
Health Professions Strategy and Practice

Undergraduate Nursing Employee (UNE) Provincial Description

Approvals

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Acting SVP, Human Resources

Approval: _____ /s/ _____ Date: March 24, 2010

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Approval: _____ /s/ _____ Date: March 24, 2010

Role Description Undergraduate Nursing Employee

Working Title:	Undergraduate Nursing Employee (UNE)
Classification Title:	
Site:	Alberta Health Services
Title of Direct Supervisor:	Manager/Supervisor
Bargaining Unit:	UNA
Date:	January 2010

A. Role Summary

The Undergraduate Nursing Employee (UNE) position provides an opportunity for the UNE to develop further competency in the range and complexity of Registered Nurse (RN) or Registered Psychiatric Nurse (RPN) practice. The UNE is an unregulated member of the interprofessional health care team who provides Patient Centered Care with the supervision of a RN or RPN.

The nursing activities performed and level of supervision required are determined by legislation, standards of supervision outlined by professional associations¹, Alberta Health Services (AHS) policy, educational preparation, practice setting, complexity of the Patient, level of risk involved, and competency of the UNE. In collaboration with the UNE, the RN or RPN at the point of care has the responsibility to make a reasonable and prudent UNE Patient care assignment.

The UNE is accountable for providing safe patient care in accordance with her or his educational preparation and competency. The UNE is responsible for seeking consultation and guidance. The UNE is excluded from employment in a practice setting (e.g. unit) for the period of time that she or he is in a clinical placement as a student in that practice setting.

B. Key Responsibilities

The UNE provides holistic care to Patients, with the supervision of the RN or RPN, utilizing the nursing process.

Assessment

Collects relevant health history, psychosocial, and physical examination data and contributes to the comprehensive assessment of the health status of each assigned Patient:

¹ College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta. (2005). Standards of Supervision of Nursing Students and Undergraduate Nursing Employees Providing Client Care. Edmonton: Author.

- Performs assessments and updates data
- Assesses Patients in context of the determinants of health
- Identifies learning needs and priorities for care preferences and goals
- Communicates assessment findings to supervising RN or RPN, at the point of care, and other health care team members
- Documents assessments

Planning

Contributes to the development and modification of the Patient's plan of care:

- Provides relevant information related to the Patient's health status, self-care abilities, and limitations
- Assists with identification of priorities for care
- Contributes to the establishment of short and long-term goals
- Contributes to the identification and planning of nursing interventions
- Contributes to the identification of education and discharge planning needs
- Documents plan of care for the Patient

Implementation

Focuses nursing action toward goal attainment:

- Provides care based on the Patient's plan of care
- Modifies nursing actions according to changes in the Patient's health status
- Participates in Patient education including acquisition of specific knowledge and skills
- Identifies the need for referrals to selected resources both in the hospital and community
- Documents nursing actions

Evaluation

Assists with measurement of expected outcomes for planned nursing interventions:

- Observes and communicates the Patient's response to nursing interventions
- Identifies the need for revisions to the Patient's plan of care based on ongoing assessment of the Patient's condition and progress
- Collaborates with the interprofessional team to revise the Patient's plan for care
- Documents the Patient's responses to nursing actions/interventions

Professional Practice

- Follows established legislation, policies and procedures
- Follows AHS values, principles, and Code of Conduct
- Performs skills safely within her/his knowledge, skills, and abilities
- Identifies and seeks consultation when she/he lacks competence to perform a skill
- Identifies and seeks guidance and assistance when the complexity of the Patient's condition or care is beyond the competency of the UNE
- Communicates effectively and respectfully

- Adapts practice based on reflection and feedback
- Understands own role and other's roles and accountabilities within health care team
- Respects confidentiality of Patients and AHS information
- Participates in staff development activities or education programs as appropriate

The **UNE MUST NOT**:

- Take verbal or telephone orders
- Perform Advanced Nursing Interventions; advanced nursing interventions are *not* part of a basic nursing education program and require additional education to perform competently
- "Be left in charge or left alone on a unit or in a practice setting without a registered nurse or another regulated health care professional present"²
- Perform a Restricted Activity that they have not had appropriate theory and practice in their nursing education program
- Perform a Restricted Activity interventions without appropriate supervision

C. Supervision

At the beginning of each shift an RN or RPN is identified to provide supervision of the nursing activities, including Restricted Activities, performed by the UNE. The level of nursing activity supervision is determined in collaboration with the UNE, based on:

- The nature and level of risk of the nursing activity
- The established competency of the UNE
- AHS policies
- The practice setting

Restricted Activities

To perform Restricted Activities, UNEs *must* be supervised either directly or indirectly *in the practice setting* by a Regulated Health Care Professional authorized and competent to independently perform and supervise that Restricted Activity. The supervising RN or RPN may designate another Regulated Health Care Professional to supervise the provision of a Restricted Activity. The RN or RPN still remains responsible for the supervision of the UNE for the overall provision of patient care. To perform the Restricted Activity, the UNE "must have had appropriate theory and practice in the nursing education program and be competent to perform the restricted activity intervention prior to doing the restricted activity intervention"³.

² College and Association of Registered Nurses. (2005). *Standards for Supervision of Nursing Students and Undergraduate Nursing Employees Providing Client Care*, 6. Edmonton: Author.

³ College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta. (2005). *Standards for Supervision of Nursing Students and Undergraduate Nursing Employees Providing Client Care*, p 6. Edmonton: Author.

In determining whether a Restricted Activity is performed by the UNE, the manager (or designate) and RN or RPN at point of care takes into consideration:

- Completion of relevant theory and practice in the UNEs educational program
- AHS policies
- The Patient population and their health care needs
- Current established competencies of the UNE
- The supports and resources available for supervision

Supervision received:	
Operational supervision	Managers, Supervisors
Patient care supervision	<p>Regulated Health Care Professionals</p> <p>Direct supervision: means the RN, RPN, or Regulated Health Care Professional designate is present in the practice setting at the point of care and is providing supervision “<i>at the side of</i>” the UNE.</p> <p>Indirect supervision: means the RN, RPN, or Regulated Health Care Professional designate is available for guidance and consultation but is not directly at the side of the UNE and is readily available on the unit or in the <i>same location</i> where the care is being provided.</p>
Supervision provided:	UNEs do not provide supervision to other employees or students.

D. Qualifications

Formal Education (minimum requirements)

1. Current enrollment in an approved nursing education program leading to initial entry to practice as a registered nurse or registered psychiatric nurse
2. Completed a minimum of 450 hours of clinical practice in an approved nursing education program leading to initial entry to practice as a registered nurse or registered psychiatric nurse (refer to Appendix A for hiring considerations and orientation requirements)
3. Current Health Care Provider level (C) CPR

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

UNEs have acquired knowledge and formal academic preparation in various clinical practice experiences and may have been deemed competent to perform various skills. In addition to this, the opportunity to perform the skill with enough frequency that

competency can be maintained is required. These considerations determine their current competency level and also the plan for continuing to refine their competencies and enhance their confidence in nursing practice during their UNE experience. On a regular basis, the manager or designate discusses with the UNE her/his evolving knowledge and skill development. Initial considerations for knowledge, skills, and abilities include:

- Acquired competencies in clinical nursing practice to provide safe, quality nursing care, in a supervised assignment
- Ability to work as a member of a team and to request and accept direction
- Critical thinking skills including clinical judgment, problem solving, and evaluation skills reflective of level of education
- Professional, mature manner
- Effective interpersonal and communication skills
- Initiative
- Respect and tolerance for different Patients and cultural lifestyles
- Ability to engage in and support evidence based practice and research

E. Contacts

Internal: Members of the health care team, support services staff, Patients, and families.

External: Other members of the health care team, other providers of care.

Special Requirements

- Rotating shifts and weekends
- Standing, walking, lifting, pulling, pushing, stooping, and carrying
- Physical demands may include lifting, turning and transferring or assist with lifting, turning, and transferring of adults, children and infant Patients. Physical demands also include transporting Patients on stretchers, wheelchairs or beds, and lifting, and carrying supplies

F. Definitions

Advanced Nursing Interventions: Nursing activities that require education *beyond* the basic, entry-to-practice level. This includes activities such as care of a central venous catheter, chest tube removal, performing peritoneal dialysis.

Establishing Competency (UNE): the UNE has obtained academic preparation, been deemed competent to perform the nursing activity, and will perform the activity with the frequency required to maintain competency.

Patient: Refers to Patients, clients, and residents.

Patient Centred Care: Patient/family centered care places an emphasis on collaborating with patients and families of all ages, at all levels of care, and in all health

care settings. Families are more than surrogates to be called on when the patient is unable to make decisions on her/his behalf; they are essential members of the care continuum and care-giving team.⁴

Regulated Health Care Professional: Means a health care worker who is permitted to deliver a range of health services and restricted activities as defined by Federal and Provincial legislation, her/his regulatory college, Alberta Health Services, and practice setting (where applicable).

Restricted Activities: Those activities outlined in the Government Organizational Act and defined in the Health Professions Act⁵ that are considered to be high risk activities that may only be performed by Regulated Health Care Professionals who are authorized and competent to do so.

Supervision: Consultation and guidance by a member of a regulated health profession in the practice setting.

G. Approval

Supervisor: _____ Date: _____

Incumbent: _____ Date: _____

Human Resources: _____
Date: _____

⁴ Conway, J., Johnson, B., Edgman-Levitan, S., Schlucter, J., Ford, D., Sodomka, P., et al. (2006). Partnering with patients and families to design a patient and family-centered health care system: A roadmap for the future - a work in progress. Bethesda, MD: Institute for Family-Centered Care.

⁵ Government of Alberta (n.d.). Queens Printer.

Appendix A Undergraduate Nursing Employee

Hiring Considerations

In determining the appropriateness of the applicant for a particular practice setting, the manager or designate considers:

- The number of clinical hours the applicant has completed in their nursing program
- Previous experience or student placement experience with the patient population (each UNE will have had different clinical placement experiences, resulting in different competencies)
- Current competencies acquired in nursing education program
- Complexity of care needs of the patient population
- Capacity for the care setting to provide appropriate RN or RPN supervision of UNE nursing activities
- Ability for manager or designate to commit to regular discussions with the UNE regarding knowledge and skill development, role, and functions

A standardized UNE interview question guide for managers is available from Human Resources – Recruitment.

Orientation Requirements

To promote a successful UNE experience, the manager or designate ensures the following:

- UNEs will be provided with orientation to the practice setting for which they have been hired. The UNE will *only* be assigned to no more than *two similar* patient care areas for the initial 120 hours worked.
- UNEs will not be asked to float to units, other than those designated at the beginning of their employment, prior to the end of their initial orientation period. Orientation to additional units will be provided.
- Every attempt shall be made to keep the UNE attached to one or two patient care areas/programs to provide consistency in supervision of nursing activities, consistency as a member of the interprofessional healthcare team, and to develop competence and confidence in a particular practice setting.