NORTHERN LIGHTS COLLEGE
REGISTRAR'S OFFICE
PROGRAM INFORMATION AND COMPLETION GUIDE

Program Name: Access to Practical Nursing
Credential/Certification: Diploma in Practical Nursing
Date Submitted: September 2026
Effective Date: September 2027

Program Contact: healthscienceschair@nlc.bc.ca

Dean: Nicole Dahlen, Dean & Dennis Stavrou, Associate Dean

Document Author: Curriculum is written and approved by the Province of British Columbia, requiring adoption by all institutions that offer the Access to Practical Nursing Program in BC.

Province of British Columbia. (2025). Access to practical nursing program B.C. provincial curriculum 2025. BCcampus. https://opentextbc.ca/apncurriculum/

Program Description: The Access to Practical Nursing (APN) program is designed to build on the Health Care Assistant (HCA) Certificate. Students who complete or hold an HCA Certificate* may complete the Access to Practical Nursing (APN) Diploma in 14-16 months rather than the direct entry Practical Nursing (PN) program which is 22 months.

The (APN) Diploma prepares graduates to provide professional nursing care to individuals and families in a range of settings. Graduates of the program can apply to write the Regulatory Exam - Practical Nurse (REx-PN) for licensure as Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs). LPNs are hired in the community, continuing care and acute care hospital settings. The NLC APN program meets or exceeds all of the Provincial education competencies required for Licensed Practical Nurse graduates.

This 14-16 month Diploma program is full-time study divided into three levels:
• The Access level provides the balance of training from a combination of Levels 1 and 2 of the revised 2011 Practical Nursing Provincial Curriculum (2025), giving prior learning credits for knowledge and skills acquired in the HCA, RCA, HS/RCA certificate programs.
• The next two levels are the same as Levels three and four of the revised 2011 Practical Nursing Provincial Curriculum (2025).

* Resident Care Attendants (RCA) or those with a combination of Home Support/Resident Care Attendant (HS/RCA) may also be recognized. Those entering with an education other than from a BC public post-secondary institution (HCA; RCA or

HS/RCA Certificate) will need to provide active registration with the BC Care Aide and Community Health Worker Registry and will be assessed on a case by case basis.

Bridging model (HCA to PN):
The APN program allows students to begin their health career education at NLC, completing an HCA Certificate in 31-34 weeks. HCA graduates are required to obtain 600 hours of work experience as HCAs before bridging into the APN program, where after an additional 14-16 months of study they will graduate with their Diploma in PN.

Admission Requirements:
The following admission requirements reflect provincial standards mandated by the Practical Nurse Program Provincial Curriculum Guide Supplement:

1. Grade 12 graduation, or equivalent
.
2. English: any one of the following with a minimum grade of C+, English 12, or English First Peoples 12, or equivalent. See below for applicants with English as an additional language.

3. Math: any one of the following with a minimum grade of C: Foundations of Mathematics 11, Pre-Calculus 11, or equivalent.

4. Biology: any one of the following with a minimum grade of C: Anatomy and Physiology 12, Biology 12, or equivalent.

5. PNUR 099: Anatomy and Physiology for Practical Nurses (or an equivalent course at another institution) with a minimum grade of 65%. The completion date for PNUR 099 or equivalent must be within five years of program initiation. Applicants may be granted conditional acceptance into the Access to Practical Nursing program prior to completing PNUR 099 or its equivalent. However, the PNUR 099 requirement must be successfully completed prior to the first day of classes in Semester 1.

6. A certificate in one of the following programs: Health Care Assistant (HCA) or Resident Care Attendant (RCA) or a combined Home Support/Resident Care Attendant (HS/RCA).Those entering with an education other than from a BC public post-secondary institution (HCA; RCA or HS/RCA Certificate) will need to provide active registration with the BC Care Aide and Community Health Worker Registry and will be assessed on a case by case basis.

7. Minimum 600 Hours of work experience, within the last two years, in a care facility where care is provided to multiple patients/residents. Work experience must be verified by an official employer letter. Working in a home care home care environment where one person is cared for at a time does not meet the requirement.

APPLICANTS WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE:

Applicants with English as an additional language are defined as those who do not have three years of full-time, face-to-face, secondary or post-secondary education at an accredited institution where English is the medium of instruction in a country where English is also an official national language. English as a Second Language/Additional Language courses are not included in this three-year calculation. Such applicants must achieve scores identified in one of the two tests below:
1. International English Language Testing System (IELTS Academic) with minimum scores of:
- Speaking: 7.0
- Listening: 7.5
- Reading: 6.5
- Writing: 7.0
- Overall Band Score: 7.0

2. Canadian English Language Benchmarks Assessment for Nurses (CELBAN) with minimum scores of:
- Speaking: 8.0
- Listening: 10.0
- Reading: 8.0
- Writing: 7.0

NOTE ON ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE:
In addition to meeting English language admission requirements for the Provincial Practical Nursing Program, graduates who speak English as an additional language must be able to demonstrate performance-ready English proficiency as a condition for registration and practice in British Columbia. See BCCNM's website for further details.

POST-ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS
The following six items must be completed and documented by the first day of classes in the first semester.
1. Current CPR (Basic Life Support) certification as outlined in the Health Sciences Placement Network Practice Education Guidelines - Orientation - Students

2. Immunizations as outlined in the Health Sciences Placement Network Practice Education Guidelines - Communicable Disease Prevention
Please make an appointment with a public health nurse immediately because the immunization process can take anywhere from one to three months, sometimes longer.

3. Proof of full COVID-19 vaccination as referenced in the Practice Education Guidelines - Communicable Disease Prevention

4. Negative TB test indicating the absence of active tuberculosis.
5. N95 fit testing for proper respiratory mask fitting certificate.

6. Schedule B Criminal Record Check (CRC) for working with "children and vulnerable adults." No student will be permitted to begin a workplace practicum with children or vulnerable adults until the CRC has been received and reviewed by NLC. Students are

obligated to report any Schedule B criminal convictions that occur after they authorize a Criminal Record Check but are still enrolled in the program. Failure to do so may result in immediate dismissal from the program. Please apply for the CRC immediately because the application process can take anywhere from three to six weeks.

Length of Program: (weeks and total hours) Approximately 68 weeks, 1550 total hours/45.5 credits

Program Intake: (start/finish dates)
Start: February
Finish: May of following year (14-16 months later)

Available Seats: 24-28

Application Deadline: Opens February 1st for February admission or the following year (the first intake will open June for February admission of the following year)

Career Prospects: Licensed Practical Nurses work with other interprofessional, health care team members in a variety of settings and play an increasingly wide role in primary health care focusing on health promotion, illness and injury prevention, and health protection and restoration.

Affiliations/Partnerships: Northern Health and related facilities

Location: Classroom hours will be video-conferenced between the Dawson Creek and Fort St John campuses as available. Laboratory contact hours are scheduled in both Dawson Creek and Fort St John. Clinical learning experiences may occur in a variety of settings, including Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Chetwynd, and Fort Nelson. Efforts will be made to place students in convenient clinical locations, but all students should be prepared for in-region travel. Transportation, meals, and accommodation are the responsibility of the student. After a clinical or preceptorship site is assigned by the Program Chair and instructor, no changes are permitted.

Additional Requirements/Supplies: (fees, supplies, materials)
Required Supplies/Materials:
- Stethoscope
- Uniforms, lab coats (provided by NLC at cost)
- WCB approved safety/nursing shoes
- Watch with a second hand
- Books and lab kits

A substantial amount of course and program resource materials is provided solely in electronic form. Minimum computer requirements are published on NLC's website. See https://www.nlc.bc.ca/Services/Information-Technology/minPC

Printing of resource materials is a student responsibility. Please contact your campus library for printing costs if you plan to use campus facilities. Basic computer literacy skills are strongly recommended.

Students are required to purchase texts for the program.

Appropriate attire and shoes are necessary for lab courses and for clinical and preceptorship experiences. Students must purchase standardized program uniforms from the NLC Bookstore.

Long shifts may be required for some components of the program.

Keys to success:
- Openness to new ideas
- An ability to self-evaluate, be self-reflective, and hold oneself accountable
- Maturity
- High standard of personal hygiene and grooming
- Ability to concentrate
- Consistent attendance
- Personal integrity and ability to exercise discretionary judgement
- Physical stamina
- Timely completion of all homework and readings for all courses/classes
- Continuously evolving intuitive and creative skills
- A caring philosophy and ability to work well within a team environment (understand, respect, and appreciate roles within a team)

Eligibility for Canada Student Loans: (Yes or No)
Yes

Required Minimum Grade: (overall and/or minimum within a course)
Students must achieve 100% on all Pharmacology Math exams. A maximum of three attempts are available for each Pharmacology Math exam (applies to APNP 134). Students must achieve a minimum of 80% (A-) on the theory portion of the Pharmacology courses (applies to APNP134).

Integrated Lab Assessments or Skill Assessments in the Integrated Nursing Practice courses are marked Pass/Fail. To pass this course, students require BOTH a 75% grade for the theory portion of the course, AND mastery in skill development as indicated by an 80% grade on the final Objective Structured Clinical Examination

(OSCE). One retest is granted for failure of the OSCE (applies to APNP 135 and PNUR 235, 245).

All other theory nursing courses (APNP 130, 131, 132, 133 and PNUR 230, 231, 232, 233, 242, 243) require a minimum grade of 68% (B-) for students to progress from term to term and to graduate from the program.
Program progression/continuation requirements are assessed by instructors and program chair. Students who don't meet program progression requirements are withdrawn from program.

In ALL cases, when a second test is necessary, the student and instructor will meet to discuss remedial strategies before the retest is attempted. Sufficient time for practice and improvement will be provided (minimum of two days).

In total, a maximum of two rewrites of a final exam are permitted for the theory portions of the Practical Nursing curriculum in a given academic year. No more than one exam re-write can be written per theory course.

The Final Practice Experience/Preceptorship is marked Pass/Fail (PNUR 248).

Residency Requirement: (percentage of courses which must be taken at NLC)
A minimum 25% of total program hours must be completed at Northern Lights College. Typically, students will complete the entire program at NLC; however, given the existence of a provincial curriculum, transfer credit may be considered from recognized institutions.

Required Courses: (list courses required to complete credential and total hours for each course)

ACCESS LEVEL
APNP 130: Professional Communication A (45 hrs; 1.5 Credits)
APNP 131: Professional Practice A (45 hrs; 1.5 Credits)
APNP 132: Health Promotion A (30 hrs; 1 Credit)
APNP 133: Variations in Health A (60 hrs; 2 Credits)
APNP 134: Pharmacology A (60 hrs; 2 Credits)
APNP 135: Integrated Nursing Practice A (180 hrs; 4.5 Credits)
APNP 136: Consolidated Practice Experience A (120 hrs; 3 Credits)

LEVEL THREE:
PNUR 230: Professional Communication 3 (20 hrs; 1 Credit)
PNUR 231: Professional Practice 3 (20 hrs; 1 Credit)
PNUR 232: Health Promotion 3 (36 hrs; 1 Credit)
PNUR 233: Variations in Health 3 (45 hrs; 1.5 Credits)
PNUR 235: Integrated Nursing Practice 3 (120 hrs; 4.0 Credits)
PNUR 236: Consolidated Practice Experience 3 (65 hrs; 2 Credits)

LEVEL FOUR:
PNUR 242: Health Promotion 4 (30 hrs; 1 Credit)
PNUR 243: Variations in Health 4 (50 hrs; 2 Credits)
PNUR 245: Integrated Nursing Practice 4 (214 hrs; 6.5 Credits)
PNUR 246: Consolidated Practice Experience 4 (200 hrs; 5 Credits)
PNUR 248: Final Practice Experience (210 hrs; 5 Credits)