

Perioperative Nursing LPN Program Frequently Asked Questions

Revised – 04/12

When can I start courses in the program?

The program is offered twice a year starting in Fall and Winter. It is designed to enable completion in approximately eight months on a full-time basis or within three years on a part-time basis. Please contact the program for further details regarding the differing pacing of the program.

Do I need to come to Saskatchewan to complete the program?

You need to complete the lab and clinical experience components of the program in Saskatchewan, and you must obtain a current nursing registration in the province.

The primary clinical sites have been in Regina and Saskatoon. Traditionally, the clinical sites have been in Regina and Saskatoon. Students may participate in the preceptored portion of the clinical component at a SIAST pre-approved site.

Special requests for a group of students to have the lab and clinical delivered in other locations will also be considered. If a health care facility or organization is interested in entering into a contractual arrangement with SIAST to deliver the program, discussions can be arranged to explore the request and facilitate the process.

Can I receive transfer credit for my prior work experience?

Experienced perioperative nurses should contact a program faculty member who will determine if PLAR is appropriate for them.

I have heard that some provinces won't hire Licensed Practical Nurses. How likely am I to get a job in the perioperative setting when I'm done my program?

All licensed practical nurses interested in applying for the program are encouraged to explore their employment options prior to applying. This is because some provinces are less likely to employ LPNs. However, many facilities in Canada do hire LPNs. There is a progressive shift toward models of care that integrate LPNs into the surgical environment.

If you are living in a community where a facility does hire LPNs, or if you are willing to relocate, you will likely be successful in obtaining a job.

What is the scope of practice for an LPN in the perioperative setting?

This varies greatly from province to province and facility to facility. LPNs are encouraged to explore this in their chosen location.

Can I still work while I am completing the program?

Yes, and most students continue to work at their jobs while completing the online component of the program.

How will I progress in the program?

The program is delivered over the internet, so you can build your professional credentials while maintaining job and family responsibilities. There are six courses completed over approximately 22 weeks and clinical components consisting of a one week lab and approximately ten weeks of clinical experience.

Each course is divided into learning outcomes and steps. Each course has specific strategies for evaluating theoretical knowledge. This could be through exams or assignments. The assignments are described in detail within each course. All exams are written online.

You will participate in a psychomotor skills lab prior to attending the clinical component of the program. It provides you with an opportunity to apply theory to practice. The five-day lab consists of a demonstration of essential psychomotor skills, practicing skills under supervision, and a performance exam.

The 10-week clinical practice experience takes place after successful completion of the lab. The lab and clinical take place in preapproved agencies within the Regina Qu'Appelle and/or Saskatoon health regions.

Where can I do my clinical practice education?

You need to complete the lab and clinical components of the program in Saskatchewan. However, special requests to complete the lab and clinical in other locations outside of Saskatchewan may be considered. If a health care facility wants to enter into a contractual arrangement with SIAST to deliver the program within their facility, discussions can be arranged to explore their request and facilitate the process.

I have always attended formal classroom education. Distance learning seems like it would be a lonely experience. Is there any way I could have contact with my classmates?

While distance learning can be a lonely experience, all students are given the opportunity to complete a Freedom of Information consent form. If you agree to allow our faculty to release your contact information to other students, then you can be linked up with your classmates. Your information is only given to other classmates and is only released with your consent.

Online students have an opportunity to chat, conduct discussions via the online course and are encouraged to exchange contact information with other students if they choose to do so. The program strives to create community of e-learners who are interactive and share the learning experience(s) with one another.

I have never taken online courses before. How do I know if I have the attributes to be a successful online learner?

Distance education takes added time and energy, therefore it is suggested that you evaluate your readiness for learning via distance. Self assessment tools to determine if online learning is right for you are available on the internet and on request to the program.

Personal attributes of the successful online learner are:

- Ability to assume responsibility for own learning
- Self-directed and motivated
- Persistent and confident
- Ability to problem-solve
- Active in their learning
- Effective time management skills
- Disciplined to study without external reminders

Basic technical skills that you need include:

- Basic computer literacy
- Word processing
- Searching on the internet
- Taking time to complete available online tutorials and use help screens

What kind of supports can I put in place to ensure I am successful as an online learner?

SIAST has a wealth of tutorials and support tools to ensure your success. A successful online student searches out these tools and uses them. When a student is registered into a SIAST course for the first time, the student is also enrolled in a free orientation course called “Online learning made easy.” Students are strongly encouraged to complete this short course to learn about supports SIAST has in place to enhance your success. Students who complete the orientation tools before the course begins have reduced frustration when the course starts.

Student success is also enhanced through family and employer support. Families can provide childcare or assist with household chores. When employers allow flexible hours for school obligations or use of a computer at work, success is also enhanced. Some students have found that having a personal laptop that can be taken with them wherever they go enhances their success.

Do I need to have good computer skills to take online courses?

No, even students who do not have good computer skills can succeed in the online courses. In fact, some of the students who start with limited computer skills enjoy the online courses the most!

You will develop skills quickly and remember, you will receive lots of support. The online learning made easy course is made available to all students in the perioperative nursing programs.

Online is a wonderful and rich learning environment that offers interactive learning exercises, connection to an online community of learners and a wide range of audio/visual learning aids.

Previous online students who were initially hesitant to access online learning have commented that they wish all the courses were available online.

How will I communicate with the faculty?

Program faculty are available to support you via the telephone, email, online communication tools (video chat) and, in some situations, in person.

Where will I write my exams?

An approved test site will be assigned to you when you are registered in program courses.

Generally, students write their exams online at SIAST approved test centers in or close to your home community.

When you write your exams online, test center staff will orientate you to the test-writing software. You must schedule an extra 15 minutes before your first exam for the orientation. The exams are multiple-choice and require you to use a mouse and read onscreen instructions.

Where can I buy my books and other materials?

Information on purchasing textbooks and course manuals will be provided when you register. Material is available for purchase online, by phone, or in person.

What completion document do I receive after completing the program?

Upon graduation, you will receive an advanced certificate in Perioperative Nursing / LPN.

What other recognition will I receive after completing the program?

Graduates are credited with 660 practice hours towards eligibility to maintain registration with the Saskatchewan Association of Licensed Practical Nurses (SALPN) if you are a licensed practical nurse in Saskatchewan while taking the program.