

## AC514: School of Nursing Clinical Practice

<b>Policy Title:</b>	School of Nursing Clinical Practice
<b>Policy Number:</b>	AC514
<b>Owner:</b>	Sr. Vice President Academic and Student Success
<b>Approved by:</b>	Senior Leadership Team
<b>Effective Date:</b>	September 2025
<b>Reference:</b>	
<b>Links to Other Policy:</b>	BScN and PN Uniform Policies

St. Lawrence College is committed to making our resources fully accessible to all persons. This document will be made available in alternative format upon request.

### BACKGROUND

#### **Purpose:**

The St. Lawrence Bachelor of Science - Nursing (Honours) (BScN) and Practical Nurse (PN) Programs include mandatory clinical practice, which takes place in a variety of health care agencies within the region. This policy speaks to the complexities of this essential element of education in nursing. This policy ensures that clinical practice opportunities continue to be available to students; that students learn the workplace requirements of this regulated profession; and that students, clients and clinical practice host institutions are working within the high standard of care and safety required in health care settings.

#### **Scope:**

This policy applies to the Clinical Practice components for all students studying the BScN and PN Programs at St. Lawrence College, who will be called Nursing students throughout this policy. It is expected that, in conjunction with the requirements of this policy, students will also comply with the requirements of the St. Lawrence College BScN and PN Uniform Policy.

### POLICY STATEMENTS

1. All clinical hours within long-term care, acute care and community-based settings are mandatory within both BScN and PN programs.
2. Students must meet course outcomes prior to earning credit in the associated course.
3. Absenteeism is handled and documented in the following manner:

- 3.1 Planned absence from clinical hours must be pre-authorized with the course professor (or clinical course lead) at the start of the semester or as soon as the need for absence is known. Considerations for pre-authorized absences include participation in varsity sports and clinical-related learning opportunities.
- 3.2 Unplanned absences due to compassionate reasons must go through Student Wellness, and any other extenuating circumstances will be managed through the School of Nursing. These absences may require formal documentation and will include a plan for make-up time.

Missed time due to college closure, or Clinical Instructor absence will not be counted towards these hours. Every effort will be made to recover these hours either in the clinical setting, or lab.

4. Responsibilities of Nursing Students in Clinical Practice include the following:
  - 4.1. Students are ultimately responsible for their own learning and must be able to participate and demonstrate safe, competent care and professionalism.
  - 4.2. To create a learning contract to achieve the course learning outcomes. The student will document progress regularly and report to faculty.
  - 4.3. Earn a passing score in all evaluation components to be deemed successful in the course. These details are outlined in the learning plan. This includes a clinical evaluation with the clinical instructor, preceptor, and/or faculty advisor.
  - 4.4. Aware that failure to achieve a satisfactory performance could result in the inability to continue in the program and repeat other co-requisite courses.
  - 4.5. Aware that completed clinical evaluations become a part of the permanent student record and when a student signs the evaluation does not indicate that the student agrees with the content but that the student has read content and was able to discuss it with the clinical instructor, preceptor and/or faculty advisor.
  - 4.6. Student Performance is documented by faculty. If the nursing student is not demonstrating safe, competent care, the clinical course lead and program coordinator will be consulted. A student may be removed from the course if they are not making satisfactory progress and/or failing to meet the criteria for performance in professional areas.
5. Faculty may exclude students from the clinical area due to illness, injuries, or lack of preparation for practice, inappropriate professional behaviour and/or lack of professional appearance or any situation deemed unsafe. It is the responsibility of faculty to protect clients and students. If the student is absent or excluded for a reason other than illness or injury, the faculty may not be obligated to schedule clinical make up time for the student.

6. Returning to the clinical practice setting: Following a medical absence where accommodations may be required and/or there are outstanding safety concerns for practice, the student may be asked to confirm that they are ready and able to return to clinical placement. In those instances, the student may be required to produce documentation to Wellness & Accessibility from their regulated health professional supporting their readiness to return. All students who miss clinical time may also be required to submit a learning contract to the clinical instructor and Clinical Course Lead. It should include specific strategies to achieve all course learning outcomes, such as make-up labs.
7. Out of Town Clinical Placement Requests: Nursing students may apply for an out-of-town clinical placement in final preceptored placements (BScN fourth year and PN fifth semester).
  - 7.1. The application for an out-of-town placement must be submitted by the stated due date. Review of out-of-town clinical placement applications is by a committee. The committee's decision to accept or deny a student request for an out-of-town clinical placement is final and communicated to the student by the Program Coordinator.
  - 7.2. All communication with the potential placement agencies regarding (in-town or out-of-town placements) must be done through the School of Nursing (placement coordinator and faculty). Students are not to contact any agency directly to request a placement. Doing so will forfeit placement at that agency.
8. Clinical Placements: Each clinical course has identified placement facilities to ensure course learning objectives can be met. The nursing student does not select these areas but might be asked where they live so the Clinical Course Lead can consider location and transportation.
  - 8.1. BScN Program 4<sup>th</sup> year placements: Students must attend classes on campus in semester 7 and 8 to complete three courses and 278 hours of clinical practice per semester. The student must complete hours in both acute and community placements to graduate in the final year. Therefore, if a student completes acute care hours in semester 7, they must complete community placement hours in semester 8 or vice versa. Semester 8 is completed mostly online and may allow for out-of-town placements to qualifying students. Nursing skill labs are required both semesters and on campus attendance is mandatory.

- 8.2. BScN high acuity areas: If any student requests a high acuity area (e.g. ICU, ER) for placement, they must have completed the critical care elective in semester 6. Placement is based on availability, completion of the elective, suitability for the area, strong clinical performance and GPA. Completion of the elective does not guarantee a student will have a placement in a high acuity area.

## MONITORING

It is the responsibility of the Senior Vice President, Academic and Student Success and the Deans/Associate Deans to ensure adherence to the policy and to interpret the policy.

## NEXT POLICY REVISION DATE

September 2030

## SPECIFIC LINKS

## APPENDIX A AND ATTACHMENTS

Procedures:

### P1 Attendance in Clinical Practice

**Determining make-up clinical time for students who have missed up to 20% of clinical hours due to illness, compassionate reasons, or extenuating circumstances:**

1. Should the student be meeting clinical competencies, the missed clinical time will be added to the appropriate consolidation course. The hours will be noted and sent to the Program Coordinator to be tracked.  
If the student is not meeting clinical competencies clinical make-up time is required. Specific ETP's and learning objectives will be identified for the clinical make-up time. If make-up work is required to meet the course outcomes, it must be done in the clinical setting. Every effort will be made to have the clinical hours take place in the unit the student was placed in, however, if this is not possible, students will have to complete extra hours of orientation if they are placed in a setting they have not yet attended. Clinical make-up time may occur in the evenings or on weekends, therefore, flexibility is required.
2. Make-up clinical time may have fees assigned to completing the required hours.
3. Students who have missed 20% of clinical time will create a learning contract.
4. Any student who misses make-up clinical time will be assigned an NG grade.
5. **PLEASE NOTE:** there is a maximum amount of missed time that can be brought forward to

consolidation. It is not possible to make up more than a full-time week - approximately 37.5 hrs. Should it be predicted that the student will need to complete more than 37.5 hrs., they will be required to complete make-up shifts prior to going into consolidation and there may be a cost associated with this.

**Determining make-up clinical time for students who have missed 20% their clinical hours:**

1. Students who miss over 20% of their clinical hours in a rotation are required to complete those clinical hours in consolidation. If the student is meeting clinical competencies once the missed time is equal to 20%, no further clinical time is required within that specific rotation and the remaining missed hours will be added to the final consolidation as detailed above. If students are not meeting clinical competencies once missed clinical time is equal to 20%, additional clinical hours will need to be completed.
2. Make-up clinical time may have fees assigned to completing the required hours.

**Determining make-up clinical time for students who have missed over 30% of clinical hours:**

1. Any student who missed more than 30% of clinical time in a rotation will be assigned an NG grade. Extenuating circumstances substantiated through medical documentation submitted to Student Wellness & Accessibility (SWA) will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis in collaboration with SWA and the Program. Absences over 30% cannot be supported for recovery by the School of Nursing or SWA, and an NG grade will be assigned for the clinical course.
2. No more than 37.5 hrs. of missed time will be moved to consolidation. Excess hours over 37.5 will be required to be completed before consolidation begins.

**P2 Out of Town Clinical Placement**

To request an Out-of-Town clinical placement, the nursing student must meet all 7 items:

1. Have a minimum cumulative average of 75% (GPA of 7.0) in all required nursing and science courses in the program to date.
2. Be in good academic standing including successfully completing all program requirements (year 3 for BScN and 4<sup>th</sup> semester for PN).
3. Demonstrate above average ratings across all clinical evaluations to date.
4. Remain an active member of the classroom group and commit to meet attendance expectations as indicated in both the academic calendar and course calendars.

5. Demonstrate safe, ethical, and professional practice as outlined by St. Lawrence College Policy and Procedures and Student Code of Conduct and nursing practice and policy expectations of the host clinical agency.
6. Be willing to accept the clinical placement secured by the program.
7. Have internet access outside of their clinical practice environment.

The School of Nursing reserves the right to approve or deny an out-of-town clinical placement request. Clinical placement decisions depend on human resources, the learning needs of the student, and contracts with clinical agencies. Communication with potential placement agencies is exclusively through the School of Nursing.