards and guidelines, clinical agencies, and the policies and regulations of Ontario Tech University, and to use clear, accurate and effective communication skills in all professional interactions. Furthermore, in accordance with CNO ETP 2.2, students need to "Demonstrate[s] a professional presence, and confidence, honesty, integrity, and respect in all interactions" (CNO, 2019, p. 6) – this extends to all forms of communication.

All individuals are expected to demonstrate respect for self, clients, classmates, faculty, all members of the university and college communities, preceptors, agency staff and the

community at large. Mutual respect helps to create a caring environment that supports education. Respect for one another is seen as reciprocal and is demonstrated through actions such as being punctual, active listening, authentic communication, caring connections in personal and professional encounters, and constructive feedback of one another's work.

All parties are expected to behave in a manner that consistently demonstrates respect for the worth and dignity of clients and/or families, while accepting responsibility and accountability for all nursing actions consistent within their role.

It is important to remember that the student's primary role is that of a learner. As learners' integration of feedback and continual professional growth is dependent on a student's receptivity to feedback. The integration and utilization of suggestions and recommendations to facilitate one's own learning and growth as a student and professional is an essential component to learning, and along with self-reflection, is expected.

3.1.3 Safety

To ensure safety for the client, self, and others, nursing activities must provide a safe physical and psychosocial environment. Safety in the physical environment includes the competent practice of nursing assessments and interventions, knowledge of policies and procedures, knowledge of the client's experience, the physical set up of the environment, organization of one's own workload, setting of priorities, assignment of nursing care, and communication to relevant parties regarding work that is completed or not done. **A safe psychosocial environment is one that upholds confidentiality and is free from racism, sexism, discrimination, harassment, and other behaviours inconsistent with a caring environment.**

3.1.4 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is of paramount importance. Students are expected to function within the limits of their role and accept responsibilities for which they have been prepared. The privacy of patients, residents, team members, organizations, and/or student information in all instances must be respected. Students are expected to realize the confidential nature of the data that they are privileged to use. Students must comply with legislation, practice standards, ethical responsibilities, and organizational policies to maintain client privacy, confidentiality, and security (Information & Privacy Commissioner of Ontario, n.d.). Inappropriate access to client information may adversely affect client safety, quality of care, and undermine the client's relationship with providers. As representatives of Ontario Tech University and Durham College, faculty and students must work together to maintain cooperative relationships with the various community agencies utilized in our practicum partnerships.

Client information and the private information of others (including one's own personal health record) MUST NOT be accessed without need, nor be discussed in any public area or with any unauthorized persons, through any form of communication (including via social media). This includes materials such as photos, medical and health records, and healthcare clinical applications.

Under no circumstances is information to be given to the police or the media. All requests for information must be referred to the designated administrative person.

Any computer access codes must only be used to access computer data for patients/clients as assigned for patient care. Students should not attempt to access any unauthorized information including information about themselves, family, friends, colleagues, or any other person whose information is not required to perform duties related to their practicum.

If, for any reason, a student breaches confidentiality, privacy, or security, or becomes aware of a breach, the student must immediately report this to the course instructor and the placement organization via the appropriate channels. Students should have access to medical records only as assigned for educational purposes.

The importance of these overriding principles is affirmed by the [Professional Suitability Policy \(Undergraduate\)](#) at Ontario Tech. Any student who exhibits behaviour that is inconsistent with the norms and expectations of the program or the profession, or that places themselves, clients or others at risk will be addressed through this policy.

3.2 Additional Requirements for Registered Practical Nurses

Students who are Registered Practical Nurses must be aware that they are required to practice, at all times, in accordance with the [standards and guidelines as outlined by the CNO](#).

Recognizing our role in protecting students, patients, and the public from harm, should a student demonstrate practice or conduct that fails to meet these standards, it is the responsibility of the Nursing Program to determine if the behavior or action necessitates reporting to the College of Nurses of Ontario.

4. PRACTICUM PLACEMENTS

As an important component of learning professional nursing practice, quality placements are offered in each year of the program. We recognize that many students balance family responsibilities, employment, and other personal commitments alongside their studies. At the same time, students enrolled in the program are expected to meet the requirements of a full-time course load, including practicum expectations. Due to the complexity of placement scheduling and site availability, we are unable to accommodate individual scheduling preferences or requests.

As students progress through the program, clinical placement hours increase and placements become more intensive. By the final semester, students should be prepared for placement commitments that closely resemble a full-time work schedule.

4.1 Overview of Placement Process

Practicum experiences allow students to apply what they learn in coursework to the real-life clinical environment. Practicum may also be referred to as “placement” or “clinical”. All placements are arranged by the Nursing Program. As an academic institution, the Nursing Programs’ primary role is to provide educational experiences that meet the requirements of the BScN degree.

The Program requests placements 3-4 months in advance of the practicum rotation. Agencies then evaluate need and availability and return confirmation of practicum placements for the given term. Typically, placements are released to students via HSPnet, a web-based platform used for the communication of placement information, *approximately* 2 weeks before the start of the term; however, dependent on the clinical landscape and the realities being faced by practicum agencies this may be earlier or later.

Students are expected to begin their clinical placements on the scheduled start date of the term or as established by the Nursing Program Office. Placement start dates cannot be modified by preceptors, unit staff, or other agency personnel. ***Once assigned, placements are considered final.*** Students experiencing challenges meeting the start date should notify the Nursing Program as early as possible. A delayed start may result in insufficient time to complete required clinical hours and course requirements and may therefore prevent the student from proceeding with the placement during that term.

4.2 Assignment of Placements

The Undergraduate Nursing programs ***prepare generalist nurses to practice across diverse settings and populations***. While student career interests are acknowledged, the program's primary responsibility is to ensure entry-to-practice competencies are achieved. Therefore, placements are not customized to individual preferences but are designed to provide varied learning experiences. We strive to provide a broad range of learning experiences that meet the learning objectives/program outcomes and support professional growth.

Placement availability and assignments vary from semester to semester and year to year. Several elements are considered when selecting practicum placements to facilitate the student's practicum learning, including:

- Nursing Professional Practice Competencies for the year level
- Learning objectives identified by the course
- Availability of placement sites/agencies and the learning experiences they can provide

Students must be flexible in their schedules, as practicum may occur at any day or time of the week or weekend (e.g., day, evening, or night shifts) and may have varying durations (e.g., 8 or 12-hour shifts). The academic calendar is made available to students well in advance of the start of the academic year, and students should use this to plan accordingly and keep all dates/times available until a schedule is confirmed. Students in the final year will self-schedule their shifts based on their preceptor's schedule, while balancing course commitments and personal responsibilities, ensuring all required practicum hours are completed.

The Nursing Program Office at Ontario Tech University maintains established agreements and processes with practicum partners. All placements must be coordinated through the Nursing Program Office at Ontario Tech University. Students attempting to arrange their own placements or contact placement sites may be subject to consequences addressed through the [professional suitability policy \(undergraduate\)](#).

4.3 Location & Transportation

Students are expected to attend practicum as assigned for the designated shifts. Students are responsible for arranging transportation to and from practicum and are responsible for all associated costs while attending placement. Placement sites are located at various agencies throughout Durham Region and surrounding regions within 1.5 hours drive from the Ontario Tech-Durham College campus.

4.3.1 Changes to Assigned Placements

Changes to assigned placement are not permitted. Students may not “swap” placements.

Placement assignments may be altered by the Nursing Programs due to circumstances beyond our control, in consultation with our placement partners.

4.3.2 Practicum Surveys & Submission of Resumes

To support placement requests and assignments, students will have the opportunity to complete a Clinical Information Survey for their respective clinical courses. ***Students are not guaranteed placement in the areas or settings identified in their placement survey.*** While preferences are considered whenever possible, placements are dependent on-site availability and learning opportunities available each term. If any information provided on the survey changes after submission, students are responsible for notifying the Nursing Program Office as soon as possible.

As part of the practicum process, students in their final year (and occasionally students in NURS3700 Healthy Communities) are required to submit a resume along with their annual practicum survey. Some practicum partners request resumes when selecting students for specialized areas such as ER, ICU, Labour & Delivery, and Public Health and may also require an interview.

Students should prepare a professional resume that highlights their practicum experiences and any relevant work experience. We strongly encourage students to take advantage of the resume support services available through [Student Life](#) to help ensure their resume is polished and competitive.

4.3.3 Conflict of Interest

Students are required to self-identify any conflict of interest they may have in their assigned practicum placement. Identifying potential conflicts of interest is important to ensure that students are not placed at a practicum site where they are currently employed, volunteer, or have a personal connection (such as a family member, friend, or acquaintance) working. Self-identifying a conflict of interest also supports the Nursing Programs, the student, and the preceptor to recognize and address any dual roles the student may have within the organization. This ensures appropriate professional boundaries can be maintained. Students must always wear clearly visible STUDENT identification while participating in practicum as a learner.

Notification of a conflict of interest must be made in writing to the Practicum Coordinator via email – practicum.coordinator@ontariotechu.ca

5. REQUIREMENTS FOR PRACTICUM

Practicum experiences play a critical role in preparing students for the professional practice of a registered nurse. To participate in practicum, **students are required to complete pre-practicum requirements within the specified timelines.**

5.1 Pre-Practicum Requirements

Pre-practicum requirements are mandatory medical and non-medical requirements outlined within the contractual agreements with our established practicum partners. These requirements form an *integral component of a student's professional suitability* as outlined in the [Academic Calendar](#). The requirements, as well as necessary forms, training links and information sheets, are posted on the FHS- Nursing Practicum canvas. Students who do not successfully meet pre-practicum requirements within the provided timeframe will either be de-registered and/or will be required to withdraw from their respective NURS Theory and Practicum course. Students may re-enroll in the course the next time it is offered, based on their program map and placement availability. It is recommended that students connect with [Academic Advising](#) to review their options.

The Faculty of Health Sciences has partnered with Synergy Gateway for verification of all pre-practicum documentation. Synergy is a secure, online platform used by post-secondary institutions to track, review, and validate student pre-practicum requirements such as immunization and criminal record checks. Please ensure you review the Verified by Synergy tab in the pre-practicum requirements section of the FHS-Nursing Practicum site in Canvas for further information on the process and fees for submission.

For the 2026-2027 academic year, the program is moving to semester-based clearance for pre-practicum requirements. Students must achieve a 'Pass' status on all pre-practicum requirements prior to the start of the semester in which they participate in placement. Students should review FHS-Nursing Practicum canvas for more information and semester deadlines. No extensions will be given once the deadline has passed.

Students are responsible for all costs associated with meeting the pre-practicum requirements.

Please Note: The Nursing Program does not have access to your personal health information documents. We *strongly recommend* that students keep both a hard copy and digital copy of your records in the event you are asked to provide proof of any requirement.

Additional Specific Requirements for Practicum Sites

Some practicum sites may have additional health and safety requirements beyond those required by the Nursing Program. For example, a practicum site may require certain vaccinations that the Nursing Program considers highly recommended rather than mandatory or request a VSC completed within a specified time frame.

Students are responsible for meeting the requirements of their assigned practicum site. Students must comply with those requirements to attend practicum at that site.

Students who choose not to meet a practicum site's mandatory requirements may not be able to complete their practicum placement thus jeopardizing successful completion of the course.

5.1.1 Immunizations

As noted on the Entry and Returning Immunization Forms, the mandatory immunization requirements apply to all students entering a health care practice setting which have communicable disease surveillance protocols in place. The information required follows the standards outlined by the Ontario Hospital Association and the Canadian Immunization Guide. **Compliance with the immunization guideline is mandatory.** Any practicum agency utilized by the programs may refuse access to students who do not meet the immunization requirements (and, where applicable, additional elements). Students must have their immunization forms completed by a registered health care provider (i.e. Physician or Nurse Practitioner). *Students MAY NOT complete the immunization forms on their own behalf.*

Please visit the FHS-Nursing Practicum Canvas for information related to required immunizations.

Please Note: Practicum agencies may require students to have additional vaccinations or make mandatory annual vaccinations (including influenza) before approving placement.

5.1.2 Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC)

Completion of a Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC) is a mandatory requirement for all nursing students. ***Students are encouraged to begin this process as early as possible,*** keeping in mind the following: In some situations, the process of acquiring a Vulnerable Sector Check may take a minimum of 12 weeks to complete. Processing times vary between police services and can change throughout the year. Students should review

the current processing timelines for their police service and apply well in advance, allowing sufficient time to meet all program deadlines. Note: if fingerprinting is required, this will increase the processing time.

- The cost of the VSC is the responsibility of the student.
- Students who have not provided a completed VSC will not be eligible for practicum.
- Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC) indicating a criminal record or other relevant findings will be reviewed in accordance with program and placement agency requirements.

In situations when a Vulnerable Sector Check is not clear (i.e. a record has been found) this may have implications for student progression. The student will be contacted by the Associate Dean of Nursing to discuss next steps. Students should also be familiar with the long-term implications of findings as they relate to registration with the College of Nurses of Ontario, or the geographic location in which the student plans to register.

After admission, and at any time prior to completing the program, students charged with a criminal offence are required to report this information immediately to the Nursing Program Office. Your documentation must stay current for the entire duration of your practicum placement. You are required to inform the school right away of any changes, including new criminal charges—that could affect your status or the validity of your Vulnerable Sector Check. Failure to do so will be considered under the [Professional Suitability Policy \(Undergraduate\)](#), and/or as professional misconduct for RPNs currently registered with the College of Nurses of Ontario.

More information regarding the VSC application process is available on the FHS- Nursing Practicum site in Canvas. If your service is not listed, but requires additional information, please email practicum.coordinator@ontariotechu.ca

5.1.3 CPR Certification and First Aid

All students in the Nursing Programs must show proof of a valid Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) certification/recertification every year of their program. The certification level required is Basic Life Support (BLS) for Healthcare Provider (HCP). *First Aid is not required but strongly recommended.* Certifications completed entirely online will NOT be accepted, and all certifications must be valid in Canada. Please review the Nursing Program Office website and/or the FHS – Nursing Practicum site in Canvas for

more information.

5.1.4 Respirator Mask Fit Test (N95)

All students in the Nursing Programs are required to have a valid mask fit test for practicum. Mask fit tests are valid for two years from the date of testing.

All students are responsible for consistently assessing that a respirator mask fits properly each time they use it. If any of the following occurs, a student must be retested to ensure proper fit:

- Excess weight gain or loss (increase or decrease of 10 pounds or more)
- Change(s) in facial structure (i.e., due to facial surgery, dental work, etc.)
- Change in facial hair status (i.e., facial hair growth/removal)

It is the student's responsibility to provide an updated certificate if there have been any changes. Students are responsible for all costs associated with mask fit testing.

If you require an accommodation for mask fit testing for medical or religious reasons, please refer to **Section 6.6: Requisite Skills and Abilities & Accommodations within Practicum and Lab Settings** for information on how to request an accommodation.

5.1.5 Additional Required Forms and Training

As part of the pre-practicum requirements, students must also complete additional training certifications and forms. Please refer to the FHS- Nursing Practicum site in Canvas for more information on these additional requirements.

5.1.6 RPN Registration

Students in the Advanced Entry BScN program are expected to maintain their College of Nurses of Ontario RPN registration and be in good standing throughout the program. Annual submission of current CNO registration is a pre-practicum requirement.

5.1.7 Maintenance of Academic Competence

Students are expected to demonstrate and sustain proficiency in their professional responsibilities, with expectations that progress in complexity across program year levels. Students must achieve and maintain a passing level of performance as outlined in the [Academic Calendar](#) and continue to apply and integrate previously mastered and evaluated knowledge and skills.

5.2 Pre-Screening for Practicum Experiences

To ensure students in the Undergraduate Nursing Programs can demonstrate the necessary competencies needed for placement in a practicum setting, the program reserves the right to pre-screen students before their entry into a practicum environment.

5.2.1 Medication Math Assessment

All students are required to complete a mathematics screening test during orientation for every practicum experience. Expectations, passing grades, and consequences of failure are outlined in the course outline and the [Nursing Pre-Practicum Math Assessment Policy](#). Students who do not achieve the required grade (80% in year 2, 90% in year 3, and 100% in year 4) will be eligible to retake the test until the required grade is met, up to the last day to drop courses without academic or financial consequence, as noted in the Academic Calendar. Failure to reach the passing percentage outlined by this deadline will result in withdrawal from both practicum and theory components of the course.

For preparatory work and/or additional information, please speak with the practicum oversight lead. Math Specialists and peer tutors are available through [Student Life](#).

6. EXPECTATIONS FOR PRACTICUM, LABS, AND SIMULATION-BASED LEARNING

Students are expected to consistently demonstrate professional behaviour and arrive at all learning experiences prepared with the knowledge required to perform the skills and competencies they have been taught. This expectation applies across all practicum settings, as well as laboratory and simulation-based learning experiences. Learning activities that take place in the lab are considered equivalent to practicum experiences within the Nursing Programs, and all policies, standards, and expectations outlined in this handbook apply in these learning environments. Clients receiving care expect safe, competent, and professional practice, and the rights of clients must be respected and protected in accordance with ethical and legal standards. While students are recognized as learners, they are still expected to consistently uphold professional standards of behaviour and practice.

6.1 Agency Requirements

The Nursing Programs maintain signed affiliation agreements with each of the partner agencies utilized by students in practicum. This contractual agreement describes the relationship that exists between the parties, as well as their respective obligations and

responsibilities. Further, the agreement outlines the terms under which the agency will accept students into its practicum area.

Each agreement recognizes that the agency has its unique policies and regulations and expects both faculty and students to function in accordance with them.

To comply with both educational and institutional requirements for placements, the student, in collaboration with the clinical sessional instructor, must ensure that they are familiar with and follow all agency regulations, policies, and procedures relevant to their presence in the practicum setting.

Students are expected to:

- Understand that a contractual agreement exists between Ontario Tech University and the agency.
- Meet all requirements of the placement site as communicated by the placement and/or Nursing Program.
- Familiarize themselves with the specific policies and procedures of agencies or institutions before engaging in direct or indirect client care.
- Contact the clinical sessional instructor or practicum lead if the student does not have sufficient information about the agency's requirements.

6.1.1 Required Practicum Orientation and Training

All Health and Healing clinical courses have a mandatory course orientation at the beginning of the term and prior to practicum. The course orientation is an important part of getting ready to practice. ***Students who do not attend mandatory orientations will not be eligible to continue to practicum,*** as they may not be fully prepared to provide safe client care and engage in learning activities.

Students are required to notify their practicum lead and/or clinical sessional instructor in advance if they are unable to attend course orientation. When orientation is missed, the student must meet with the practicum lead at the earliest opportunity to develop a plan of action to support continuation in the practicum experience and successful completion of the course.

Some practicum agencies may require orientation/training prior to the beginning of placement. **Where indicated, these sessions are mandatory.** Failure to attend the practicum agency orientation/training may result in removal from practicum, and ultimately the course.

If any scheduled agency orientation/training conflicts with course orientation or class attendance, students **MUST** attend the agency orientation/training. It is the

responsibility of the student to inform the respective course professor of their absence and make alternative arrangements for any missed work.

6.2 Preparation for Practicum & Labs

Students are required to practice in accordance with the University, program, course, agency, and CNO expectations, including fitness to practice. This includes sufficient preparation (assigned and self-assessed) for practicum and simulation-based and lab-based experiences. All students are expected to self-assess, reflect, and determine their fitness for practice and to share any concerns related to this with their clinical sessional instructors. The College of Nurses of Ontario defines fitness to practice as “freedom from any cognitive, physical, psychological, or emotional condition or dependence on alcohol or drugs that impairs ability to provide nursing care” (Canadian Nurses Association as cited in CNO, 2019a, p.10) , e.g., lack of sleep, proper nutrition, and/or use of substances that affect cognition; or psychological or emotional conditions that affect the ability to practice nursing safely.

Students may not work an overnight shift the night before a practicum day and must, at all times, arrange for a minimum of 8 hours off between employment and a scheduled practicum shift.

Students who fail to abide by this or demonstrate that they do not meet the CNO’s fitness to practice definition, such as being under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, and/or drug(s) will be removed from practicum and/or lab environment, at risk of being assigned a failing grade , and may subject to the [Professional Suitability Policy \(Undergraduate\)](#).

The Nursing programs take the health and safety of students, staff, faculty, clients, and those working in practicum health care environments very seriously and reserve the right to remove a student immediately should there be ANY concerns regarding a student’s fitness to practice.

6.3 Attendance at Practicums & Labs

Attendance in both practicum and lab-based settings is mandatory. Success in the Undergraduate Nursing programs is dependent on a student actively attending and engaging in the practicum and/or lab-based setting as well as the associated theory class

Attendance in both the practicum and lab settings is subject to the [Attendance Policy – Undergraduate Nursing programs](#). All students should be familiar with this policy and understand the implications of missed time and the associated processes.

Due to placement availability, students MAY be placed any day of the week, Monday to Sunday, and any shift (days, evenings, nights).

6.3.1 Illness & Absence from the Practicum Setting

The Nursing Programs and practicum sites are committed to maintaining a safe environment and preventing the spread of infection. If you have been exposed to or diagnosed with a communicable disease (such as influenza, COVID-19, measles, or chickenpox), you must report it immediately. If this happens, students should:

- Notify your clinical sessional instructor (CSI) or preceptor if you have been exposed or diagnosed and do not attend practicum
- Follow your practicum site's communicable disease policies and procedures.

If a student becomes ill during a practicum shift, the student has an obligation to inform the CSI and/or preceptor. Handover and transfer of accountability for all assigned patients must occur prior to departure. In cases of illness, students are required to follow agency policies and procedures before leaving the clinical setting. The CSI will record any time missed accordingly.

The following symptoms warrant absence from the clinical setting:

- Diarrhea: Any staff or students with diarrhea cannot attend a practicum/lab that day. If symptoms of diarrhea persist longer than 24 hours, follow up with the appropriate Campus Health Centre or the student's health care practitioner.
- Respiratory symptoms: including a fever of greater than 38 degrees and a new or worsening cough or shortness of breath. Flu-like symptoms (e.g., gastrointestinal upset, diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting)
- Rashes
- Open or weeping wounds
- Musculoskeletal injury
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)

Students must also comply with the established policy for each agency regarding the reporting of an illness.

6.3.2 How to Report an Absence to Assigned Practicum Placement

In the rare case that a student is ill or absent from the practicum area, students should:

1. Contact your CSI and/or Preceptor PRIOR to the start of the shift you are expected to attend
2. Ensure agency policy related to illness and absenteeism is followed.

Notification is required for each practicum shift that the student is absent from. The CSI will record missed time accordingly.

6.3.3 How to Report an Absence for Lab Settings

In the rare case that a student is ill or absent from a lab-based learning course, they must notify the course instructor prior to the start of the lab via email.

6.3.4 Onsite Screening & Outbreaks

Students who fail any type of agency onsite screening must not attend the practicum site. In addition, students who have been directed to quarantine may not attend practicum.

Dependent on agency policy and the level of outbreak, students may be allowed to attend practicum during a facility outbreak. These decisions are made by the agency in consultation with infection control teams.

If students are permitted to attend, they are expected to do so and must use the appropriate, properly fitted personal protective equipment (PPE) provided on site and follow all infection control practices.

6.4 Working in a Health Care Environment

We recognize that many students are also employed in health care settings (e.g., hospitals, congregate living, or community practice). It is your responsibility to be aware of and follow any workplace policies that may affect your placement in another agency. Please keep in mind that your role and responsibilities as an employee may be different from those of a BScN student. For example, as an extern you may be permitted to perform certain skills, but those same activities may not be allowed within your student role during practicum.

Work within a health care environment is not considered a replacement for practicum hours, nor is it eligible for credit in lieu of practicum attendance or course completion.

In the event of an outbreak in either a student's practicum setting and/or work environment, the student may not be allowed to attend practicum and/or work. Students must follow the policies and procedures that apply to their specific practicum setting. Students in this situation must immediately contact their clinical sessional instructor/preceptor, who may notify individuals within the Nursing Program for

guidance regarding next steps. Any missed clinical time due to outbreaks at one's place of work will be considered under the [Attendance Policy- Undergraduate Nursing Programs](#).

6.5 Travel Outside Ontario

All students/staff travelling outside of Ontario and/or Canada are expected to comply with any regulations/guidelines that currently exist regarding outbreak management (e.g., COVID, influenza, Ebola, Zika).

Depending upon the current state of travel recommendations and destination, you may be required to provide additional documentation and/or quarantine to verify your suitability for placement or return to placement. Any missed time as a result of travel will be considered under the [Attendance Policy-Undergraduate Nursing Programs](#).

6.6 Requisite Skills and Abilities & Accommodations within Practicum and Lab Settings

Within practicum and lab settings, the specific practice requirements may vary to some degree. The College of Nurses of Ontario has specific [Requisite Skills and Abilities](#) for nursing practice that are required for registration as an RN. We encourage students to review these and self-assess their skills and abilities, seeking accommodation as required.

Students are required to provide direct, in-person client care in most practicum components, in accordance with course requirements and the practicum delivery model. To ensure safe practice, some elements of practice, such as timed elements of practicum or lab-based evaluations, cannot be waived, extended, or modified under any circumstances.

Should you require **accommodation for your practicum due to a disability or medical condition**, please contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) to book an appointment in advance of your practicum. (Minimum one term before). Please be advised that SAS will require documentation from a registered health care professional, such as a physician or psychologist, with clear identification of the impact of any functional limitations on the academic and practicum environment. Once received, the Nursing Practicum Coordinators will need time to negotiate the required accommodation(s) with the respective practicum partner. It is the student's responsibility to ensure any required accommodation(s) is in place PRIOR to the start of each practicum. Failure to do so may result in the delay of the student's practicum start and potentially jeopardize the student's ability to successfully meet the competencies of the respective course.

If you receive a new accommodation or your existing accommodation changes while you are participating in practicum, please *notify your CSI and register with Student Accessibility Services as soon as possible.*

Your accommodation will be reviewed to determine whether it can be safely and appropriately implemented in the practicum setting. During this review period, your placement will be paused. Please refrain from attending any scheduled practicum shifts until further notice.

You may return to practicum once the review is complete and you have been notified by the Nursing Program Office that you are approved to resume your placement.

Students who require a **creed-based accommodation** that may affect their practicum placement, or pre-practicum requirements should contact the Nursing Program Office as early as possible. Early notification helps ensure enough time to review the request and work with practicum partners to determine if an accommodation can be arranged.

Examples of creed-based accommodation requests include, but are not limited to:

- Being unavailable for practicum on certain days or times due to religious observances (e.g., Sabbath)
- Requesting accommodations in the practicum setting to support religious practices (e.g., fasting during Ramadan, prayer needs, or religious attire)
- Requests related to pre-practicum requirements (e.g., vaccinations or mask fit testing) based on sincerely held religious or creed-based beliefs (not medical exemptions)

If requesting a creed-based accommodation, please contact practicum.coordinator@ontariotechu.ca for required documentation and next steps.

All accommodation requests will be reviewed in accordance with university policies, practicum course requirements, and the ability of the practicum setting to support the accommodation. While every reasonable effort will be made to accommodate approved requests, accommodation cannot be guaranteed if they would prevent students from meeting course learning outcomes, compromise patient/client safety, conflict with practicum site requirements, or create undue hardship. . Accommodation is explored on a case-by-case basis and may include, but are not limited to, accommodation on site or an altered program map.

Students are expected to continue meeting all practicum and pre-practicum requirements until they receive written directions from the Nursing Program Office regarding their accommodation request.

PLEASE NOTE: It is the student's responsibility to ensure all approved accommodation is in place before the practicum starts. Delays in completing this process may result in a later practicum start and could affect your ability to meet course requirements.

6.7 Dress Code – General Requirements

We value the spectrum of human diversity, self-expression, and experiences of our students and academic community and strive to foster environments that respect difference and empower students to achieve their potential. We also recognize that there are requirements related to infection control practices, expectations of the profession, and there may be specific requirements of our partner agencies in relation to dress code requirements. Students who fail to comply with the requirements of the Nursing Program may be asked to leave the practicum setting.

Students are expected to observe the following dress code requirements AT ALL TIMES whether they are in a lab-based experience or practicum environment:

- Student identification badge (as well as agency identification if applicable) is to be worn on the upper body and be visible at all times.
- Long hair must be secured to prevent inadvertent contamination. Where allowed, scrub hats may be used.
- Facial hair may interfere with mask seals; please consider this as a potential health and safety risk. Students are encouraged to keep facial hair clean and tidy.
- All practice settings are to be considered scent-free and students should use scent-free personal products.
- For infection control reasons, nails must be kept short. Gel nails and artificial nails are not permitted. Long nails and nail enhancements are harder to clean, can damage gloves, and can carry significantly more bacteria.
- Jewellery must be kept to a minimum. Only a simple, plain ring band may be worn. Nose studs, simple stud earrings, creed-based necklaces and creed-based permanent bracelets are permitted. Jewellery can pose a safety risk and can interfere with proper handwashing, scrubbing, and sanitizing. Jewellery below the forearm may tear or interfere with medical gloves, trap bacteria and blood-borne pathogens.
- Stethoscopes, if owned, should be carried in the pocket and NOT worn around the neck for student safety and infection control. Stethoscopes should be cleaned between every patient interaction.
- Footwear must be closed toe and heel and be in accordance with agency policy. Shoes should provide good support, be clean, and in good condition.
- Undergarments are concealed at all times.
- With the exception of creed-based head coverings/scrub hats, head coverings are not to be worn. Creed-based head coverings can be worn given they are secured to avoid contaminating sterile fields and adhere to infection control practices.

- Body art (e.g., tattoos) is acceptable; there should not be any visible profanity, violence, discrimination, or sexually explicit content.
- Acne patches are permitted if neutral in colour/design. They must be maintained hygienically, as they could potentially pose an infection risk.

Nursing students are expected to use their professional judgement to ensure their appearance is both safe and professional, minimizing distractions and maintaining patient confidence.

Students who follow specific dress for cultural or religious reasons are invited to speak directly with their professor/clinical sessional instructor to ensure that their needs are met within this policy and remain within the protocols of infection control established by the agency.

Please note: Where applicable, placement policy will replace program guidelines. Any creed-based accommodation not addressed above will be handled on a case-by-case basis using the FHSc Creed Based Accommodation process. **Please review section 6.6** for more information regarding creed-based accommodation and process.

6.7.1 Uniforms in Practicum & Lab Settings

In addition to the requirements above, students attending labs or practicum settings that require uniforms are to ensure that uniforms are:

- Navy blue in colour* (BScN program requirement)
- Clean and fit properly. Scrub tops, pants and skirts (no longer than ankle length to avoid tripping hazards) are permitted.

Undershirts with $\frac{3}{4}$ length sleeves may be worn under scrubs, however the wrist must remain exposed at all times for infection control and prevention purposes. Lab coats may be worn except when giving direct client care.

Uniforms (or any part thereof) should not be worn off agency property. It is recommended that students have an extra uniform available in the practicum agency.

Students may be placed in practicum settings where uniforms are not required. In this case, students must follow the dress code requirements as per the agency's policy.

**During the final year practicum placements (NURS4700 and NURS 4701) where students may wear other colours providing they are in accordance with the practicum agency's dress code*

7. COMPETENCIES & ASSESSEMENTS – PRACTICUM & LAB ENVIRONMENTS

The information presented here applies to students in both the Advanced Entry BScN Program and the Collaborative BScN Nursing Program.

7.1 Collaborative BScN Programs Skill Requirements

In nursing practice environments, it is essential that nurses are able, in a timely manner, to complete the following broad scope of activities:

- Appropriately determine what action is to be taken based on analysis of complex contextual information and verbalize this understanding.
- Provide clients with appropriate information and the opportunity to either consent or not to the proposed nursing action.
- Undertake the nursing action safely, competently, and ethically.
- Evaluate its effectiveness (if possible).
- Document the action taken.

Students can expect that one or more of the evaluation components or criteria for all practicum courses (including lab courses) will involve timed elements. Due to a concern for safe practice, timed elements of an evaluation component or criteria cannot be waived or extended under any circumstances.

7.2 Nursing Program Skills List

Nursing skills are acquired throughout the program; as such, an up-to-date skills list is available for each practicum course posted to Canvas, which outlines skills that students are expected and allowed to perform in the clinical setting. However, students must always have the knowledge, skill, and judgement to complete such acts.

7.3 Regulatory Acts during all Practicum Placements

If a student has questions related to regulatory acts and controlled acts, including medication administration, please consult directly with your clinical sessional instructor or practicum lead. In nursing practice environments, it is essential that nurses are able, in a timely manner, to complete the following broad scope of activities. The purpose of this section is to clarify guidelines for nursing students during practicum. This guideline has been adapted from the [CNO Entry to Practice Competencies \(2019\)](#). The Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA) provides for nursing students to perform Controlled Acts under the following exception: “When, under the supervision or direction of a member of the profession, a student is learning to become a member of that profession and the performance of the procedure is within the scope of the profession’s practice” (CNO,

2023, p. 19) Under the RHPA, Nursing is authorized to perform five of the 14 controlled acts:

- i. Perform a prescribed procedure below the dermis or a mucous membrane.
- ii. Administering a substance by injection or inhalation
- iii. Putting an instrument, hand, or finger:
 - a. Beyond the external ear canal
 - b. Beyond the point in the nasal passages where they normally narrow
 - c. Beyond the larynx
 - d. Beyond the opening of the urethra
 - e. Beyond the labia majora
 - f. Beyond the anal verge
 - g. Into an artificial opening in the body
- iv. Dispensing a drug.
- v. Treating, by means of psychotherapy technique, delivered through a therapeutic relationship, an individual's serious disorder of thought, cognition, mood, emotional regulation, perception or memory that may seriously impair the individual's judgement, insight, behaviour, communication or social functioning.

These controlled act procedures must be ordered by a physician, dentist, midwife, chiropodist, midwife or Nurse Practitioner [NP or RN (EC)] or if it is initiated by an RN or RPN in accordance with conditions identified in the regulation (CNO's Legislation and Regulation RHPA: Scope of Practice, Controlled Acts Model, 2020). Nursing students are responsible for analyzing and take action to resolve questions about unclear, incorrect, or unsafe orders, decisions, actions, or treatments.

Nursing students cannot initiate, or delegate (as defined below), controlled acts authorized to nursing. Nursing students cannot accept the delegation of a controlled act authorized to another profession.

When in doubt regarding the performance of a controlled act or practicum procedure, students must familiarize themselves with the agency/institution's policy and procedures prior to engaging in direct or indirect client care. Students are required to apply knowledge of pharmacology and safe medication practice and resources, as students are accountable to prevent and reduce the possibility of medication errors.

Prior to engaging in a controlled act, the student must

- Review the guidelines as outlined in this document
- Review policies of the student's practicum agency
- Consult with the appropriate individuals: clinical sessional instructor and/or preceptor and/or course lead
- Self-assess for evidence of knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform the act and manage potential untoward events

In general, students should familiarize themselves with relevant College of Nurses of Ontario practice documents specific to the student's learning needs and practice context. All students should review the following standards and guidelines from the College of Nurses of Ontario – available on the [CNO Standards & Guidelines webpage](#):

- Practice Standard: Medication
- Practice Standard: Documentation
- Practice Standard: Confidentiality and Privacy: Personal Health Information
- Practice Standard: Therapeutic Nurse-Client Relationship
- Practice Standard: Discontinuing or Declining to Provide Care standard
- Practice Guidelines: Consent
- College of Nurses of Ontario: Scope of Practice for RNs
- College of Nurses of Ontario: Code of Conduct

7.4 Practicum Evaluation Process

Practicum evaluations are used to evaluate students against the expected outcomes of the practicum experience. Evaluations are both formative and summative. Formative evaluation includes the day-to-day informal feedback. This type of evaluation may include regular debriefing, encouragement, direction, constructive feedback, clarification, teaching, and revision of action, values, beliefs, and conceptualizations. It may be provided verbally or in written form [e.g., Reflective Critical Analysis (RCA), Learning Plans, Collaborative Success Plans (CSP), or other documents]. Summative evaluations are the formal evaluations that take place at midterm and final evaluation meetings and are signed off by both the student and the clinical sessional instructor.

Students are strongly encouraged to provide the evaluation documents from their previous practicum rotation to their clinical sessional instructors in each subsequent semester, for the purpose of establishing effective learning goals and to maximize the educational experience.

7.4.1 *Practicum Evaluation and the Relationship to the Caring Philosophy*

Aligned with the caring curriculum, the evaluation process is designed to be collaborative, interactive, empowering, and student-centered, recognizing students as active participants in the evaluation process.

The following points are inherent in the evaluation process philosophy:

- A caring approach is fundamental to helping the student achieve success
- The review process must be based in praxis
- Learning outcomes are rooted in psychomotor, cognitive, and affective domains
- Learning is internalized and is a personal experience unique to every student

- Course competencies must be consistently demonstrated for a student to be successful
- What is gained from each learning experience varies from learner to learner
- Recognition of mastery and excellence is as important as recognizing areas that need improvement
- Ongoing feedback is necessary for growth and to reinforce the development of accountability and professionalism

The ultimate goal of the nursing program is to graduate caring, safe, ethical, compassionate, and competent practitioners who are accountable to the CNO, as well as responsive to the needs of the client and society at large.

7.4.2 Practicum Evaluation Process

Evaluation is an ongoing process that involves a review of the student's progress in the practicum in each semester. This includes regular written feedback and/or verbal dialogue between the student and their clinical sessional instructor (and preceptor where applicable), specifically about the student's progress towards achievement of the learning outcomes and leveled competencies for their year of study.

In preparation for formal midterm and final evaluation meetings, students are to submit all components of the evaluation tool and the learning plan with appropriate evidence by the assigned due date. This provides the clinical sessional instructor (and preceptor, where applicable) with the opportunity to consider the students' self-assessment when they complete the evaluation.

The student and clinical sessional instructor or preceptors, where applicable, will meet thereafter to discuss the evaluation and the feedback. At both the midterm and final evaluations, the preceptor and clinical sessional instructor must sign a copy of the evaluation (electronic signatures are to be acceptable). A copy of the evaluation, including both the midterm and final evaluation feedback, will be archived electronically.

7.4.3 Basis of Practicum Evaluation

The midterm and final evaluation documents used in the Nursing Programs follow a consistent format; however, they are modified for each level of the program. The tool is intended for use by students for self-evaluation purposes for each practicum course. The form is also used by clinical sessional instructors and preceptors, where applicable, to evaluate students in the practicum setting.

Evaluations of practicum performance are based on the following:

- Consistently and safely meeting the practicum course learning outcomes and associated practice competencies as outlined in the associated evaluation document
- Consistently following the overriding principles, outlined in the Nursing Programs Handbook and Ontario Tech University policies and procedures
- Submission of a learning plan (outlined in the section below), inclusive of personal learning goals related to the practicum area, and completing all identified evidence of accomplishment
- Completion and submission of practicum requirements such as Clinical Success Plans, Reflective Critical Analysis, and Clinical Updates
- All criteria of the course syllabus have been successfully met
- Expectation that the allotted number of hours for the course has been fulfilled by the end of the term

8. ADDRESSING PERFORMANCE-RELATED ISSUES

Students, clinical sessional instructors, and faculty should refer to the [Professional Suitability Policy \(Undergraduate\)](#) for further information on University regulations regarding unsafe practice and professional suitability, as these issues may be addressed through administrative processes and the initiation of Collaborative Success Plans.

****Please note that in the case of serious/critical safety concerns and/or breach of overriding principles or policies, and in consultation with the Associate Dean of Nursing, the student may be removed from the practicum experience.****

Every effort will be made to support the success of the student through a Collaborative Success Plan (CSP) when an issue or problem related to performance or safe practice is raised by:

- the student
- a faculty or sessional instructor
- a clinical sessional instructor
- the agency or community partner
- the preceptor and/or
- a delegate of the agency at any time during the practicum experience

During practicum, student progress is assessed in the following areas on an ongoing basis:

- Achievement of the learning plan
- Meeting the overriding principles
- Meeting program learning outcomes
- Achieving course and year-level competencies

If a student is not making satisfactory progress in any of these areas, the clinical sessional instructor/preceptor will identify concerns with the student as they arise in the practicum environment and may choose to implement (or recommend, in the case of a preceptor) a Collaborative Success Plan. When concerns are raised, the student must be notified as soon as possible, in person when feasible, followed by written documentation.

8.1 Collaborative Success Plans

A Collaborative Success Plan (CSP) is a tool developed in consultation with the student with the goal of assisting the student to be successful in the practicum experience.

Potential situations that may require a Collaborative Success Plan include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to progress satisfactorily or achieve learning outcomes

- Not meeting the required Entry to Practice Competencies for the appropriate year of studies within the designated time frames
- Consistently failing to meet course outcomes
- Attendance and punctuality issues (see Attendance Policy)
- Difficulty applying knowledge, skills, and judgment
- Issues with professional accountability and code of conduct

The development of a CSP between the student and faculty/clinical sessional instructor collaboratively identifies areas of unresolved difficulty, sets goals for improvement, outlines an action plan to facilitate the student's learning, and sets a target date to review the student's progress. A significant part of the process is a formal reflection, which is mandatory, completed by a specified time as assigned by the faculty/sessional/clinical sessional instructor.

When the CSP is issued, the student may be struggling and identified as at risk of not fulfilling the requirements of the practicum experience. If the goals are not met, the student will receive a failing grade for that practicum experience.

The CSP is completed collaboratively by the student, practicum lead/clinical sessional instructor, and/or preceptor, and may have input from the practicum lead. Please note that a Collaborative Success Plan may be initiated at any time (by Instructor or Student), including prior to the course commencing in some situations (e.g. failure to adhere to placement protocols). The intent is to help identify areas of difficulty and to review the options available to address these difficulties. The plan will help the students to clarify responsibilities and direct the learning effort and expectations. The student is expected to play an active role in planning and implementing the plan. Once completed, the Plan, along with the remaining aspects of the course expectations, will be used to evaluate clinical performance. Failure to fulfill the plan may result in a "Fail" grade in the course. Students who fail the practicum portion are required to take the entire course again (theory and practicum).

The CSP document can be found on the respective courses canvas site or can be requested from the Practicum Oversight lead.

8.2 Practicum Failure

Failure in practicum occurs when students, at final evaluation, have failed to perform *consistently* at a competent level and/or failed to meet expected course learning objectives and competencies.

Specifically, a practicum failure occurs when a student:

- Demonstrates a level of performance such that on evaluation they rate below a PASS on meeting course learning objectives

- Received a failing assessment, prior to the final evaluation (e.g. midterm) and has not demonstrated consistent improvements in the areas of concern that were identified and/or in events when a student fails to meet the requirements outlined in Collaborative Success Plan
- Receives a failing grade as a result of sanctions applied in accordance with university policies and/or standards outlined in the Academic Calendar

In courses with a theoretical component, students must successfully achieve a “passing” grade in both practicum and theoretical components to receive credit in the course. Students who receive a practicum failure will receive an overall grade of ‘F’ for the entire course, regardless of the numeric grade received in the theory component. If the student is provided with the opportunity to repeat the course, they must repeat both the practicum and theory components of the course.

8.3 Late or Missed In-Term Coursework, tests, or examinations

Professionalism is a fundamental expectation of nursing practice. Consistent accountability in all actions is reflected in the CNO Code of Conduct and is expected throughout the Nursing Programs. Students are therefore expected to demonstrate professionalism by meeting deadlines and completing all coursework, assignments, tests, examinations, presentations, and other academic requirements in accordance with course expectations.

Students are expected to be familiar with and, when necessary, utilize the processes in place for requesting a [deferral of missed coursework or examinations](#) as outlined by the Office of the Registrar.

For more information, students should consult [Ontario Tech University's policy and procedures](#) for consideration of missed course work and examinations.

9. GENERAL INFORMATION

9.1 Communication

As outlined in the practicum framework, students, staff, and faculty in the nursing programs are expected to always conduct themselves professionally. This expectation extends to all forms of communication, including verbal, nonverbal, written, and social media interactions.

Students are expected to request meeting times with staff and faculty with sufficient notice and are expected to request any changes to meeting times, including cancellations, with the same courtesy.

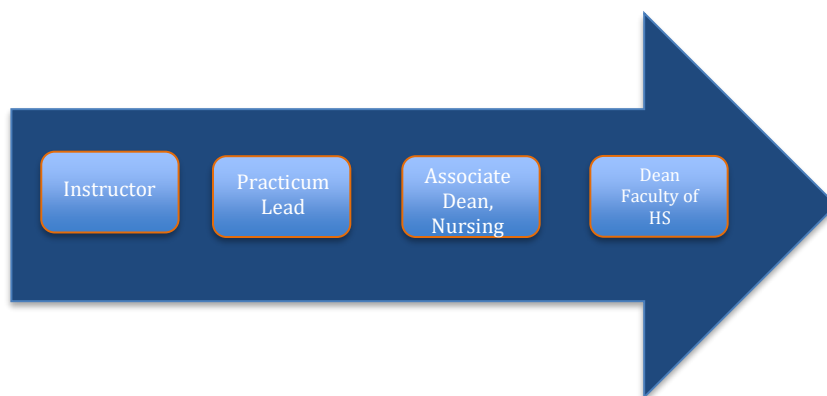
Email communication is also considered a means of professional communication. It is expected that students will include appropriate greetings/signatures, utilize full sentences, and demonstrate a respectful, professional tone at all times. Program staff and faculty will only use students' ontariotechu.net accounts. This includes clinical sessional instructors, faculty, staff, and agency personnel.

Students should not consider email that they send to faculty members, clinical sessional instructors or staff to be confidential. If, in the potential interest of the safety of a student, a patient, or the public, or correspondence potentially concerning in any way, faculty are required to share this information with appropriate individuals.

All communication will take place with students ONLY. It is up to the student to decide how much information they wish to share with their family and support network. Faculty members and staff in the Nursing Program will only communicate directly with students.

9.1.1 Chain of Communication

The escalation of student issues should first begin at the instructor level and progress from there. Please see the diagram below:



9.1.2 Use of Personal Technology and Communication Devices

Nurses, as professionals, are expected to utilize multiple forms of technology to support best possible nursing practice. Nursing students must always conduct themselves in a professional and appropriate manner when using technology.

All students are guided by Ontario Tech's [Technology Use Policy](#). In addition to this general policy, the following guidelines apply to the use of any technology in the Nursing Programs (including computers, laptops, cell phones, tablets, and other electronic devices):

- Professional behaviour and proper etiquette will be observed at all times when using technological devices in the classroom, laboratory, or clinical setting.
- Technological devices may be used only when authorized by faculty for clinical or classroom activities, or as outlined in the Notice of Accommodation.
- The use of technological devices for personal reasons is not permitted while in a patient area or during designated clinical hours. All devices must be silenced or turned off during these times.
- Students are expected to abide by agency requirements and policies regarding the use of technological devices.
- All students are expected to discuss the use of electronic devices and expectations related to technology use with their clinical faculty and to strictly adhere to Program and clinical agency requirements.
- The use of an electronic device allows students to retrieve information quickly and unobtrusively.
- Students must protect the confidentiality of patient information at all times in accordance with healthcare and privacy legislation.

Students are expected to show respect to the patient at all times and to ensure that their full attention is focused on the patient while in the patient's room. If a student is using a device at the bedside, they should explain how the device supports nursing care. Students must maintain control of the device at all times.

Students and clinical sessional instructors should regularly disinfect their devices throughout the shift, following the agency's IPAC guidelines. Just as other medical equipment can act as reservoirs for microorganisms and contribute to the transfer of pathogens, personal devices and other handheld electronic devices can do the same.

Students who violate patient privacy and confidentiality with respect to technology will be investigated for a breach of privacy.

9.3 Social Media Guideline

“Social media” refers to a group of internet-based applications, technologies, and mobile tools that people use to share opinions, information, experiences, images, videos, and audio clips. Common sources of social media include but are not limited to social networking sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn; personal, professional, and anonymous blogs; X (formerly Twitter); TikTok; content-sharing websites like YouTube and Instagram; and discussion forums and message boards.¹

Students are reminded that social media sites may present a sense of anonymity and/or lack of permanence; however, social media is public, and even posts that are “private” may be copied and shared and are available long after. As such, we remind students that social media spaces are also public spaces, and we strongly encourage students to refrain from posting anything that would not be said in a public gathering nor information that would not be suitable for anyone in the world to see, especially in the context of patient confidentiality.²

Relevant Ontario Tech University Standards:

Students are expected to always utilize social media sites in a responsible and professional manner and in accordance with:

- The policies for professional conduct as outlined by the Ontario Tech University [Student Conduct Policy](#)
- The policies regarding professional suitability as outlined by Ontario Tech University [Professional Suitability](#)
- The policies outlined by Ontario Tech University regarding [Technology Use](#)

In addition to university policies, nursing students are expected to demonstrate behaviours consistent with the profession, as such nursing students are expected to uphold the privacy of colleagues and clients in accordance with the following:

- Policies related to the Government of Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004 (PHIPA) [PHIPA](#)
- Policies related to the Government of Ontario Freedom of Information and Protection Privacy Act (FIPPA) [FIPPA](#)
- College of Nurses of Ontario Code of Conduct [CNO – Code of Conduct](#)
- Agency specific policy/agreements as per a student’s practicum site.

¹ International Nurse Regulator Collaborative (2014). "Social media use: Common expectations for Nurses.
<https://www.cno.org/globalassets/docs/prac/incr-social-media-use-common-expectations-for-nurses.pdf>

² University of Exeter Student's Guild Social Media Policy.
<https://hosted.exeterguild.com/assets/PDFs/Social-Media-Policy-September-2020-2-A22W1.pdf>

9.4 Privacy Breach or Breach of Agency Policy

Students who fail to adhere to the standards and guidelines of professional practice (i.e. Code of Conduct) regarding FIPPA and PHIPA legislation will be charged with *academic or non-academic misconduct* (depending on the nature of the infraction) and are at risk of failing the course. Students who breach patient confidentiality may also be investigated by the agency and depending on the severity of the breach, may be reported to the privacy commission. Patients will also be notified of any privacy breach.

Students are prohibited from posting any information related to their practicum placement on any social media site(s). Students should not post specific information related to patients' identifying information (i.e., name, birthdate, diagnosis etc.). Students should refrain from posting negative remarks about an agency, a unit or a staff member. Students should also avoid posting photos that identify patients or staff and should not discuss any procedures performed on a unit or involving a patient.

Students wishing to highlight our partnerships with agencies, for example, an end-of-term photo of the group of students and instructors should be at the discretion of the agency. Students who breach any part of this guideline may be removed from their placement site, subject to appropriate university policies (e.g. academic, code of conduct, professional suitability), and will be at risk of failing the course and possible dismissal from the program and/or the university.

Please review the education tool developed by the College of Nurses of Ontario related to the use of social media; [Social Media: Reflect before you post](#) as well as the position statement created by the International Nurse Regulator Collaborative on [common expectations of nurses regarding social media use](#).

10. SAFETY IN PRACTICUM AND LAB SETTINGS

Students are required to recognize and apply workplace health and safety principles, including bio-hazard prevention and infection control practices, and to correctly use appropriate protective equipment and devices to prevent harm to clients, self, other healthcare workers, and the public.

Students on unpaid placement are entitled to Worker's Compensation type coverage or private insurance purchased through the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU). All students must review and sign a Student Declaration of Understanding to be eligible for insurance coverage. This is included in the pre-practicum requirements for all Entry (i.e. new students) and completed in year 1 of the program. Only registered students are allowed in lab and practicum environments.

10.1 Accidents and/or Injury to self

An accident or injury during practicum is any unexpected event or exposure that happens while you are on placement and results in physical (e.g. slip or fall) or psychological harm, which includes all exposure incidents (e.g., a break in the integrity of the skin due to a needle stick injury, scratches, bites, lacerations, and contact resulting from splashing blood or other bodily fluids, or other biohazards to which standard precautions apply). Students, faculty, staff, and clinical sessional instructors must report exposures immediately after they occur to ensure that appropriate interventions are implemented in a timely manner. For example, prophylaxis against Hepatitis B must be initiated promptly to be effective, or the workplace WHMIS manual may provide guidelines to follow regarding exposure to a chemical or other hazard. In addition to the process outlined below, students need to seek immediate medical attention if required or within 12 hours of the exposure for initial evaluation and treatment as needed, and/or counseling.

Any student or employee who sustains an accident or injury during class, lab, or at a practicum placement must follow the processes outlined below.

In the event of student accident/injury the student must:

1. Notify the CSI and/or preceptor of the accident/injury immediately and seek first aid/medical attention as needed. In consultation with the CSI/preceptor, ensure safe transfer of patient care has occurred before leaving the unit.
2. Complete the online [Ontario Tech University Accident Injury Form](#) within 24 hours following the accident/injury, ideally before leaving the practice area. The form must be completed by the individual who sustained the accident

- injury. The student is advised to complete the form in draft for the clinical instructor to provide feedback as once submitted, it cannot be retracted.
3. If the accident/injury occurred at a practicum placement, ensure that the practicum site has been notified and follow applicable agency policy and process for reporting the injury and paperwork if needed.
 4. If required, the student may also be asked to complete a [Nursing Program Safety Incident Reporting Form](#).

In the event of a student accident/injury, the clinical sessional instructor/preceptor must:

- i. Ensure that safe transfer of patient care has occurred
- ii. Support the student to complete the online [Ontario Tech University Accident Injury Form](#) **within 24 hours following the injury or accident, ideally before leaving the practice area**. The form must be filled out by the individual who sustained the accident or injury.
- iii. If the accident/injury occurred at a practicum placement, ensure that the practicum site has been notified and support the student in following applicable agency policy and process for reporting the injury and completing paperwork if needed.
- iv. Clinical Instructors will be notified if the student is required to complete a [Nursing Program Safety Incident Report Form](#) – this will be sent directly to the student from the Nursing Program Office, and you will be copied on the email to support the student in completing the form as necessary. As this is a legal document, the student must complete the draft form for clinical sessional instructor feedback prior to submitting.

In the event of an accident/injury involving the clinical sessional instructor:

- i. Seek first aid/medical attention as needed. Before leaving the unit, ensure that student activity is paused, and that safe transfer of patient care has occurred. Students should not remain on the ward if you are not actively providing coverage.
- ii. Complete the online [Ontario Tech University Accident Injury Form](#) **within 24 hours following the injury or accident, ideally before leaving the practice area**. The form must be filled out by the individual who sustained the accident or injury.
- iii. If the accident/injury occurred at a practicum placement, ensure that the practicum site has been notified and follow applicable agency policy and process for reporting the injury and paperwork if needed.
- iv. You will be notified if you are required to complete a [Nursing Program Safety Incident Report Form](#) – this will be sent directly to you from the Nursing Program Office, and you will be copied on the email to support the student in completing the form as necessary.

Any accident/injury may result in a Workers' Compensation Claim.

10.1.1 WSIB Reporting

If it is determined that the accident/injury requires Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) notification, the WSIB form “Employers’ Report of Injury/Disease Form 7” will be completed by the Director of Risk Management at Ontario Tech University with the assistance of the student.

The WSIB form will be completed if the work-related injury has caused the student/employee to:

- Be absent from their regular work and/or
- Require modified work and/or
- Obtain Health/Medical Aid
- See Occupational Health Nurse at agency as necessary

WSIB forms must be completed within three calendar days after the injury. If you have any questions about whether a WSIB form should be completed, please contact the [Office or Risk Management](#).

10.2 WSIB & Smoking Policies

If an agency has a no-smoking policy on its property and the student chooses to leave the property to smoke and sustains an injury or is involved in an accident during this time, there is no workplace accident coverage.

10.3 Incident Reporting & Patient Safety Incidents

A patient safety incident is an event or circumstance that could have resulted, or did result, in unnecessary harm to a patient. There are three types of patient safety incidents:

Harmful Incident: A patient safety incident that resulted in harm to the patient.

Near Miss (or Close Call): A patient safety incident that did not reach the patient and therefore no harm resulted.

No-harm incident: A patient safety incident that reached the patient, but no harm has resulted

In the event of a Patient Safety Incident, students and clinical sessional instructors are to follow the process outlined in the [Policy for Incident Reporting and Recording Process for Nursing Programs](#)

Incident Reports are valuable learning tools that aid in the evaluation of existing policies, procedures, equipment, etc., and help to ensure and maintain safety for

clients, students, visitors, and staff. All agencies involved will use the information for quality assurance purposes and to assess trends.

Incidents which are reportable include, but are not limited to:

- Medication and treatment errors
- Client falls
- Equipment failures

10.3.1 Responsibilities of the Student in an Incident

In the event of an incident the **student** will:

- i. Ensure the safety of the client
- ii. Report the incident to the co-assigned nurse/ preceptor/ clinical sessional instructor
- iii. Follow all agency policies, and with support of the co-assigned nurse/preceptor and/or clinical sessional instructor, complete the factual account of the event as per the agency incident reporting process.
- iv. Document in the patient's health record an objective, factual, account of the incident with the assistance of the preceptor and/or clinical sessional instructor.
- v. In consultation with the clinical sessional instructor, co-assigned nurse or preceptor discuss disclosure of the error
- vi. Complete a draft of the Nursing Program Safety Incident Report Form for the clinical sessional instructor to provide feedback. Then, submit the official version to the Nursing Program Office and the course lead/practicum lead before leaving the shift.

10.3.2 Responsibilities of the Co-Assigned Nurse, Preceptor, or Agency Delegate in an Incident (for students in a Preceptor Setting)

In the event of an incident the **co-assigned nurse/agency delegate/preceptor** will:

- i. Ensure the agency's policies are followed
- ii. Assist the student to complete the factual account of the incident in the patient's health record
- iii. Assist in completion of any required agency reporting processes and form completion. The student may be asked to contribute to the factual account of events pertaining to the incident report on the agency's Incident Reporting form.
- iv. Notify assigned Clinical Sessional Instructor
- v. Support the student when informing the client of the error

10.3.3 Responsibilities of the Clinical Sessional Instructor in an Incident

In the event of an incident the **Clinical Sessional Instructor** will:

- i. Ensure the safety of the client
- ii. Assist in the completion of any required agency reporting processes and form completion. The student may be asked to contribute to the factual account of events pertaining to the incident report on the agency's Incident Reporting form
- iii. Review the students' documentation of the event as necessary
- iv. Support the student in completing the [Nursing Program Safety Incident Report Form](#) and forward the completed form to the practicum lead and the Nursing Program Office (nursingprogram@ontariotechu.ca)

10.4 Duty To Report

Students are expected to understand the duty to report and collaborate with their clinical sessional instructor to comply with CNO (2023b) and other legislative requirements regarding the duty to report. The mandatory duty to report includes but is not limited to: reporting to CNO when a nurse poses a serious risk of harm to clients (e.g., diverting drugs/medications; incapacitation; theft from clients; sexual, physical, and/or emotional abuse); reporting improper or incompetent care or abuse of a client in long-term care; and reporting all suspected abuse of a child.

Important Legislation to be aware of includes:

- The [Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021](#) – requires nurses to report the abuse, improper care, or incompetent care which results in harm or risk of harm.
- [Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017](#) – requires all health care professionals to report suspected abuse involving a child or youth

It is the responsibility of students, agency staff, and university employees to notify the individuals involved when a breach of professional conduct or agency regulations is observed. If the situation cannot be resolved, it should be addressed with the appropriate authority (agency, staff, faculty, leadership within the Nursing Program).

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