

Policy: Attendance

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the attendance policy is to establish the requirements and expectations for student attendance for all orientations, classes, seminars, labs, and clinical experiences throughout their NESA BN program of study. The NESA BN Programs recognizes the value of its instructors and students and the students' desire to achieve success and the responsibility of the educational institution to address causes of absences among students.

DEFINITIONS:

Nursing Practice/Praxis includes all orientation, simulation, lab, and clinical experiences, components, activities, and scheduled hours assigned for the development of the competencies required for the professional practice of a baccalaureate prepared registered nurse.

Absence: refers to not being physically present to engage in the scheduled activities for a course.

Fitness to Practice: congruent with the "All the qualities and capabilities of an individual relevant to their practice as a nurse, including but not limited to freedom from any cognitive, physical, psychological, or emotional condition, and dependence on alcohol or drugs that impairs their ability to practice nursing" (CNA, 2017). There may be numerous conditions or changes in health status that can compromise a student's fitness to practice.

POLICY SCOPE:

This policy applies to all students in the NESA BN programs. Exceptions are as follows:

1. **Athletic Team Participation:** The NESA BN programs acknowledge that some nursing students are members of their academic institution's official athletic teams and may have obligations to these teams to maintain scholarships. All members of a University of Lethbridge or Lethbridge Polytechnic athletic team who anticipate absence from theory or practice course related to athletic commitments are required to provide each instructor with a schedule of athletic commitments (provided by the athletics coach) at the start of the course, or as early as available, and discuss these potential absences with their instructor/professor to determine if these absences can be appropriately accommodated without impacting the student's ability to attain the course outcomes and required practice hours. Not providing your instructor with your schedule at the start of the course may jeopardize you being released to attend your athletic

event. Please note that students on athletic teams must meet with an academic advisor at their institution to assist with course planning each semester and should attempt to register for courses so that their athletic commitments have the minimum impact on their academic commitments.

2. CNSA Conference Attendance: Official student delegates, and other nursing students who wish to attend an annual or regional (CNSA) conference **may** be granted permission to attend **one (1)** such conference during course or practice time in each academic year, as long as participation in these activities will not adversely affect achievement of course objectives. Allowance for travel time to the conference will be assessed and approved per conference. Permission to attend the conference **may** be granted for any student who: is in good standing within the BN programs, has no Enhancement Plan currently in effect, and adheres to the application process described in this policy. **Consult the Policy Appendix for the required process and documentation.**
3. NESAs Governance Committees: We believe that it strengthens our program to bring student perspectives to NESAs governance committees. Whenever possible, meeting dates and times for the meetings of these committees will be set when the student member(s) has no classroom or practice commitments.

POLICY STATEMENT(S):

1. Regular and punctual attendance in all assigned praxis days is required to support optimal student learning and to meet professional program requirements (i.e. Entry-Level Competencies for the Practice of Registered Nurses). Absence from required practice hours may impact a student's ability to meet course outcomes and graduate.
2. Attendance at classes, labs and/or seminars for the course are designated as mandatory. Students must attend these learning experiences to receive a pass in the course.
3. If an instructor deems a student unsafe or unprepared for a learning experience, the student may be excluded from the experience; thus, the student may not be able to meet the course requirements.
4. Attendance in nursing course work is a matter of professional conduct. Nursing students are expected to demonstrate accountability and integrity; this is consistent with the Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses (Canadian Nurses Association, 2017).
5. Students in the NESAs BN Programs will ensure their own fitness to participate in practice. This is consistent with CRNA Practice Standards for Regulated Members (College of Registered Nurses of Alberta, 2023).
6. Attendance at all nursing theory classes is an expectation of the nursing program. Multiple absences may jeopardize a student's development of the knowledge base required for competent professional nursing practice and successful completion of course requirements. As adult learners, students are ultimately responsible for their own learning; however, it is also recognized that repeated absences may have a negative impact on collaborative learning experiences.

7. **To ensure fitness to practice and avoid learner fatigue, learning is spread over the duration of the term praxis courses:**
- a. No student will be required or permitted to work greater than 12 hours in a 24-hour period.
 - b. No student will be required or permitted to work overtime.
 - c. Students will not be required or permitted to work practice shifts totaling more than 84 hours in any two-week period.
 - d. Students will not be required or permitted to work during statutory holidays or for institutional reading breaks.
 - e. Short shifts will not be required or permitted.

SPECIFICS OF THE POLICY:

1. Attendance at all scheduled components associated with nursing practice courses is required. Students who miss practice days are at increased risk for not successfully completing a nursing practice course.
2. Due to unforeseen circumstances, scheduled practice experiences may be changed or rescheduled (e.g. due to unit closure). Practice instructors will notify students as soon as possible of any change in scheduled practice hours/shifts.
3. Winter driving in Alberta can be hazardous as a result of decreased visibility, poor road conditions, and decreased vehicle performance. It is important to evaluate road conditions and consider not traveling if conditions are poor.
4. When an absence occurs (e.g. due to illness) students are responsible to notify their instructor and Program Coordinator (via email):
 - a. in a practice setting, it is the student's professional responsibility to notify their instructor at least 30 minutes before their nursing practice is scheduled to begin, as well as notify the Practice Coordinator (LP)/ Assistant Dean (UofL) (via email).
 - b. during a scheduled theory course, it is the student's professional responsibility to notify their instructor via email before the start of class the day of absence
5. When an absence occurs during NURS 4922 Professional Preceptorship, it is the student's professional responsibility to notify their preceptor at least 30 minutes before their nursing practice is scheduled to begin, as well as notify their Faculty Advisor (via email).
6. When a nursing student becomes aware of conditions or changes in health status that may compromise their fitness to practice, they must notify their instructor and Practice Coordinator/Program Chair/Assistant Dean of Nursing. A Fitness-to-Practice Assessment may be initiated to ensure safety to practice.
7. Neither professional nor personal pursuits will be accepted as an unavoidable absence from scheduled nursing practice.
8. It is each student's responsibility to plan any scheduled commitments outside of the "term dates" listed in the academic calendars of the Lethbridge Polytechnic and the University of Lethbridge.
9. Cumulative practice hours will be tracked via HSPnet for each praxis course as a record of

attendance.

10. Absences due to bereavement will be addressed on an individual basis by the instructor in consultation with the Practice Coordinator/Assistant Dean.
11. Requests for absences may be subject to review and approval by the Dean or designate as outlined in the Absence from Clinical Practice Time Algorithm. Consult the Policy Appendix for the required process.
12. Unexcused absences are considered unprofessional conduct.
13. When an absence occurs in a theory course setting (e.g. due to illness), it is the student's responsibility to notify their instructor and any student team members of their absence.
14. Students in team-based learning activities are responsible and accountable to their peers for their participation and attendance. Where applicable, peer evaluations support individual accountability for contributions to team assignments and to participatory learning. Students are expected to demonstrate accountability and integrity in completing peer evaluations.
15. An Enhancement Plan will be used when patterns of absence exist and will be designed to support student success in meeting course requirements and outcomes. The instructor and students will co-create the enhancement plan collaboratively to address the causes of the absences and set in place strategies to prevent further absences which could have a negative impact on the student's ability to achieve course outcomes.

APPENDIX:

Application Process for CNSA Conference

CNSA Conference Delegate/Attendee Application Form attached, and also available at:
<http://www.uleth.ca/healthsciences/cnsa>

RELATED POLICIES/ASSOCIATED GUIDELINES:

NESA Policy: Student Participation in NESA Governance Committees

NESA Policy: Fitness to Practice

NESA Policy: Professional Conduct

NESA Guideline: Enhancement Plan

REFERENCES:

Alberta Health Services (2013). *Student placement agreement*. Retrieved 05/11/23 from

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/careers/cp-stu-spa.pdf>

Alberta Health Services (2016). *Attendance at work.*

Canadian Nurses Association. (2017). Code of ethics for registered nurses. Retrieved 08/05/22 from <https://cdn1.nscn.ca/sites/default/files/documents/resources/code-of-ethics-for-registered-nurses.pdf>

College of Registered Nurses of Alberta. (2013). Nursing Practice Standards. Retrieved 05/11/23 from <https://www.nurses.ab.ca/media/zta24ri/practice-standards-for-regulated-members-2013.pdf>

University of Calgary, Faculty of Nursing (2010). Nursing Practice Attendance Policy.

University of Saskatchewan (2023). Attendance Policy. Retrieved 05/11/23 from <https://nursing.usask.ca/policies/undergraduate.php>

****NOTE: NESAs Policies exist within organizational frameworks of policy for Lethbridge Polytechnic and the University of Lethbridge, and within agreements established with practice partner organizations. If and when NESAs policies are found to differ from such policies and agreements, it is important to note that such policies/agreements will take precedence over NESAs program policies.***

Revised By/Date	Approved by/date
Policy Review Committee: March 2012	NESA Joint Faculty Council: April 18, 2012
Policy Review Committee: February 2013	NESA Joint Faculty Council: February 27, 2013
Policy Review Committee: February 2014	NESA Joint Faculty Council: May 14, 2014
Policy Review Committee: February 2015	Not Required: no change
Policy Review Committee: December 2015	Not Required: no change
Policy Review Committee: March 2017	NESA Joint Faculty Council: May 2017
Policy Review Committee: May 2018	Not Required: editorial changes
Policy Review Committee: April 2019	Not Required: editorial changes
Policy Review Committee: May 2022	NESA Joint Faculty: Table changes for FALL 2022
Policy Review Committee: April 2023	NESA Joint Faculty: May 2023
Policy Review Committee: April 2024	NESA Joint Faculty: April 2024