

Practical Nursing Program Frequently Asked Questions

Why should I consider the Practical Nursing program? What sets this program apart from other programs?

As a student in the Practical Nursing program, you will gain skills in providing nursing care to individuals of all ages under the expert guidance of our faculty.

The curriculum is based on principles of primary health care.

This program also stands out because it is nationally recognized and provides relevant content that prepares graduates to work in a variety of practice environments.

What are the program highlights? What is the focus in each semester?

The focus of each semester is as follows:

Semester 1

- An introduction to the concepts of health promotion and illness prevention with a clinical focus on the older adult.

Semester 2

- Rehabilitative and supportive care, and the concepts of mental health with a clinical focus on individuals with chronic health challenges.

Semester 3

- Theoretical and clinical experiences associated with curative / restorative care in the acute care setting and the concepts of perinatal nursing, child and adolescents nursing.

Semester 4

- The transition from student to graduate practical nurse with an additional focus on the nursing of Aboriginal people.

Each semester contains a clinical experience that will help you put theory into practice.

How is the program structured?

The program is based on a sequential four semester approach to course offerings. The courses are organized into streams that flow across each semester. They are designed to meet diverse learning styles.

Instructional methods include seminars, observational seminars pre- and post-clinical conferences, small group presentations, lectures, demonstrations, role-playing, storytelling, discussion, reflective thinking and writing, and simulation lab experiences.

Opportunities for critical reflection about a caring based practice, development of employability skills and understanding the role and scope of practice of the licensed practical nurse (LPN) are blended into the program's learning activities.

The clinical practice courses are integrative in nature and, as such, the evaluation of your performance in the clinical setting involves evaluating the application of the theoretical concepts learned in all the other courses in the care of clients. This is what ultimately determines your progress toward achieving the competencies of the beginning practical nurse.

Is this program approved?

The Saskatchewan Association of Licensed Practical Nurses (SALPN) is responsible for the approval of the Practical Nursing program. The approval criterion ensures that graduates meet the standards and competencies for practice as set forth by SALPN.

What is the difference between a licensed practical nurse (LPN) and a registered nurse (RN)?

A licensed practical nurse provides professional nursing care for individuals across the lifespan within the context of family and community. A registered nurse, who also provides nursing care for individuals, focuses on broader health promotion and illness prevention aspects of care for individuals, families, groups and communities.

What are the employment opportunities like after graduation?

Employment opportunities are excellent and reflect current and projected critical shortages of licensed practical nurses.

There is national reciprocity of SIAST graduates so you will be able to work in any province in Canada or in the Northwest Territories. Graduates have also accepted positions in the United States and overseas.

Do LPNs work shift work?

While it depends on the place of employment, historically, licensed practical nurses work a combination of days, evenings and/or night shifts that are eight or twelve hours long.

Where is the program offered?

SIAST offers the program at Wascana Campus in Regina, Woodland Campus in Prince Albert and at Kelsey Campus in Saskatoon. The program is also offered in partnership with Saskatchewan Regional Colleges and the Dumont Technical Institute in Prince Albert and Saskatoon.

I have worked as a Continuing Care Assistant. Would I get any credit for that training?

For more information please see: [Bridging Option for Continuing Care Assistants Entering the Practical Nursing Program](#).

Can I get transfer credit for my prior work experience?

It is also possible that you could access the [Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition](#) process for selected Semester 1 courses.

Do I need to get a criminal record check?

Yes - your clinical practice experience will occur in settings in which you will provide direct client care. For the protection of clients, the program requires that each student provide the results of a criminal record check as part of the program's registration process.

A criminal record may result in a student being excluded from clinical experience and may result in the student being unable to complete the necessary program requirements.

Can I take the program part-time?

No, however selected courses are available to take via distance learning (home study and online) prior to enrolling in the full-time program. For more information go to [Practical Nursing Courses \(Distance\)](#).

Are there ways for me to complete the program sooner?

No, we do not have an accelerated option to complete the program.

Can I take any of the courses before I start my program on a full-time basis?

Yes - selected courses are available to take via distance learning (home study and online) as an unclassified student prior to enrolling in the full-time program. For more information go to [Practical Nursing Courses \(Distance\)](#). To gain acceptance to the Practical Nursing program you will need to meet the entrance requirements, submit an application, and be selected from the qualified candidates.

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 from 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. Courses are available if you are missing any of the ingredients to promote 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.

Can I apply if I am still in high school?

Yes- in order to ensure that your application is complete, you will need to submit the SIAST application form and application fee **between October 1 and February 15**. All required documents including the High Demand Preliminary Statement of High School Standing or official transcripts for post-secondary education and high school upgrading **must be received by February 28 / 29 to be considered**.

If final grade 12 marks are available, they should be reported on the High Demand Preliminary Statement of High School Standing form. If a mid-term grade is available or if your counselor is willing to project a grade for courses started but not yet completed, they can report that grade on the form.

When will I know if I am accepted into the program?

Letters of acceptance are sent out after the application period has ended. This typically would occur by the middle of April.

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.

Are there any bursaries that I can apply for?

Six Saskatchewan Association of Licensed Practical Nurses (SALPN) bursaries are presented annually to students eligible for graduation and who have overall achievement in the Practical Nursing program including academic and clinical performance, interaction with clients and family in the clinical setting, leadership skills and community or school involvement.

SIAST counsellors can provide information regarding additional funding opportunities for Practical Nursing students.

Are the graduates of the Practical Nursing program required to write an exam in order to become a LPN?

Yes, in order to become licensed, following completion of the program, graduates write a Canadian Practical Nursing Registration Exam (CPNRE).

If I want, can I further my education in nursing and get credit for what I have?

The Practical Nursing program is not a step towards becoming a registered nurse; however, if program graduates want to pursue further education in the discipline of nursing, credit is available at degree programs at the University of Alberta and the University of British Columbia.

SIAST and the University of Regina are offering the Saskatchewan Collaborative BScN (SCBScN). It has not yet been determined the credit Practical Nursing graduates will obtain should they pursue the SCBScN program.

What completion documentl do I receive after completing the program?

Upon graduation, you will receive a diploma in Practical Nursing.