

The Nova Scotia College of Nursing (NSCN) is the regulatory body for licensed practical nurses (LPNs), registered nurses (RNs) and nurse practitioners (NPs) in Nova Scotia. Our mandate is to protect the public by promoting the provision of safe, competent, ethical and compassionate nursing services by our registrants. The term nurse in this document refers to LPNs, RNs and NPs unless otherwise stated.

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Our practice support tools are developed using current reference material. The source of this material is available upon request.

Transition to Practice

Transition to a new practice environment is an important time in the career of any [nurse](#), particularly nurses who are new to the Nova Scotia health care system. The collaborative efforts of regulators, employers, and nurses new and currently working in Nova Scotia new to NS nurses for successful transition to a safe, [competent](#) and ethical practice.

Transition to practice programs for nurses must continue to evolve to match the changing health care environment. Whatever the practice context, nurses must be well prepared to function safely and competently in new practice settings and when accepting new roles and [responsibilities](#).

Nurses new to the NS health care system should be provided with a transition to practice program that guides their integration into the system and may include language and cultural transition guidance. Such guidance could include basic information about living and working in NS.

All nurses require appropriate supports to transition to practice. At the same time, all nurses are responsible to ensure that they have the [competencies](#) required for any position, and employers have the responsibility to provide transition programs that are effective in assisting nurses meet their role expectations

A well-planned, effective transition to practice program will contribute to safe and effective care for [clients](#), nurses and employers.

Newly licensed nurses in Nova Scotia meet the competencies required for entry-level practice and qualify to write the approved regulatory exam and meet all other licensure requirements.

Mentorship and Preceptorship

All nurses as indicated in their respective [standards of practice](#) have an [accountability](#) to provide leadership to [mentor](#) and support others.

	LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSES	REGISTERED NURSES	NURSE PRACTITIONERS
APPLICABLE STANDARD	Standard 1 Professional Accountability and Responsibility	Standard 4 Professional Relationships and Leadership	Standard 2 Leadership and Advocacy
WHAT IT SAYS	Provide leadership to support and/or participate in mentoring and preceptorship (1.10)	Act as an effective role model, resource, preceptor, coach and/or mentor to clients, learners, nursing peers and colleagues (4.7)	Act as role models and mentors to registered nurses, other nurse practitioners, students and other health professionals (2.4)
WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?	All nurses have an accountability to demonstrate professionalism and support other nurses and colleagues in learning and transitioning into their roles.		

A key component of any transition to practice program is a well-designed preceptor program, in which employers assist preceptors to develop the competencies they require to guide staff within the designated time period.

Beyond a formal preceptor program, new nurses will require the support of their more experienced colleagues. This may occur in a more formalized mentorship relationship, or may look informal in the day-to-day work within the practice context.

Support within practice environments, especially from nursing colleagues, is critical for transitioning nurses, to effectively bridge the gap between their nursing role outside of, as well as within NS. Time is required to

establish professional relationships and learn new practice norms.

Nurses currently working in NS can support their transitioning colleagues by sharing their nursing and health care culture knowledge and expertise. Transition to the workplace occurs not only in formalized transition programs but also in part by observing other nurses in practice and within the social network of their workplace.

Preceptors and mentors require organizational support to be effective leaders.

Nurses who are new to NS may be reluctant to reach out to their nursing colleagues, in that they are concerned with a sense of being a burden on already-taxed practitioners, feeling their self-confidence is threatened, and a concern over acceptance by colleagues should the new nurse be seen as unknowledgeable or inexperienced. This reluctance to seek assistance may present client safety concerns, therefore nurses working in NS should work with their employers to create a safe environment for nurses learning and transitioning.

Key Points

- Effective transition to practice programs are essential in supporting nurses who are new to the NS context of practice.
- NSCN, employers, nurses new to NS and those nurses currently working in NS all play an important role in transition to practice resulting in safe, competent, and ethical nursing care.
- Transition to practice programs should include competencies required for any new position, as well as language and health cultural transition supports as required.
- All nurses have an accountability to provide leadership to mentor and support others.
- Beyond a formal preceptor program new nurses will require the support of their colleagues. This may occur in a more formalized mentorship relationship, or informal in the day-to-day work within the practice context.
- New to NS nurses need to feel supported to ask questions and seek support from their colleagues to foster a safe and quality practice environment.

Suggested Reading

- [Position Statement: Cultural Humility and Safety](#)