Practicum Handbook
nursing practice partners • students • instructors

Bachelor of Science in Nursing
Post-Diploma Program guidelines for practice experiences

www.nursing.uvic.ca
LETTER FROM THE ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

Dear Colleagues,

Here at the University of Victoria, School of Nursing, we rely greatly on our partners in practice to participate in the ongoing education of registered nurses. On behalf of the School of Nursing, I wish to extend our gratitude to each of you who supports their professional development and learning. This handbook is a resource for students, field guides, and instructors during undergraduate practicum experiences in the University of Victoria BSN Post RN Diploma Program.

The UVic School of Nursing is accredited by the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing and approved by the British Columbia College of Nursing Professionals. The school offers the final two years of a BSN degree to Registered Nurses who have graduated from an RN diploma program. The UVic BSN degree for Post RN Diploma students is a Distance Education program for registered nurses practicing with a diploma in nursing. The program is available to students across Canada and the USA. This includes making resources and advice available throughout the program as needed and working with the students to find the most appropriate learning experiences to prepare them for baccalaureate nursing.

Practice placement is a requirement of the Post RN Diploma BSN Distance Program. Practice placements provide students with an opportunity for supervised practical application of a concurrently or previously studied theory. In practice, students are able to observe and learn from professionals in the field. Post RN Diploma BSN students complete three practice courses:

- **NURS 351, Promoting Health of Communities and Society**, which is taken with the theory co-requisite NURS 350
- **NURS 431, Engaging in Leadership**, which is taken with the theory co-requisite NURS 430
- **NURS 495, Nursing Practice Synthesis**. NURS 495 is the final course in the Post RN Diploma BSN Program.

Through the collaborative efforts of field guides, students, and instructors, the concepts introduced to students in the online classroom come to life within the context of the hospital or community agency, when students care for and develop relationships with clients and members of the health care team.

I trust that in this handbook you will find answers to your questions about this important and highly valued learning experience. Because your major resource is always the course instructor, never hesitate to be in touch with her or him whenever questions and concerns arise. Our instructors are there to foster learning relationships and are equally available to students and field guides.

Thank you, once again, for contributing to the ongoing education of our Registered Nurses.

Sincerely,

Lenora Marcellus, RN, BSN, MN, PhD
Associate Professor and
Associate Director, Undergraduate Education
# Table of Contents

1 **Introduction to the Practice Courses** .................................................................................................................................................. 1  
   1.1 General Information ........................................................................................................................................................................... 1  
   1.2 Objective .......................................................................................................................................................................................... 1  
   1.3 Prerequisites ...................................................................................................................................................................................... 1  
   1.4 Professional Practice Requirements .................................................................................................................................................. 1  
   1.5 Registration and Grading ............................................................................................................................................................. 2  

2 **The Practicum Placement Process** .................................................................................................................................................... 2  
   2.1 Planning and Preparing for the Practicum ........................................................................................................................................ 2  
   2.2 Communication ................................................................................................................................................................................... 2  
   2.3 Timeline ................................................................................................................................................................................................. 2  
   2.4 Receiving Agency Orientation .......................................................................................................................................................... 3  

3 **Practicum Roles and Responsibilities** .................................................................................................................................................. 3  
   3.1 The Student .......................................................................................................................................................................................... 3  
   3.2 The Field Guide ..................................................................................................................................................................................... 3  
   3.3 The Instructor ...................................................................................................................................................................................... 4  
   3.4 The Practica Coordinator ................................................................................................................................................................. 4  

4 **Staff Contact and Resources** ................................................................................................................................................................. 5  
   4.1 Post-Diploma Program Practice Staff ................................................................................................................................................ 5  
   4.2 UVic Resources .................................................................................................................................................................................... 5  

5 **Appendices** .......................................................................................................................................................................................... 6  
   5.1 Practice Courses: Building on Content & Competence .................................................................................................................. 6
1 Introduction to the Practice Courses

1.1 General Information

Nursing practice experiences (practicum) are an integral component of professional training within the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) Post-Diploma Program (Distance Education).

Practicum provides students with an opportunity to put theory into practice, explore interests, contribute to course learning requirements, and participate collaboratively in activities within an agency’s mandate, while under the supervision of a field guide and instructor.

Post-Diploma Program students complete three practice courses:

- **NURS 351**: Nursing Practice VI: Promoting Health of Communities and Society – taken concurrently with NURS 350 (theory). 78 required practice hours.
- **NURS 431**: Nursing Practice VII: Engaging in Leadership – taken concurrently with NURS 430 (theory). 78 required practice hours.
- **NURS 495**: Nursing Practice Synthesis – 78, 156 or 234 required practice hours. Hours are contingent on the number of nursing electives completed. 234 hour option is only available to students admitted prior to September 2012.

These courses use the Field Guide Model of Mentoring:

Field guides are health care professionals with in-depth knowledge of the practice area who introduce students to the work in the practice setting, help students plan their activities, facilitate engagement in the day-to-day life of the agency, and provide feedback to the course instructor about their experience and student progression. Field guides often link students with other team members for a broad experience of roles. Field guides are nurses in leadership or other related health positions.

1.2 Objective

Experience has shown that one of the best ways to accomplish the practicum objectives is for the field guide and the student, with instructor consultation, to define tasks and projects of importance to the organization and of interest to the student. This can assist the student to develop new skills and gain technical and managerial competence in selected areas.

The principle objectives of the practice courses are:

- **NURS 351** provides students with the opportunity to practice health promotion with a particular community as client, within the larger context of community and/or societal health. While working collaboratively, students engage in processes that facilitates health promotion and empowerment. These processes may include involvement in community organizing, community development, program development, and advocacy. Students will further develop their capacity to work in groups, be self-directed, and self-evaluative.

The overall learning goal is that of helping students strengthen their capacity to be a responsive, knowledgeable, and skillful practitioner within their own nursing practice.

- **NURS 431** provides students with opportunities to explore concepts studied in their theory courses, such as leadership, influence, power, change, health policy strategies, funding and resources allocation, citizen participation, scholarship, and research. Students will seek out opportunities to engage in the work of the agency in which they are placed in relation to course concepts that relate to specific health concerns, nursing practices, and/or nursing issues.

- **NURS 495** provides opportunities for students to reflect on previous practice experiences and course learning to identify specific foci for their professional development in N495 relative to the domains and competencies of the BSN program. Based on this reflection, and in collaboration with the field guide and guidance from the course instructor, learners will develop a personalized learning plan that will guide their learning in N495. As learning unfolds learners will develop a concept map that illustrates the concepts and relationships between them specific to the BSN program that were manifest during their practice in N495. Learners will conclude the course with a reflection on their professional identity development in the BSN program.

1.3 Prerequisites

Course Prerequisites:

- **NURS 351** prerequisite: **NURS 345**
- **NURS 431** prerequisites: **NURS 345, NURS 350, NURS 351**
- **NURS 495** prerequisites: **NURS 345, NURS 350, NURS 351, NURS 430, NURS 431**

Student Prerequisites:

- Be in good academic standing, with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 and a grade of C or higher in any core nursing course or other required course.
- A current Program Completion Plan indicating practice course assigned within the requested term.
- Submission of a Placement Request Form to the Practica Coordinator by the submission deadline.

1.4 Professional Practice Requirements

Students are responsible for completing the professional practice requirements and expectations of both the school and Receiving Agency before entering practice. In the event the School of Nursing and the Receiving Agency have not received evidence of students having completed the
requirements prior to the start of the practicum, there will be a delay in accumulating practice hours.

- As mandated by the Receiving Agency prior to or at the start of a practice experience, students must fulfill all the student professional requirements – it is the student’s responsibility to inform themselves of these.
- All individuals working in health care (Health Care Staff) should be protected against vaccine preventable diseases. All students and faculty visiting health service delivery sites for clinical placements are considered Health Care Staff and must follow provincial and Receiving Agency immunization guidelines and policies.
- All students must adhere to the Canadian Nurses’ Association (CNA) Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses and to the professional and practice standards (or equivalent) of the Registered Nurses’ licensing organization in the jurisdiction in which they are undertaking their practice experience. Students who fail to adhere to these codes and standards may be required to withdraw from the program.

Please refer to the Faculty of Human and Social Development Guidelines for Professional Conduct and Regulations Concerning Practica in the UVic Academic Calendar.

In addition to the above noted nursing practice requirements, it is the financial responsibility of students to maintain and provide evidence of the following practice requirements when requested by the Receiving Agency and/or School of Nursing.

Students must have:
- Active practicing registration as a Registered Nurse or the equivalent registration for the jurisdiction in which they are undertaking their practice experience.
- Completion of a criminal record review/check, if required, prior to accepting the student’s placement in the agency.
- Evidence of successful completion of a basic life support level-C course or higher. Current CPR level-C certification or higher must be on file in the School of Nursing.
- Mask fit-test before initial use of their personal respirators, and annually thereafter. Current Personal Respirator Fit Testing certification must be on file in the School of Nursing.
- Basic and extended health care insurance coverage.
- An Oath of Confidentiality if Receiving Agency requests.
- Proof of current malpractice insurance for all students in the United States.

1.5 Registration and Grading

- Registration of students for all practice courses (NURS 351, 431, 495) and concurrent theory courses (NURS 350, 430) is completed by the UVic School of Nursing for students who have an agency accepted practicum. Students are notified when registration is complete.
- Grading for all practice course (NURS 351, 431, 495) are graded Complete/Fail based upon the instructor evaluation. Note that all course requirements must be complete by the agreed upon deadline. Failure to complete the course requirements, as outlined in the course syllabi, will result in failing a practice course (see UVic Academic Calendar).

2 The Practicum Placement Process

2.1 Planning and Preparing for the Practicum

Students are expected to follow the practicum placement process. See the School of Nursing website for detailed instructions.

Prepare for the practicum by identifying your learning goals, relating professional and academic learning goals to the course overview (N351, N431, N495). Based on this, reflect on where you would be interested in requesting a practicum.

Key considerations:
- All practicum hours are outside of paid work regardless of the practice setting.
- Practice hours are completed within the 13-week term.
- Travel and accommodation arrangements and costs associated with a practice experience are the responsibility of the student.

2.2 Communication

- Students require a UVic email address. All practice email communication will be forwarded to the UVic email address without exception.

2.3 Timeline

Students are responsible for making certain that all the required forms are completed and submitted to the School of Nursing in a timely manner. See the School of Nursing Practice webpage for practicum placement process.

Placement request:
Completed (typed) Placement Request Form submitted to the Practica Coordinator (at deprac@uvic.ca) by:
- September term placement due April 15th
- January term placement due September 1st
- May term placement due January 1st for BC Students only and January 15th for all other students

These timelines are necessary so that:
- The placement request is submitted through the central booking system HSPnet and/or other agency procedures.
- The Receiving Agency has time to select a staff member as a field guide and plan for their role in student learning.
• The Receiving Agency and the University have time to complete an educational affiliation agreement.
• The students can educate themselves, in advance, on the practice requirements and expectations of the practice experience for the Receiving Agency and the School of Nursing.
• Students are required to complete the practice hours within the 13-week term.

2.4 Receiving Agency Orientation

• Students must fulfill the requirements for student orientation, access to health records and medication management instructions for the Receiving Agency prior to or at start of the practicum.

3 Practicum Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The Student

BSN Post-Diploma Program students are diploma prepared practicing Registered Nurses (RNs) in the 3rd or 4th year of a baccalaureate degree in nursing (BSN). Students take their practice courses NURS 351, NURS 431, and NURS 495 through distance learning, while licensed to practice in the area where they are residing in Canada or the United States. Students must adhere to provincial/international (or state) Nursing Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics.

Student Responsibilities:

• Be familiar with the practicum placement process - comply with all Receiving Agency student requirements. 
  Note: Students who are employed at the Receiving Agency will be considered a student during placement hours and therefore must adhere to the Receiving Agency requirements for students.
• Complete the course prerequisites and requirements - as outlined in the UVic Academic Calendar and the course syllabi.
• Connect with the field guide - contact the field guide the first week of the term to arrange a schedule for practice hours to be completed throughout the 13-week term.
• Orient to the Receiving Agency – learn about and abide by Receiving Agency policy, protocols, rules and regulations.
• Maintain communication with the instructor and field guide - develop and mutually negotiate an individualized learning plan with the field guide and instructor. Ensure that expectations for deliverables during the practicum are clear between the instructor, the field guide, and the manager (if relevant).
• Engage in dialogue - discussion and various learning activities with their instructor and classmates throughout the 13-week term.

3.2 The Field Guide

Field guides are health care professionals with in-depth knowledge of the practice area who introduce students to the work in the practice setting, help students plan their activities, facilitate engagement in the day-to-day life of the Receiving Agency, and provide feedback to the instructor about their experience and student progression. Field guides often link students with other team members for a broad experience of roles. Field guides may or may not be registered nurses, however must be a registered professional.

Field Guide Responsibilities:

• Orient student to the Receiving Agency - introduce the student to the staff and their roles, the program philosophy, models of practice, and values/principles of care to inform all interactions in the practicum.
• Facilitate student engagement - support student initiative and encourage participation in the work of the Receiving Agency.
• Maintain communication with the student - at the start of the experience, plan a schedule of hours for the practicum for the term and mutually negotiate goals & practicum activities. Be available for check-ins and provide constructive feedback to enhance learning. Field

• Attendance - students are expected to notify the placement Receiving Agency whenever practicum appointments cannot be kept, and also inform the course instructor about missed appointments. Failure to ensure clear and consistent communication may result in a student being withdrawn from the practicum setting.
• Participate in at least one 3-way communication - of the experience with the student and the instructor during the course (in the first month of the course for approximately 30 to 60 minutes). This is arranged by you the student.
• Log of Practice Hours – students must maintain a log of practice hours.
• Incident Reporting - follow the Receiving Agency policy AND the UVic Incident Reporting Process in the event of an accident or injury sustained by the student, or an incident or unusual occurrence (e.g., a medication error, injury to a patient) during a practicum.
• Professional Practice - students are responsible for functioning within their own scope of practice in all settings. Students must assess their own competencies in the practice area in which they are placed and practice within their level of competency. Students can discuss issues arising with their field guide and instructor to inform decision-making about participating in practice when there is a gray area.
• Students are not permitted to transport clients, field guides, instructors - when using their own vehicles for practice.
guides do not have to always be physically present with BSN Post-Diploma Program students, unless this is a policy of the Receiving Agency.

- **Review the students learning plan** - with the student at midterm and near the end of the course and negotiate strategies and activities to meet learning goals.

- **Participate in at least one 3-way communication** - of the experience with the student and the instructor during the course (in the first month of the course for approximately 30 to 60 minutes). This is arranged by the student.

- **Maintain communication with the instructor** - provide student feedback to the instructor at different points in particular mid-term and end of term. Field guides are not responsible for evaluating students.

### 3.3 The Instructor

BSN Post-Diploma Program instructors are committed educators, learners, researchers and administrators who share the common aim of supporting innovative and accessible nursing education.

The roles of the instructor are to facilitate relationships between students and field guides, assist the students to integrate theory and practice to meet course requirements, to support students in achieving increasing competency in their practice commitments, and to evaluate students’ progress in the course.

Instructor Responsibilities:

- **Maintain communication with the student and field guide** - in addition to a 3-way communication between the field guide, student, and instructor within the first month of the course, the instructor will contact the field guide at mid-term and end of term for student feedback. Facilitate discussion for any challenges within the placement between the student and the field guide.

- **Evaluate the student** - based on satisfactory completion of the course requirements, as outlined in the course syllabi, and field guide feedback.

- **Define unprofessional conduct** - inform students of the criteria by which unprofessional conduct will be judged in the practicum setting.

- **Act as a conduit for Incident Reports** - between the student, agency, and the university. Ensure that the UVic Incident Reporting Process has been met.

### 3.4 The Practica Coordinator

The practica coordinator is a liaison between students, instructors and agencies in arranging practice placements. The practica coordinator also works with university staff including the Office of the General Counsel to manage the administrative arrangements necessary for practica.

Practica Coordinator Responsibilities:

- **Maintain communication with the student** - provide practicum related UVic information and mentor the students in identifying goals, learning needs and placement options. Inform students of placement details and status.

- **Will use the students’ UVic email address** - for correspondence related to practice placements.

- **Maintain communication with the placement Receiving Agency and field guide** - follow the Receiving Agency protocols and advocate for the students. Connect the field guide with the instructor and ensure legal University-Receiving Agency affiliation agreements are in place.

- **Maintain communication with the instructor** - provide instructors with Receiving Agency and field guide information and follow-up with issues or questions regarding placements.

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Photo: Professor Emeriti, Jeannine Moreau, RN, BSN, MN, PhD and UVic Nursing student.
4 Staff Contact and Resources

4.1 Post-Diploma Program Practice Staff

Deanna Hutchings, RN, BSN, MN, CHPCN(C)
Practicum Coordinator
T 250.721.7962
E deprac@uvic.ca
F 250.721.6231

Diana Gicas
Practica Support
T 250.721.6470
E deprac@uvic.ca
F 250.721.6231

4.2 UVic Resources

Counselling Services
T 250.721.8341
www.uvic.ca/services/counselling

Health Services
T 250.721.8492
www.uvic.ca/services/health

Division of Student Affairs
T 250.721.6421
www.studentaffairs.uvic.ca

Centre for Accessible Learning
T 250.472.4947
https://www.uvic.ca/services/cal/

Equity and Human Rights Office
T 250.721.8488
www.uvic.ca/equity

Office of the Ombudsperson
T 250.721.8357
www.uvicombudsperson.ca
### 5.1 Practice Courses: Building on Content & Competence

Nursing practice is integral to the UVic Post RN Diploma BSN Distance Program. Post diploma students take 3 practice courses NURS 351, NURS 431 and NURS 495.

In practice courses, students should be reflecting on the philosophy of the agency, practice patterns, and health professional and nursing roles and contributions in relation to the work of the agency. It is helpful if you develop questions about theoretical frameworks used to guide practice in the agency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Theory</th>
<th>NURS 351</th>
<th>NURS 431</th>
<th>NURS 495</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theory</td>
<td>NURS 351: Nursing Practice VI: Promoting Health of Communities &amp; Society</td>
<td>NURS 431: Nursing Practice VII: Engaging in Leadership</td>
<td>NURS 495: Nursing Practice Synthesis</td>
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<tr>
<td>NURS 350: Health &amp; Healing VII: Promoting Community &amp; Societal Health</td>
<td>NURS 430: Professional Practice V: Leadership in Nursing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intent</td>
<td>Students develop practice relationships with families, groups, communities and/or populations and participate collaboratively in activities within an agency’s mandate that emphasize health promotion and community empowerment.</td>
<td>Students enhance their professional growth opportunities to engage in influencing change for the promotion of societal health. Students focus on their growth as professional nurses, leaders and change agents and collaborate with interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary groups for health care and nursing practice.</td>
<td>Students define their learning goals, needs, activities and evaluation plans for the course in a learning plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client</td>
<td>Community &amp; society as client (Community of patients, staff, etc.)</td>
<td>Society as client.</td>
<td>Student’s area of focus defines the client.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>78 hours minimum: students negotiate their hours with their field guide (about 1 day per week over 13 weeks in the term).</td>
<td>78 hours: students negotiate their hours with their field guide (about 1 day per week over 13 weeks in the term).</td>
<td>78, 156 or 234 hours (hours vary and are completed over the 13-week term). Note: Students admitted in Sept 2012 or later can only take NURS 495 for either 78 hours or 1.5 units, or 156 hours or 3.0 units.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentor</td>
<td>Field Guide: service providers with in-depth knowledge of the agency. The field guide may or may not be a nurse however is a registered professional.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Locations</td>
<td>Communities can be identified in any agency including community service agencies, non-profit societies and acute care or long-term care organizations.</td>
<td>Same as NURS 351, plus political organizations such as government ministries, nursing associations and interest groups.</td>
<td>Student’s choice related to a particular practice setting, client population, or health challenge, career move or focus of study. With advance planning this may include placement in an international, rural or remote setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory Content</td>
<td>Principles of health promotion, social determinants of health, community health, epidemiology, advocacy, community organizing and development, client participation and empowerment, interdisciplinary/intersectoral collaboration.</td>
<td>Influence, power, change theory and strategies for taking action, leadership styles, political and health care contexts, health policy, funding, resource allocation, citizen participation, nursing images, interdisciplinary relationships, activism (nurses’ voice).</td>
<td>Students emphasize theory and practice curriculum foundations, and research-based, ethics-based and competency-based learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning Tools</td>
<td>Dialogue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students define goals, learning needs, strategies and commitments in an individualized learning plan negotiated with their field guide and instructor.</td>
<td>• How agency staff think about providing service for a community of clients vs. individuals?</td>
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<td>• What opportunities are there for staff to influence change? Is change theory discussed when restructuring?</td>
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<td>• How is innovation understood, recognized, implemented and rewarded in the agency?</td>
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<td>• Where does most change originate—top-down or from bottom-up? Who holds power in the agency?</td>
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<td>• How are a client’s and/or a community’s assets and capacities built upon to facilitate empowerment?</td>
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<td>• How do nurses assume leadership to influence risk management, policy development, and the organization of nursing work?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Students define goals, learning needs, strategies and commitments in an individualized learning plan negotiated with their field guide and instructor. | • What are the social determinants of health addressed to promote health? |
| | • How are clients’ and/or a community’s assets and capacities built upon to facilitate empowerment? |
| | • What opportunities are there for staff to influence change? Is change theory discussed when restructuring? |
| | • How is innovation understood, recognized, implemented and rewarded in the agency? |
| | • Where does most change originate—top-down or from bottom-up? Who holds power in the agency? |
| | • How do nurses assume leadership to influence risk management, policy development, and the organization of nursing work? |
| | • What are the strengths of clients and staff valued? How are clients kept at the centre of practice? |
| | • What are common ethical dilemmas in this setting? What opportunities for transformation of practice does research-based practice promote? What constitutes quality practice? How is competence acknowledged, measured and rewarded? How is leadership and mentorship enacted in this setting? |

| Students develop a learning plan with learning goals, needs, strategies, semester “know, be and do” criteria, and quality indicators to evaluate practice. | • What philosophical beliefs, ways of being or knowledge bases are needed to practice in this agency? How are the strengths of clients and staff valued? How are clients kept at the centre of practice? |
| | • What are common ethical dilemmas in this setting? What opportunities for transformation of practice does research-based practice promote? What constitutes quality practice? How is competence acknowledged, measured and rewarded? How is leadership and mentorship enacted in this setting? |
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