

2019

NURSE PRACTITIONER PROGRAM APPROVAL



Association of
Registered Nurses
of Newfoundland
and Labrador



Introduction

One of the professional self-regulating responsibilities of the Association of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador (ARNNL) is to approve nursing education programs that prepare Registered Nurses for licensure as Nurse Practitioners. This authority is derived from the *Registered Nurses Act (2008)* section 11. (1)(h) which states:

The Council may, with the approval of the minister, make regulations respecting the approval of nursing education programs for the purposes of registration and licensing;

The approval process is based on the premise that nursing education is central to promoting excellence in nursing practice and preventing unsafe nursing practice in the public interest. Through the approval process, ARNNL strives to promote excellence in nursing practice by ensuring nurse practitioner education programs are preparing graduates to achieve the entry level competencies to practice as nurse practitioners.

The Education Advisory Committee (EAC) supports the assessment of nursing education programs which are conducted at intervals approved by Council. The EAC reviews the program approval results to validate if the program is meeting standards and prepares recommendations, based on data, for Council on approval status. Nurse practitioner programs must receive program approval status from Council to obtain the designation of an “approved nurse practitioner program” in Newfoundland & Labrador. Council has the final authority to grant a program approval status.

The data analyses of the education program are contracted to an external third party whom has validated the indicators and the scoring methodology and evaluated the program approval process and tools.

Guiding Principles

Five principles guide program approval:

1. Regulatory Focused: The program approval standards and process is based on a public protection mandate.
2. Transparent: The program approval standards, policies and decisions are available to all stakeholders.
3. Evidence – informed: The program approval framework and process is based on evidence and best practice.
4. Objective: The evaluation and decision making is based on standardized criteria.
5. Sustainable: The program approval process can be maintained by all stakeholders.



Nurse practitioner education programs are evaluated based on the program approval framework approved by Council (see Figure 1). The framework encompasses three standards which are measurable, achievable benchmarks against which nurse practitioner programs are reviewed and evaluated for determining program approval status.

Standards

1. Structure: The program's policies, procedures and resources which support the student's preparation to meet entry level competencies.
2. Curriculum: The program's curriculum prepares students to meet entry level competencies.
3. Outcomes: The program consistently demonstrates outcomes of preparing graduates to meet entry level competencies.

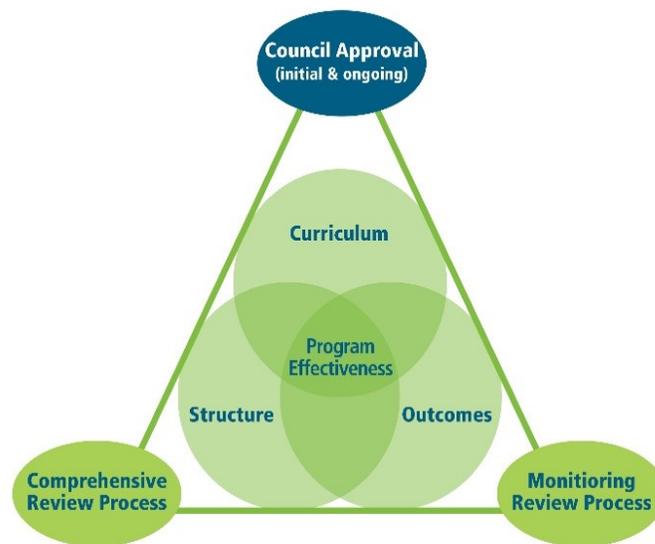


Figure 1

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Each of the three standards uses indicators and associated evidence requirements to evaluate a program's performance for that standard. Each indicator has been validated and supports the principles and objectives for program approval. Figure 2 provides a high-level summary of the 9 indicators and the evaluation scores.



Structure Standard (total weight 25%)	
Indicator (Sub - indicator)	Weight %
1. Nursing program governance	6
1a: Nursing program governance structure	2
1b. Curriculum review structure	2
1c. Annual review of program outcomes	2
2. Client and student safety	13
2a. Orientation of student and faculty to clinical setting	2
2b. Student supervision in all clinical placements	3
2c. Regular evaluation of student performance in clinical setting	3
2d. Processes are in place to manage and learn from safety incidents	5
3. Qualified faculty	6
3a. Faculty who are RN, RPN and NPs have current certificate of registration	2
3b. Regular process to evaluate teaching	4
Sub-total - Structure Indicators	25%
Curriculum Standard (total weight 40%)	
4. Curriculum incorporates entry-to-practice competencies and foundational practice standards	25
5. Clinical learning opportunities support learners to attain and demonstrate acquisition of program objectives	10
6. Processes in place to communicate expectations for the student placement	5
Sub -Total: Curriculum Indicators	40%
Outcome Standard (total weight 35%)	
7. Registration exam scores-1st time pass rates (3 - year cumulative total)	17
8. Recent graduates' ratings of their preparation to practice safely, competently, and ethically	8
9. Preceptor ratings of student's readiness to practice	10
Sub -Total: Outcome Indicators	35%
Total of Standards 1, 2, 3 weight	100%



Figure 2

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Mandatory Indicators: Client and Student Safety Sub - indicator
Curriculum Standard

Approval Status

To assist ARNNL Council in determining approval status, the EAC, upon review of data provided by a third party, will provide Council with one of the following four approval statuses with rationale and a summary of the program's approval scores:

- i. **Preliminary approval status** is given to a new program meeting the criteria for such approval. Programs receiving preliminary approval must undergo a comprehensive review in the academic year following the first class of graduates. Graduates from programs with this status are considered graduates of an approved nursing program and are eligible for registration in Newfoundland & Labrador.
- ii. **Approved status** is granted for 5 years when the program meets the cut score of 75% and the mandatory indicators for program approval. Graduates from a program with this status are considered graduates of an approved nursing program and are eligible for registration in Newfoundland & Labrador.
- iii. **Approved with conditions status** is granted for three years (unless otherwise directed by Council) when the program does not meet the cut score of 75% OR does not meet the mandatory indicators. Graduates from a program with this status are considered graduates of an approved nursing program and are eligible for registration in Newfoundland & Labrador.

Programs receiving conditional approval status are required to develop an action plan to address the recommendations. The program will have up to three years to implement their action plan to meet the recommendations and report annually to Council their progress toward implementing recommendations.

- iv. **Not approved** means the program fails to meet the cut score of 75% OR does not meet the mandatory indicators over a consecutive number of years and does not demonstrate improvement in meeting the requirements. Graduates from a program with this status are not eligible for registration in Newfoundland & Labrador.



Program Review

To support the principle of using objective and evidence-informed practices to inform decision-making, a scoring tool and rubrics are used to evaluate the evidence for each of the indicators. This section describes how the indicators are evaluated to score each program. The score for each indicator is calculated on two factors, as shown in the following equation:

Indicator score: A score for the evidence submitted (2, 1 or 0) x indicator weight (%).

Evidence score: Based on the program's submitted evidence, each indicator is evaluated against a rubric that determines whether the indicator has been met (score = 2), partially met (score = 1) or not met (score = 0).

Indicator weight: Each indicator has a "weight" that contributes a relative percentage to the program's total score based on its regulatory importance. The indicator weights, total to a standard weight (Program Structure 25%; Program Curriculum 40%; and Program Outcomes 35%) and an overall weight (Total 100%). A subset of indicators, defined as "mandatory" from a regulatory perspective, must be "met" (score = 2) for the program to receive an approved status.

The following are mandatory indicators:

- Client and student safety
- Curriculum: Incorporates entry level competencies and foundational practice standards.
- The ratings for the entry level competencies and the foundational practice standards contribute to the overall curriculum mapping score. For a rating of met (score =2), the curriculum mapping tool template must meet the following three criteria:
 1. There are no unmet entry level competencies (all entry level competencies must be rated met or partially met); and
 2. 75% or more of the entry level competencies within each domain must be rated met; and
 3. 100% of the foundational practice standards must be rated met.

Nursing program approval statuses are based on whether the program exceeds the cut score of 75% and meets the mandatory indicators described above.

Re-submission process (as necessary): In the event any indicators or competencies are scored as unmet during the initial evidence review, the assessors meet with the program to review gaps in evidence and provide recommendations for re-submission of unmet indicators/competencies. Appendix 1 provides an overview of documents and evidence required in the submission process.

If after re-submission, the program still does not meet the cut score of 75% OR either of the two mandatory requirements, the program receives conditional approval and must develop an action plan to address gaps based on recommendations and a schedule provided by ARNNL Council.

Program Review Timelines

The following outlines the review process and timelines for new and established programs.

New Programs

A new nurse practitioner education program is required to receive preliminary approval before admitting students to the program. The program will provide ARNNL written notification of its intent to offer a new program one year prior to commencement date.

A program approval review will minimally include a review of the new program's curriculum. Programs receiving preliminary approval must undergo a comprehensive review in the academic year following the first class of graduates.

Established Programs

ARNNL provides the program written notification 18 months in advance of their comprehensive review deadline. The program will have 11 months to submit documents or as otherwise mutually negotiated.

Changes to Program

The program is responsible for notifying ARNNL in writing of any proposed substantive changes to the program or the programs curriculum. The EAC will review information provided by the program and will determine if a program approval review is required and the scope of the review. The EAC may consult with representatives from the program or request additional information to assist in its determination.



A substantive change may include but are not limited to:

- Significant changes to the delivery method of the program (e.g. simulation).
- Significant changes in the curriculum including how the curriculum addresses the entry level competencies and standards required for nurse practitioner practice.
- Change in program length (e.g. clinical hours, theory hours).
- Change in resources (e.g. fiscal, faculty, clinical placements) that will have a direct impact on a school's ability to implement the approved nurse practitioner program.

Questions related to whether a change to a program is substantive shall be referred to ARNNL Council by the EAC and Council will make the final decision.

Moving Forward

The program approval process is a new program which ARNNL will continue to evolve and improve to promote excellence in nursing practice and prevent unsafe nursing practice in the public interest. It is fundamental to public protection to ensure our regulatory accountability is consistently and effectively applied to all education programs. Therefore, the goal is to have a standard program approval process for all entry level nursing programs in NL.



Appendix 1

Document Submission Requirements

This section provides a high-level overview of key documents required for the comprehensive review. All required forms will be provided during a scheduled orientation to the approval process.

A secure portal (enhanced file transfer system or EFT) has been set up for the program to upload their approval documents. Each school has a secure separate folder that can be accessed by multiple users to manage their program approval documents. Separate instructions with password and log-in information are provided for using the portal.

Indicator Evidence Form

Each indicator has a list of evidence required to substantiate that the indicator is met. An Indicator Evidence Form (Evidence Form) is to be used by schools to document and submit the evidence for five of the program approval indicators (Indicators 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6). Indicator 4 (curriculum mapping) requires completion of a separate document (Curriculum Mapping Tool). ARNNL is responsible for providing the evidence for Indicator 7 (first time pass rates on registration exams). Indicators 8 and 9 will be completed by students and preceptors.

Curriculum Mapping

Curriculum mapping is foundational to all entry-level nursing programs. It is one indicator used to evaluate and approve entry-level nursing programs. Curriculum mapping is a mandatory indicator focused on the regulatory mandate of public safety and integrating and teaching entry level competencies. During a curriculum review, schools engage in a self-assessment process of their curriculum and provide evidence of the teaching and learning experiences required to prepare graduates to be competent and safe practicing nurses. Curriculum mapping provides a systematic approach for schools to document their curriculum against foundational practice standards and entry level competencies for each program.

Each entry-level nursing education program is required to map its curriculum during the comprehensive review process, and prior to implementation of any new entry-level nursing program, using the curriculum mapping tool.



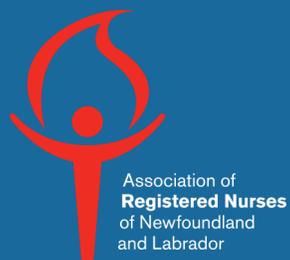
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