Learning and Evaluation Plan Introduction

There is no right way to develop your learning and evaluation plan. The educational process includes assessment, goal setting, implementation and evaluation. This is the same process for providing nursing care, except the focus of activities and the language differ. For example, instead of identifying client needs/problems, the focus is on your learning needs or competency gaps.

Goals are often stated as objectives or learning outcomes. Similar to the nursing process, the education process is not neat and linear, but tends to be circular in nature requiring ongoing assessment and modification of plans.

The words “standards” and “competence” have been used several times in this guide. While these terms are related, standards are usually used to identify a level of performance that is used as a basis for describing quality – in other words, evaluation.

CRNBC defines “standard of practice” as “a desired and achievable level of performance against which actual performance can be compared.”

Competence on the other hand is the “integration and application of knowledge, skills, attitudes and judgment to perform safely and ethically within an individual’s nursing practice setting or in a designated role (e.g., practitioner educator) or setting (e.g., community).”

The context in which a nurse practises is an important element in describing competence. That is why a clear description of your chosen practice area will be helpful in identifying the competencies required for acceptable practice. For example, a nurse planning to practise in palliative care must understand pain management and be able to implement and evaluate pain management protocols in order to meet CRNBC Professional Standard 2: Specialized Body of Knowledge and Standard 3: Competent Application of Knowledge.

A home care nurse who works in a relatively isolated rural community, for instance, must be able to problem solve independently, understand professional boundaries in nurse-client relationships, and know which community resources to call on when needed. Competence in those areas would help the nurse to meet CRNBC Professional Standard 3: Competent Application of Knowledge, Standard 5: Provision of Service in the Public Interest, and Standard 4: Code of Ethics.

Throughout the process of developing your proposal, please keep in mind that the aim of this exercise is to have:

- a clear practical guide for you and your preceptor to direct learning and evaluation activities during your supervised practice experience, and
- a proposal that assures the Registration Committee that the plan provides the necessary learning opportunities to enable you to meet the CRNBC Standards of Practice.

After you have worked through the process of developing your learning and evaluation plan, complete Section C of Form 67: SPE Applicant Checklist.
Getting Started: Your Learning Needs

Self-assessment of learning needs or “knowing what you need to know” can be difficult. It is not a one-time event but an ongoing process. The initial self-assessment of your learning needs, however, should take into consideration these three areas:

- Orientation to the sponsoring agency and clinical practice area.
- Changes in health care and nursing since you last practised.
- Specific knowledge, skills, attitudes and judgments that a nurse requires to provide quality care in your chosen practice area.

Orientation

Most agencies have an orientation plan for new staff that you should discuss with the sponsoring agency representative and preceptor. If possible, make arrangements to attend the planned orientation session. The orientation plan should address such things as:

- physical environment
- equipment and resources
- agency policies and procedures
- communication systems
- documentation methods
- patient and staff safety issues as well as other items pertinent to the chosen practice area.

An outline of the orientation is to be included with your plan.

Changes in Health Care and Nursing

The learning needs you identify in this area will likely correlate to the time you have been away from practice and other activities you were engaged in during this period. You could use the following sources to start this process:

- CRNBC resources available at www.crnbc.ca
- Nursing Colleagues. Ask your preceptor and other nurses about what they consider to be major changes and shifts in nursing and client care (e.g., shift to client empowerment and self-care, alternative nursing interventions, technological changes).
- Continuing Education/Professional Development Programs. Check the continuing education courses and workshops offered by universities, colleges and CRNBC. Some may be relevant to your learning plan.
- Review current books and publications on changes and trends in nursing and health care.
You may find that, during this process, you move beyond just identifying your learning needs to actually addressing them. Make a note of what you have learned for inclusion in your proposal. Areas you wish to learn more about, particularly if they have a direct relationship to your chosen practice area, should be included as part of your identified learning needs.

**Specific Competencies Identification**

Competence is the integration and application of knowledge, skills, attitudes and judgment to perform safely and ethically within an individual’s nursing practice setting or in a designated role. In other words, you need to identify what a nurse practising in your chosen area must know and be able to do to provide care to the particular client group. Then compare this to what you currently know and are able to do, and determine what gaps exist. This can be a challenge! Here are some suggested steps for getting started:

**Collect data and make a list of knowledge and skills**

- Review the client population, their needs and problems.
- Talk to staff in the area, including clinical specialists, managers and educators (if available) about the nursing knowledge and skills that are key to providing care, including what has changed since you last practised.
- Identify agency learning resources available (e.g., care protocols, skills, checklists, in-service education programs, books, articles and videos).
- Ask staff what the key issues are in the area (e.g., ethical/legal issues, roles of other health disciplines).
- Review recent journals relevant to the practice area.
- Ask your preceptor and others what textbooks they would recommend.
- Look for information on nursing specialty programs (e.g., post-basic education programs, Canadian Nurses Association Certification Programs). Remember, you must ask permission to use any of this information as well as acknowledge the source of the material if you do use it in your proposal.

From the data you collect, make rough notes of what you have identified. Don’t be concerned about how you write this; the important thing is that it has meaning to you. Following are a variety of examples from different clinical settings that illustrate this:

- Pain assessment and different pain management techniques.
- Common medications used for children with asthma, including side-effects and family educational needs.
- Admission procedures for a high risk ante-partum patient, including history taking physical assessment, and problem identification.
- Implementation of skin and wound care protocols in the home environment.
- I.V. infusion pumps.
- Explore ethical issues important when working with clients with chronic illnesses.
- Understand the role of nurses in relation to other health care team members.
**Compare the list you have made with your current knowledge and skills**

- What areas do you feel confident about?
- What areas do you need to review or be “refreshed” in?
- What areas are you not comfortable with or are new to you?

Make a note beside those areas in which you have a “competency gap”.

**Organizing your learning needs.**

Try grouping your identified learning needs (competency gaps) into categories for manageability. You can create your own groupings if that works best for you, or try using the following categories:

- Knowledge (knowing about nursing and related sciences).
- Applying knowledge to client care (application of nursing process, decision making).
- Implementation of technical/psychomotor skills.
- Organization/coordination of care (for individuals, client groups, with health care team).
- Ethical/moral issues.
- Responsibility and accountability for own practice.
- Interpersonal/communication/teaching skills.

Some applicants have found it useful to use the CRNBC *Professional Standards for Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners* as a framework. No matter what approach you use (including the standards), there will likely be some overlap between the groupings. Remember that you may not have identified a specific learning need (competency gap) for every standard. In fact, in the process of developing this SPE proposal, you are addressing Standard 1: Professional Responsibility and Accountability.

**Identify priority learning needs.**

What are critical/safety issues in client care? What must you know or be able to do right away? What should you know and be able to do by the end of the SPE in order to meet the CRNBC Standards of Practice? What could be considered for ongoing development beyond your SPE? Be sure to work with your preceptor to help you make these decisions. Put an asterisk beside those areas that are priority so they are addressed early in your learning plan.

Identifying your learning needs is essential to the development of your learning and evaluation plan. During your experience, you will likely identify other learning needs or competency gaps (make this one of your objectives). Keep a journal and write these down when they occur to you and raise them with your preceptor so that you can incorporate them into your learning plan.
Objectives, Learning Activities and Evaluation Plans

Objectives (learning outcomes) are statements based on your identified competency gaps of what you expect to know and be able to do by the end of the SPE. Learning activities are the ways you plan to achieve the objectives. Evaluation indicators are how you know that you have achieved the objectives.

Objectives (Learning Outcomes)

These are simply statements of your intentions based on what you have identified as learning needs (your competency gaps). Objectives are stated in the future tense (e.g., “To develop an understanding of . . .”). Learning outcomes are stated in terms of what has been accomplished (e.g., “Demonstrates an understanding of . . .”).

Following are examples of objectives, some of which have been taken from the learning plans of previous applicants. The related standard has been identified in brackets by each objective.

▪ To understand the symptoms of drug and alcohol abuse and the impact on body systems (CRNBC Professional Standard 2).
▪ To identify and describe the five main groups of medications most commonly administered in pediatrics, including action of the drug and the nursing implications (CRNBC Professional Standard 2).
▪ To understand the implications of Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act on providing care in the emergency unit (CRNBC Professional Standard 1).
▪ To be able to accurately access the palliative patient’s pain and use appropriate methods to alleviate the pain (CRNBC Professional Standard 2).
▪ To demonstrate competency in skills listed on the Core Nursing Competencies and Skills for Perinatal Nursing (CRNBC Professional Standard 2).
▪ To develop nursing care plans for clients with chronic illness (CHF, COPD) based on an understanding of challenges faced by individuals living with these conditions, which includes a client/family education plan (CRNBC Professional Standard 2).
▪ To utilize the nursing process when implementing protocols for:
  a. skin and wound care management
  b. care of a client with a new colostomy
  c. care of a client with chest tubes (CRNBC Professional Standard 2).
▪ To develop cooperative and collaborative working relationships with other members of the health care team on the long term care area including:
  a. an understanding and appreciation of the different scopes of practice
  b. my responsibilities when delegating tasks to other members of the team (CRNBC Professional Standard 3).
To initiate and implement discharge planning which includes the promotion of self-care activities and the identification of relevant resources to assist clients and families with the transition back to the community (CRNBC Professional Standard 3).

To understand the nurse’s ethical responsibilities when discussing treatment options for home care clients living with end stage renal disease (CRNBC Professional Standard 4).

To utilize the information provided in the CRNBC Practice Standard *Nurse-Client Relationships* (pub. 406) in exploring some of the issues faced by staff in caring for the confused client (CRNBC Professional Standard 4).

To continually assess the adequacy of my knowledge and skills and to take action on any competency gaps that I identify throughout my SPE (CRNBC Professional Standard 1).

To ensure that I am adequately oriented to the agency, including being familiar with the area-specific policies, protocols and procedures (CRNBC Professional Standard 1).

**Learning Activities**

These are the ways to help you achieve your objectives. Common methods and resources include:

- review written material (textbooks, protocols, policies and procedures, etc.)
- develop materials (care plans, teaching materials)
- observation (videos, demonstrations)
- presentations and discussions by and with experts and peers (conferences, rounds)
- mentoring, coaching and role modelling by competent practitioners

You are likely familiar with these methods and resources. These methods should correspond to what you need to learn. The best way to learn a psychomotor skill is to observe the skill being performed and re-demonstrate it under supervision. A literature and case study review accompanied by discussion with nursing colleagues and other members of the health care team is a good way to address some of the ethical/legal issues in your area of practice.

One of the best methods for learning nursing care is to observe care given by competent nurses, and to be coached and supervised in your practice. This is largely what the supervised practice experience is all about.

Create a list of the resources you plan to use (e.g., textbooks, articles, audio-visuals).

**Evaluation Plans**

There are two aspects to consider when identifying your evaluation plans. One is the evaluation of your progress in meeting your objectives (learning outcomes). The other is your overall evaluation in terms of the CRNBC *Professional Standards for Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners*. These are obviously intertwined as the purpose of the learning plan is to provide you with the competence required to enable you to meet the standards of practice in your chosen practice area.
Evaluation of your progress in terms of your learning plan should be ongoing. Work with your preceptor to set up a routine review schedule. Use your journal to record progress in meeting your objectives. The evaluation indicators should correspond directly to the stated objective.

Determine how you will know that the objective has been met. Ask “how will I demonstrate that I have met this objective?” and “who can give me feedback?” Evaluating that you are competent to perform selected psychomotor skills would require satisfactory demonstration of the skill, as assessed by your preceptor or another qualified nurse. Evaluation of objectives dealing with attitudes and judgments may be less clear.

Evidence that you have met this type of objective may be noticeable in your care planning, documentation, patient assessment, decision regarding nursing interventions, communication and/or approach to clients and others. On the other hand, the changes initially may be largely internal as you reflect on what you feel, think and value.

Periodically, you and your preceptor should review your performance in relation to the CRNBC Professional Standards for Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners. It is recommended that you do this formally about midway through your practice experience and toward the end of your 400 hours. Use Form 70: Performance Evaluation as it addresses the standards.

It is the responsibility of the agency and preceptor to report to CRNBC that you have completed the SPE and that you are competent to practise.

To sum up, your evaluation plans must:

- Identify how you will determine each objective is met.
- Assess your overall performance in relation to the CRNBC Professional Standards for Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners.
- Include plans for ongoing review as well as more formal periods of assessment.
- Involve your preceptor(s).
Putting It Together and Writing Up Your Learning and Evaluation Plan

Putting it together

The development of your objectives, learning activities and evaluation plan were described together because there should be a natural relationship or flow between them. Use the Examples of Learning Plan Worksheet included in this package if you find it helpful.

Identifying a sequence and time frame for your plan

- Identify the start date and estimated date of completion.
- Identify any learning activities that took place prior to actual clinical time, (e.g., review of changes in nursing and health care, review of basic nursing skills, etc.)
- List the weeks, the focus of the activities and the number of hours. For example:

  **Week 1:**
  - Agency and unit orientation activities
  - Review skills checklist, nursing protocols, client charts, care plans
  - Assist preceptor in the provision of care of clients
  - Attend scheduled in-service sessions
  - Schedule meeting to review progress

  Total Hours

  **Weeks 4, 5, 6:**
  - Continue to assume responsibility for providing care for selected clients
  - Attend multidisciplinary conference
  - Complete review of chapters in text
  - Draft care plans and teaching plans
  - Schedule a review of learning plan and performance evaluation

  Total Hours

Writing your learning and evaluation plan

Start by briefly explaining the process you used to identify your learning needs. This should be approximately one to two paragraphs and should not exceed one page.

Identify your objectives, learning activities and evaluation indicators:

- State the objective or learning outcomes (what you need/expect to learn).
- Identify learning activities planned (ways you will achieve the objective).
- Identify evaluation indicators (how you will know if objective is met).
Briefly explain your evaluation strategies including:

- What the plans are for ongoing review and feedback?
- When your overall performance will be assessed in relation to the standards?
- What strategies and tools will be used (journal, performance appraisal tool)?

*Tip: Initial, and have preceptor initial each objective when it has been met.*

Identify your overall plan sequence and timeline (record the number of planned practice hours).
## Examples of Learning Plan Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>OBJECTIVE (Learning Activities)</strong></th>
<th><strong>LEARNING ACTIVITIES</strong></th>
<th><strong>EVALUATION INDICATORS</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>To be able to accurately assess the palliative patient's pain and use appropriate methods to alleviate the pain.</td>
<td>▪ Review selected articles on pain assessment and management including: Read Chapter _____ in Clinical Pharmacology and Nursing Care. ▪ Review unit protocols and procedures on pain management techniques including: distraction, heat and cold application, relaxation/image TENS, analgesic administration (sc and via implanted venous access device). ▪ Observe and ask questions of preceptor and other RNs as they assess and provide care to patients experiencing pain. ▪ Gradually assume responsibility for providing care for palliative patients experiencing pain under guidance of preceptor (weeks 3, 4, 5).</td>
<td>▪ I receive feedback from preceptor(s) staff, patient/family (after providing care for a variety of patients) that: - pain assessments completed were comprehensive and accurate - selection of pain management techniques were appropriate for the situation - evaluation of the effectiveness of the interventions were consistently done and documented. ▪ I demonstrate satisfactory performance in the implementation of pain management techniques. ▪ There is evidence that I communicate to other health team members those interventions that were most beneficial in alleviating individual patient's pain (through nursing care plans, patient conferences).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Example 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>To utilize the nursing process when implementing protocols for the care and management of a client with chest tubes.</td>
<td>▪ Read chapter on chest tubes in text Nursing Care of Clients with Respiratory Disorders. ▪ View video Principles of Chest Tube Drainage Systems. ▪ Review unit protocols and procedures on care of a client with chest tubes. ▪ Observe preceptor do a complete respiratory assessment of post-operative client (with chest tubes) and have preceptor observe and guide me through the same process with several clients.</td>
<td>▪ My assessment of client's respiratory status and chest tube drainage system is comprehensive and accurate. ▪ I am able to verbalize the basic principles of chest tube drainage systems, including safety issues and potential client complications. ▪ I satisfactorily perform all procedures identified on the chest tube skills checklist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example 3</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>To continually assess the adequacy of my knowledge</td>
<td>▪ Actively seek feedback from my preceptor(s) and other staff. ▪ Maintain a journal to record my progress</td>
<td>▪ I meet other objectives identified and have recorded new competency gaps and learning activities in my journal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### OBJECTIVE (Learning Activities)

(What I need to know, be able to do)

- and skills and to take action on any competency gaps that I identify throughout my SPE.

### LEARNING ACTIVITIES

(Ways I plan to learn)

- (regarding objectives) and to identify plans to address these needs.
  - Routinely review core competencies and skills for perinatal nursing to ensure that I have adequate practice opportunities.
  - Familiarize self with obstetrical journals and where to access current information (libraries, unit).
  - Attend meetings and education sessions as occasions arise.
  - Read at least one new article a week (focus on support of breastfeeding moms and advanced obstetrical nursing and midwifery)

### EVALUATION INDICATORS

(How I will know objective is met)

- The competencies and skills list is checked off by my preceptor.
- I can state the names of three obstetrical journals that I found most helpful and where to locate them.
- I attend relevant meetings and education sessions (e.g., monthly, perinatal nursing meeting, fetal surveillance course) and am able to state five things that I learned that I have applied in my practice.
- I can identify two articles I found to be especially good that I anticipate will improve the quality of my nursing practice.

### Example 4

To understand the nurse’s ethical responsibilities when discussing treatment options for home care clients living with end stage renal disease (CRNBC Professional Standard 4).

- Read chapter on treatment options in Nursing Care of Clients in Renal Failure.
- Read article “Living with Chronic Illness.”
- Explore with nurses and other members of health care team ethical issues they have faced when caring for clients with chronic debilitating illness.

- I am able to verbalize some of the challenges for clients living with ESRD and some of the ethical issues confronting nurses and other health disciplines.
- I have an increased level of comfort, awareness and sensitivity when discussing these issues with clients and families during home visits.
- I can provide one example of how I explored this with staff using the values of choice, fairness and dignity (e.g. initiated discussion with individuals by asking about personal experiences or presented case study for discussion as care conference).