

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Academic Year:	2026-2027
Credential:	Ontario College Diploma
Program Delivery:	Full-Time
Duration:	2 Years
Length:	4 Semesters
Program Code(s)	H117 - Timmins Campus (PC) H118 - Kirkland Lake Campus (KL) H127 - Moosonee Campus (JB) H129 - Haileybury Campus (HL)

DESCRIPTION

Thanks to Northern's two-year Practical Nursing diploma, you'll be ready to start the healthcare career you've always dreamed of.

You will learn about the Nursing process and the role of nursing education in promoting health and wellness. You will hone your communication and leadership skills. And – from minor scrapes to complex health challenges, mental health and even palliative care – you'll gradually develop a holistic approach to nursing, and the capacity to provide care and comfort to patients with varying conditions at all stages of life.

At every step along the way, you will practice new skills within our state-of-the-art training facility. And you will top it all off with an eight-week placement that marks the official start to your career as a competent and caring practitioner.

Practical Nursing is a 2-year (4 semester) program leading to an Ontario college diploma in Practical Nursing. Northern College's Practical Nursing program has received a Category 1 Program Approval from the College of Nurses of Ontario. Northern College delivers the current diploma program standards that meet the national Entry to Practice Competencies to prepare graduates for the Regulatory Exam – Practical Nurse (REx-PN). Success with the REx-PN will facilitate the Practical Nursing student to be a licensed Registered Practical Nurse (RPN).

Northern's Practical Nursing program holds as its philosophy a set of beliefs and values based on five key concepts: the client, health, caring, nursing, and the role that teaching and learning play in enabling individuals and their families and groups to achieve optimal health outcomes. These concepts are interrelated, interdependent and integrated throughout the curriculum. Registered Practical Nurses work with individuals, families, groups, and communities (autonomously or in consultation with nursing and the multi-disciplinary team) to assess, plan, implement, and evaluate evidence-informed nursing care, services and programs that promote health and rehabilitation, prevent injury and disease, maintain and restore health, and provide palliation.

The Practical Nursing Program at Northern College is approved by the College of Nurses of Ontario (www.cno.org). Graduates from this program are eligible to apply for registration as a Registered Practical Nurse in Ontario.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Graduates may find employment opportunities in acute/long term care centres (hospitals – may include critical/intensive care, dialysis, emergency, maternity, medical, mental health, oncology, operating room, recovery, rehabilitation/restore, surgical), clinics/ doctors' offices, community agencies (home care, long-term care agencies), correctional health care, hospice/palliative care, industry, mental health services, occupational health, public health, street nursing, travel nursing, and more.

VOCATIONAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Communicate therapeutically with clients and members of the health care team.
2. Assess clients across the life span, in a systematic and holistic manner.
3. Plan safe and competent nursing care, based upon a thorough analysis of available data and evidence-informed practice guidelines.
4. Select and perform nursing interventions using clinical judgment, in collaboration with the client and, where appropriate, the health care team, that promote health and well-being, prevent disease and injury, maintain and/or restore health, promote rehabilitation, and/or provide palliation.
5. Evaluate the outcomes resulting from all interventions in the nurse-client interaction and modify the plan of care as required.
6. Act equitably and justly with clients and members of the health care team.
7. Adapt to a variety of health care settings, using different leadership skills and styles as appropriate to each setting.
8. Contribute to creating a healthy and safe work environment in a variety of health care settings.
9. Practice in a self-regulated, professional and ethical manner, complying with relevant legislation and with the standards of both the regulatory body and the practice setting to provide safe and competent client care.

PROGRAM COURSES

The following reflects the planned course sequence for full-time offerings of the program. Programs at Northern College are delivered using a variety of instruction modes. Courses may be offered in the classroom or lab, entirely online, or in a hybrid mode which combines classroom sessions with virtual learning activities.

Semester 1		Hours
BI1003	Anatomy and Physiology I	42
CM1323	Professional Communications	42
EL1051	General Education Elective	42
GN1443	Indigenous and Awareness	42
PN1004	Nursing Practice I	56
PN1033	Human Relationships	42
PN1063	Professional Growth I	42
PN1073	Nursing Theory I	42
Semester 2		
BI2013	Anatomy and Physiology II	42
EL1052	General Education Elective	42
PN2017	Nursing Practice II	238
PN2023	Health Assessment	42
PN2043	Nursing Theory II	42
Semester 3		
PN1014	Pathophysiology I	56
PN1053	Pharmacology I	42
PN3016	Nursing Practice III	224
PN3023	Professional Growth II	42
PN3033	Nursing Theory III	56
Semester 4		
PN2014	Pathophysiology II	40
PN2033	Pharmacology II	30
PN4004	Nursing Theory IV	40
PN4019	Nursing Practice IV	190
PN5010	Nursing Practice V	320

PROGRAM PROGRESSION

The following reflects the planned progression for full-time offerings of the program.

Fall Intake

Sem 1: Fall 2026

Sem 2: Winter 2027

Sem 3: Fall 2027

Sem 4: Winter 2028

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD)
- Grade 12 English (C, U) (Minimum 65%)
- Grade 11 or 12 Biology (C, U) (Minimum 65%)
- Grade 11 or 12 Chemistry (C, U) (Minimum 65%)
- Grade 11 Math (C, M, U) (Minimum 65%)
- Or equivalent

Academic prerequisites for this program may be obtained free of charge through [Academic Upgrading](#).

Applicants who do not have a high school diploma or equivalent and will have reached the age of 19 years on or before the start of the program must undergo academic testing and may be required to complete [Prior Learning Assessment & Recognition \(PLAR\)](#) process to demonstrate equivalency of admission requirements prior to admission into a program.

For more details, please contact the Admissions Office at 705-235-7222 or admissions@northern.on.ca.

Additional Requirements for International Students

In addition to the admission requirements, international students must have proof of [English Proficiency](#) and meet the requirements below.

1. Proof of Senior High School Diploma/Certificate with 65% in each equivalents for Mathematics, Chemistry and Biology.
2. English Proficiency (we will require one of the following):
 - IELTS Academic (International English Language Testing System – minimum overall score of 6.5 must be achieved with no individual band score under 6.0)
 - TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) – Internet Based Test (iBT) overall minimum score of 88+
 - PTE (Pearson Test of English) Academic 60+

If your country of citizenship has English as its official language, we may accept alternate proof of English Proficiency. All educational documents must be submitted in English and will be dependent on the country of citizenship. For more information, please contact admissions@northern.on.ca.

PROGRAM SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Refer to the program page for [Practical Nursing Clinical Requirements](#) documentation.

The requirements must be submitted prior to the start of the semester or by the date specified in order to be eligible to continue in the program.

On admission to the PN program students must complete and submit all mandatory clinical requirements by the due date of August 15 (some exceptions apply for International students). Students are strongly encouraged to ensure that they initiate the completion of all the mandatory clinical requirements by no later than June 1st to ensure that they avoid potential delays with access to CPR/First Aid training opportunities, medical appointments for Immunization/Communicable Disease Testing Requirements and any necessary

vaccines, and processing of the Criminal Reference Check with Vulnerable Sector Screen in order to complete all requirements by the due date.

COVID-19 vaccinations are now required, by all placement agencies, for all students in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Practical Nursing and Personal Support Worker programs, in order to be permitted to attend clinical hours.

Students who do not comply with the immunization requirements will not be allowed into the practice settings and as such will not be able to complete the Practicum/clinical placement required for graduation from the program. CPR & WHMIS re-certification, criminal reference checks, Mask Fit and immunization updates are required annually and must be completed prior to August 1st for students to be able to participate in the required clinical placements. Any costs for these requirements will be the responsibility of the applicant.

Students are responsible for the cost of appropriate uniforms and equipment (e.g. stethoscope, watch, pen, etc.) required for the clinical area as well as transportation to clinical placements.

Mask fit testing will be provided by the College prior to clinical placement.

Upon successful completion of all courses outlined in the program of study (including a minimum of 65% in core Nursing courses), the student is eligible to write the registration exam REx-PN as set out by the College of Nurses of Ontario to obtain their nursing licensure.

Students will be informed of the cost of this examination to be paid to the College of Nurses of Ontario, and it is their responsibility to pay this fee by the designated dates. Resources customized to prepare students to write the REx-PN are embedded within the curriculum of the 2nd year courses, and the cost remains the responsibility of the student.

As of January 1, 2005, the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) requires all applicants for registration or reinstatement from within Canada to provide a recent Canadian Police Information Centre Criminal Record Synopsis (CPIC check) and Vulnerable Sector check as part of the registration process. The CPIC check registration requirement enhances public protection by allowing CNO to identify those who have criminal records that could affect their suitability to practice nursing.

Students should also review the CNO document [“Requisite Skills and Abilities for Nursing Practice in Ontario \[PDF, 180 KB\]”](#) for information the skills and abilities that must be demonstrated to become a nurse in Ontario. As noted in this document, applicants who have questions about whether or not they have the requisite skills and abilities to be registered as an RN or RPN should contact the CNO to explore the kinds of supports they might require.

Mask Fit Testing: This program requires that students wear a full-face self-contained breathing air (SCBA) mask and an approved N95 particulate respirator during certain learning situations reflective of safe workplace practice and standards. To successfully complete Mask Fit Testing to wear an SCBA mask and N95 mask, students shall present themselves for fit testing free from interference of hair where the respirator seals to the skin or neck. Students are required to be clean-shaven or have no hair where the mask seals to the skin.

Work Integrated Learning Opportunities

Practical Nursing students will experience small group clinical placement in long-term care, medical, surgical, maternity, and mental health departments. Students may request the area of preference to complete their final consolidation of their learning during the 8-week preceptorship experience.

The Practical Nursing Program offers students clinical setting learning opportunities within agencies such as hospitals and longer-term care facilities, followed by a Preceptorship period.

Articulation / Transfer Agreements

A number of articulation agreements have been negotiated with universities and other institutions across Canada, North America and internationally. These agreements are assessed, revised and updated on a regular basis. Please contact the program coordinator for specific details if you are interested in pursuing such an option. Additional information can be found at [Articulation Agreements](#).

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

- 19 Program Courses
 - 1 Communications Course
 - 2 General Education Courses

Graduation Eligibility

To graduate from this program, a student must attain a minimum of 65% in core nursing courses, 60% in Communications and General Education electives, and a letter grade of CR (Credit) in nursing practice courses in each semester unless otherwise stated on the course outline. Students should consult departmental policies and manuals for additional details and exceptions.

Graduation Window

Students unable to adhere to the program duration of two years (as stated above) may take a maximum of four years to complete their credential. After this time, students must be re-admitted into the program, and follow the curriculum in place at the time of re-admission.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions about being admitted into the program, please contact Northern College Admissions at admissions@northern.on.ca or by phone at 705-235-3211 ext. 7222. For questions about the content of the program, contact the Program Coordinator.

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COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Semester 1

BI1003 Anatomy and Physiology I

This course introduces learners to the normal development, structures and functions of the human body. Learners will examine the physiological components of the human body in order to obtain an understanding of how the structures and functions of the body are related.

CM1323 Professional Communications

In this course, students will learn essential skills for success in college and the workplace. This course focuses on developing and strengthening oral and written communication skills, and critical thinking ability. During this course, students will engage in a variety of forms of communication with a focus on upholding the principles of academic integrity. Students will develop the skills necessary to create discipline-specific documents, practice business etiquette and professionalism, and apply critical thinking strategies to practical scenarios. Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to plan and draft concise, coherent and well-organized writing assignments that are tailored to specific audiences and purposes.

EL1051 General Education Elective

General Education Courses are selected online each semester by the student from a list provided and exposes students to a related area of study outside of their immediate academic discipline. Certain programs have predetermined electives.

GN1443 Indigenous Culture and Awareness

This general education course will provide students with an introduction to Canadian Indigenous Nations' history, sovereignty, land titles, cultural history and current critical issues. Topics addressed include the content of Indigenous rights, economic and social development, community and political processes, and business law and policies, justice & social services. Canadian Indigenous History and Relations is a general education course that has been incorporated into all programs at Northern College.

PN1004 Nursing Practice I

This course provides practical nursing students with essential foundational skills necessary for delivering safe, compassionate, and effective client care. Students will gain proficiency in core nursing procedures including medical asepsis and infection control practices, proper body mechanics, personal hygiene care (bathing and grooming) and support with urinary and bowel elimination. Instruction also covers client positioning, safe transfers, ambulation with assistive devices, and nutrition and hydration support. Additionally, students will develop the ability to accurately measure vital signs and blood pressure. A key component of the course includes building numeracy skills relevant to nursing practice, such as performing basic medication-related math. Learning is reinforced through hands-on practice in the skills lab to ensure readiness for real-world clinical settings.

PN1033 Human Relationships

In this course, students will engage in effective professional relationships with clients and colleagues. With a focus on communication skills, students will learn to: build therapeutic relationships, provide person-centered care, work within an interprofessional team, and manage conflict within the workplace. These skills will be taught with a sensitivity to diversity, values, beliefs, and cultural practices. Stress management techniques will be reviewed to highlight the importance of self-care when working in healthcare.

PN1063 Professional Growth I

This course provides an introduction to the profession of nursing. It explores the philosophy of nursing, nursing theories, the evolution of nursing and the role of nurses in today's society. Learners are introduced to nursing professionalism, Ontario's regulatory body for nursing, and the importance of reflective practice in nursing. Learners will examine personal learning styles and teaching and learning. Health and nursing informatics are introduced, and learners will gain skills in using electronic databases to find scholarly nursing literature. Nursing research is also introduced, and students have the opportunity to analyze nursing research studies and gain an understanding of the relationship between nursing theory, practice and research.

PN1073 Nursing Theory I

This course will introduce the learner to the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of health and healthy lifestyles. The dimensions of human needs will be explored with an emphasis on the significance of self-responsibility, culture and the change process.

Semester 2**BI2013 Anatomy and Physiology II**

A continuation of Anatomy and Physiology I, this course continues with the study of the major body systems, from the nervous system to the reproductive systems. The unifying themes of the interrelationships of body organ system, homeostasis, and the complementary nature of structure and function will provide the basis for understanding the workings of the human body.

EL1052 General Education Elective

General Education Courses are selected online each semester by the student from a list provided and exposes students to a related area of study outside of their immediate academic discipline. Certain programs have predetermined electives.

PN2017 Nursing Practice II

This course provides students with the foundational knowledge and hands-on skills required to deliver safe, competent, and holistic nursing care. Integrating theoretical instruction, laboratory practice, and clinical experience, students learn to support the physical, emotional, and psychological needs of clients. Key skills include elimination interventions (enemas, suppositories), oxygen therapy, sterile technique, simple wound care, safe medication administration (oral and non-parenteral), and pre- and postoperative care. Through a combination of classroom learning and supervised lab sessions, students will develop a strong understanding of the theory behind each skill and build confidence through practical application. Weekly clinical placements offer students the opportunity to further apply these skills with real clients, reinforcing critical thinking, communication, and client-centered care.

PN2023 Health Assessment

This course will provide the learner with the skills required to conduct a holistic health assessment for a normal healthy individual during all stages of the lifespan. The concepts of wellness, health promotion, health protection, and client teaching will be integrated throughout the course.

PN2043 Nursing Theory II

This course will focus on health promotion and health protection strategies for selected individuals across the lifespan related to individuals, families, groups and communities. This course will also examine the evolution of Canada's health care system.

Semester 3**PN1014 Pathophysiology I**

This foundational course introduces practical nursing students to the dynamic and complex world of human pathophysiology, with a specific focus on acute, episodic, and complex health challenges. Through a systems-based approach, students will explore the structural and functional alterations that occur in the body in response to disease and injury. Emphasis is placed on understanding the underlying causes of these changes, the resulting clinical manifestations, and the interconnections between various body systems. Topics include essential concepts such as homeostasis, inflammation, pain, and healing, as well as critical system-based conditions related to fluid and electrolyte balance, immune function, infection, diabetes mellitus, cancer, cardiovascular and respiratory function, neurologic and sensory disorders, and more. By integrating theoretical knowledge with clinical relevance, this course prepares students to recognize signs and symptoms of illness, contribute to nursing assessments, and support informed clinical decision-making in diverse healthcare settings. This is the first of two pathophysiology courses designed to equip practical nursing students with a solid scientific foundation for safe and effective nursing practice.

PN1053 Pharmacology I

Using the nursing process this course introduces the learner to the concepts of pharmacology as selected drug groups are studied. The course will emphasize the role and responsibilities of the practical nurse in the administration and monitoring of client medications. This course is also designed to allow the learner to apply basic skills to safely calculate drug dosages.

PN3016 Nursing Practice III

This course will provide the learner with opportunities to examine the role of the practical nurse when caring for individuals with health challenges. The learner will utilize critical thinking skills to plan and implement holistic nursing care. This experience will take place in the laboratory setting and in a variety of medical-surgical areas.

PN3023 Professional Growth II

This course will prepare the learner for entry into the workplace through exploration of leadership, conflict resolution and advocacy. Leadership and management roles within health care will be examined. The process of transition from student to nurse will be explored.

PN3033 Nursing Theory III

This course prepares students to manage the care of adults with a range of acute and chronic conditions. Emphasizing client-centered and evidence-informed care, students will develop clinical reasoning and decision-making skills essential for safe and effective nursing practice. Students will engage in varied learning approaches to identify health issues, apply theoretical knowledge, and draw connections between client assessments, nursing interventions, and expected outcomes. Emphasis is placed on integrating pathophysiology, pharmacology, and collaborative care within the nursing process. This course promotes critical thinking, ethical practice, and interprofessional collaboration. By course end, students will be equipped to support clients with complex health needs in a variety of medical-surgical settings.

Semester 4**PN2014 Pathophysiology II**

Continuing from PN1014, this course focuses on episodic and chronic health challenges. The structural and functional changes and the manifestations that result from alterations in the following body systems will be explored: genitourinary, musculoskeletal, gastrointestinal, integumentary, sensory and mental health.

PN2033 Pharmacology II

This course is a continuation of Pharmacology I. More selected drug groups are studied. The focus of this course is still on the role and responsibilities of the practical nurse in the administration and monitoring of client medications. The mathematical skills to safely calculate drug dosages are still required for this course. This course utilizes experiential learning therefore, classroom activities will focus on the interactions, which take place between and among the learners. The facilitator will guide learning in the role of the expert learner as everyone actively participates in learning activities. To positively contribute to the group process you are expected to come prepared for discussion and discovery. This interactive process requires your attendance for all activities.

PN4004 Nursing Theory IV

This course supports students in developing the knowledge and skills required to care for clients experiencing mental health challenges and a range of complex acute and chronic physical health conditions. The course emphasizes a holistic, client-centered, and trauma-informed approach, integrating principles of therapeutic communication, recovery-oriented care, and the nursing process. Using diverse learning methods, students will assess client needs, analyze symptoms, and apply evidence-informed nursing interventions in both mental health and physical health contexts.

PN4019 Nursing Practice IV

This course will provide the learner with opportunities to examine the role of practical nurse when caring for individuals who require supportive, rehabilitative and palliative care. The learner will also be exposed to individuals with mental health challenges. Critical thinking skills will be refined to plan and implement holistic nursing care. This experience will take place in the laboratory setting and in a variety of clinical settings. This course also incorporates an Intravenous (IV) Therapy module, comprising both theoretical instruction and a laboratory component focused on the practice of IV insertion techniques. Upon successful completion of the theoretical portion, students will receive a certificate of completion. During clinical placement, students will be provided with a log sheet and may initiate up to ten IV starts, contingent upon the availability of appropriate opportunities in the clinical setting.

PN5010 Nursing Practice V

This experience will take place in nursing practice settings, which will be selected through a collaborative approach to meet the student's learning needs. The experience will consist of one eight-week experience either in an acute care setting or a chronic care setting. The focus will be to consolidate learning and to function independently when caring for clients and their families in situations where the number of variables is limited, and the outcome tends to be predictable. During this practicum, the student will work with a preceptor. Upon completion, the learner will be ready to graduate as a beginning caring, competent practitioner.