

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) H129 - Haileybury Campus (HL)

DESCRIPTION

Northern College's Practical Nursing two-year diploma program prepares graduates to provide safe, competent, ethical, compassionate, and evidence-informed nursing care in a variety of health-care settings. The program supports student development of the knowledge, skills, and clinical judgment required to meet the health needs of individuals, families, and communities across the lifespan.

Through a comprehensive curriculum and experiential learning, students develop skills in health assessment, nursing care, health promotion, medication administration, therapeutic communication, professional practice, and collaborative care. Learning includes the care of clients experiencing acute and chronic health conditions, mental health challenges, and age-related health needs. Students also develop an understanding of professional accountability, ethical and legal responsibilities, cultural safety, health equity, and the role of the Registered Practical Nurse within the health-care team.

Students apply theory and nursing skills through laboratory learning and clinical experiences in a variety of practice settings. These experiences support the development of confidence, competence, professional judgment, and readiness for entry-level nursing practice. Clinical learning culminates in a final preceptorship that supports the transition from student to beginning practitioner.

Northern College's Practical Nursing program is approved by the [College of Nurses of Ontario](#) (CNO) and meets the requirements of the Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities [Practical Nursing Program Standard](#). The program prepares graduates to meet the CNO [Entry-to-Practice Competencies for Registered Practical Nurses](#). Graduates are eligible to pursue registration with CNO by meeting all registration requirements, including successful completion of the [Regulatory Examination – Practical Nurse \(REx-PN\)](#), to practice as a Registered Practical Nurse in Ontario.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Upon graduation and registration with the College of Nurses of Ontario, Registered Practical Nurses may pursue employment in a variety of health-care settings, including hospitals, long-term care, community and home care, clinics, mental health and rehabilitation services, palliative care, and other health and community agencies.

Explore labour market information and employment trends for Registered Practical Nurses through the [Government of Canada Job Bank](#), as well as [Ontario Health Human Resources](#) recruitment and retention programs and incentives for nurses.

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. The Practical Nursing program is primarily delivered through in-person learning at a Northern College campus. Most courses require on-site attendance due to laboratory learning and clinical placement requirements. Some theory courses or course components may also include online or virtual learning activities. Students should expect to attend campus regularly and to participate in required clinical experiences at assigned, local health-care settings.

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
PN1063	Professional Growth I	42
PN1073	Nursing Theory I	42
PN1103	Therapeutic Nursing Relationships	42

Semester 2

BI2013	Anatomy and Physiology II	42
EL1052	General Education Elective	42
PN2010	Nursing Clinical II	144
PN2024	Health Assessment	56
PN2043	Nursing Theory II	42
PN2044	Nursing Practice II	56

Semester 3

PN1014	Pathophysiology I	56
PN1053	Pharmacology I	42
PN3004	Nursing Practice III	56
PN3010	Nursing Clinical III	144
PN3023	Professional Growth II	42
PN3033	Nursing Theory III	56

Semester 4

PN4002	Pharmacology II	30
PN4003	Pathophysiology II	40
PN4008	Nursing Clinical IV	120
PN4013	Nursing Theory IV	40
PN4023	Nursing Practice IV	40
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](#).

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 equivalent 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

Clinical Placements

An essential part of nursing education consists of clinical placement experiences. Students in the Practical Nursing program will attend clinical placements for experiential learning and consolidation of knowledge beginning in the program's second semester and during each subsequent semester.

There are mandatory clinical requirements all students must complete and submit in order to participate in clinical placements and the final preceptorship.

Upon admission to the Practical Nursing program, students must complete and submit all mandatory clinical requirements by August 15. Some exceptions may apply for international students.

Students are strongly encouraged to begin arranging and securing their mandatory clinical requirements no later than June 1 to allow sufficient time for CPR/First Aid training, medical appointments, immunization and communicable disease testing requirements, any required vaccinations, and processing of the Criminal Record Check with Vulnerable Sector Check.

Students requiring a Vulnerable Sector Check must obtain the appropriate request letter from Northern College before applying, as this documentation may be required by the police service processing the application.

Beginning these requirements early is strongly recommended to reduce the risk of delays that could affect eligibility to participate in laboratory or clinical learning.

Requirements for Clinical Placements

Students are required to provide the following:

- Completed Immunization/Communicable Disease Testing Requirements (forms with specifics are provided in the Practical Nursing Clinical Requirements Information Packages for Domestic and International Students)
- Current Basic Life Support (BLS/CPR) certification at the required health-care provider level
- Standard First Aid certification or equivalent
- WHMIS certification
- A current Canadian Criminal Record Check with Vulnerable Sector Check
- Mask Fit Testing (will be provided by the College prior to clinical placement)
- AODA certification
- Worker Health and Safety Awareness in 4 Steps training certification

Additional requirements, instructions, forms, links to training, and submission information are provided in the Practical Nursing Clinical Requirements Information Packages for Domestic and International Students.

- [Practical Nursing Clinical Requirements for Domestic Students](#)
- [Practical Nursing Clinical Requirements for International Students](#)

Mandatory clinical requirements must also be maintained and updated throughout the program. Requirements such as CPR certification, Criminal Record Check with Vulnerable Sector Check, WHMIS, mask fit testing, and immunization documentation require annual renewal or updating as necessary.

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.

Any costs associated with required testing, documentation, certifications, immunizations, or related clinical requirements are the responsibility of the student. Students who do not meet mandatory clinical requirements by the required deadlines may not be eligible to participate in clinical placements and may be unable to complete the clinical components required for progression and graduation.

Please Note

COVID-19 vaccination is required for participation in clinical placements with current partner health-care agencies. Students must provide required documentation of COVID-19 vaccination before attending clinical experiences. Clinical placement agencies may also establish additional health, immunization, safety, or other requirements for students attending their facilities. Northern College students are required to meet the requirements of assigned clinical placement agencies in addition to the College's mandatory clinical requirements.

Eligibility for clinical placement is subject to required criminal record and vulnerable sector screening. Information disclosed through screening may affect a student's ability to participate in clinical placements and, consequently, progress through or complete the program. Students must immediately disclose any new

criminal charges, findings of guilt, or other relevant changes in criminal record status that occur after submission of the required Criminal Record Check with Vulnerable Sector Check.

Students should review the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) document [Requisite Skills and Abilities for Nursing Practice in Ontario](#) for information about the skills and abilities required for nursing practice. Applicants who have questions about their ability to meet these requirements or about potential supports or accommodations are encouraged to contact CNO.

Graduates must separately meet all College of Nurses of Ontario requirements for registration as a Registered Practical Nurse. CNO also has reporting and registration requirements related to criminal charges, findings of guilt, and professional conduct matters.

Students are responsible for obtaining required uniforms and clinical equipment and for all costs associated with travel to and from clinical placements. Clinical placements may occur outside the student's home or campus community, and students are responsible for arranging transportation and, where necessary, accommodation.

Clinical schedules are based on agency operations and may include days, evenings, weekends, and other scheduled hours.

Work Integrated Learning Opportunities

Practical Nursing students participate in clinical learning experiences in a variety of health-care settings throughout the program. These experiences provide opportunities to apply nursing knowledge and skills in practice and culminate in a final preceptorship that supports the transition to entry-level nursing practice.

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

- 22 Core Nursing Courses, including Anatomy and Physiology courses
- 1 Communications Course
- 3 General Education Courses, including Indigenous Culture and Awareness

Graduation Eligibility

To be eligible to graduate from the Practical Nursing program, students must successfully complete all required courses and meet the program's academic and clinical progression requirements. Students must achieve a minimum grade of 65% in all core nursing courses, a grade of CR in clinical practice courses, a minimum grade of 60% in the required Communications course, and the minimum passing grade for General Education courses is 50%.

Students must also meet all applicable Northern College graduation requirements. Students should consult the Practical Nursing Student Manual, course outlines, and College academic policies for additional program-specific requirements.

Program Completion Timeline

The Practical Nursing program is designed to be completed in two years. In accordance with Northern College policy, students may take up to four years to complete the requirements of an Ontario College Diploma.

Students who do not complete the program within the maximum four-year timeline must apply for re-admission to the Practical Nursing program. If re-admitted, students will be required to restart the program and follow the curriculum and program requirements in effect at the time of 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

Improving your knowledge and understanding of the history of the Indigenous peoples of what we now call Canada is an important step to enable Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, organizations, and communities to work together more respectfully. Throughout this course you will have the opportunity to learn, discuss and reflect about many topics that are relevant in the learning journey towards reconciliation.

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.

PN1063 Professional Growth I

This course introduces students to the nursing profession. 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. Additionally, the nursing process (including nursing diagnoses) will be examined in depth.

PN1103 Therapeutic Nursing Relationships

This course focuses on the development of effective therapeutic and professional relationships with clients, families, colleagues, and members of the health care team. Students develop self-awareness, emotional intelligence, communication, and interpersonal skills that support safe, compassionate, person-centered care. Emphasis is placed on therapeutic communication, active listening, empathy, professional boundaries, cultural humility, Indigenous perspectives, conflict resolution, and respectful interactions with clients, families, and members of the health care team. Students examine the impact of personal values, beliefs, and experiences

on professional relationships and explore strategies that support collaboration, team effectiveness, and psychologically safe practice environments. Through experiential learning, reflection, case studies, and role-play activities, students explore how therapeutic relationships contribute to positive client outcomes, healthy workplace environments, and effective interprofessional collaboration.

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.

PN2010 Nursing Clinical II

This course provides students with their first supervised clinical practice experience in a health care setting. Students apply foundational nursing knowledge, assessment skills, therapeutic communication, and nursing interventions while providing person-centered care to individuals and families. Emphasis is placed on professionalism, clinical judgement, client safety, documentation, and the integration of theory into practice. Through direct client care experiences and reflective practice, students develop confidence and competence in the delivery of safe, ethical, and evidence-informed nursing care as members of the health care team.

PN2024 Health Assessment

This course introduces students to the knowledge and skills required to conduct comprehensive health assessments across the lifespan. Students develop skills in health history collection, physical assessment, therapeutic communication, and documentation, with emphasis on recognizing normal and abnormal findings. Assessment findings are used to identify health concerns and support clinical judgment, health promotion, and nursing care planning.

PN2043 Nursing Theory II

This course focuses on health promotion, health teaching, and nursing care across the lifespan. Students explore growth and development, maternal-newborn health, family-centered care, and the health needs of individuals from childhood through older adulthood. Emphasis is placed on disease prevention, chronic illness management, and the role of families, communities, and interprofessional teams in supporting health and well-being.

PN2044 Nursing Practice II

This course builds on foundational nursing knowledge and skills to support safe, competent, and person-centered nursing care. Students develop skills in medication administration, dosage calculations, respiratory care, wound management, surgical nursing care, and other therapeutic interventions. Through classroom and laboratory learning, students strengthen clinical judgment, care planning, documentation, communication, and the psychomotor skills required for nursing practice.

Semester 3**PN1014 Pathophysiology I**

This course introduces students to the pathophysiological changes that occur with acute, episodic, and complex health conditions. Using a systems-based approach, students examine alterations in normal body function, disease processes, and related clinical manifestations. Emphasis is placed on applying pathophysiology knowledge to the interpretation of signs, symptoms, and assessment findings to support clinical reasoning and understanding of client health conditions.

PN1053 Pharmacology I

This course builds on foundational medication-administration knowledge and develops a deeper understanding of pharmacology and the professional responsibilities associated with safe, ethical, and evidence-informed medication use. Students examine major drug classifications, medication actions, therapeutic uses, contraindications, interactions, and adverse effects. Emphasis is placed on client assessment, interpretation of medication orders, monitoring therapeutic and adverse effects, medication safety, client education, and the practical nurse's accountability in promoting safe medication outcomes.

PN3004 Nursing Practice III

This course builds on previous nursing practice knowledge and skills through classroom and laboratory learning. Students refine psychomotor skills, clinical reasoning, decision-making, and numeracy skills while applying the nursing process to a range of client care situations. Emphasis is placed on parenteral medication administration and intravenous therapies, advanced wound care, urinary catheterization and bladder irrigation, nasogastric tube care, and safe medication practices.

PN3010 Nursing Clinical III

This course provides students with supervised clinical experiences, caring for clients with acute and chronic health needs. Students integrate knowledge from pathophysiology, pharmacology, and nursing theory while building on previous clinical experiences and assuming greater responsibility for client care. Emphasis is placed on using clinical judgment to assess clients, plan and provide care, administer medications, communicate effectively, and promote safety in collaboration with the health-care team. Reflective practice supports the continued development of professional competence, confidence, and safe, ethical, person-centered nursing care.

PN3023 Professional Growth II

This course prepares students for entry into professional nursing practice through the exploration of leadership, delegation, interprofessional collaboration, advocacy, conflict resolution, quality improvement, and workplace

dynamics. Emphasis is placed on professional accountability, ethical and legal responsibilities, reflective practice, health equity, and the transition from student to Registered Practical Nurse. Students also strengthen leadership, teamwork, and decision-making skills that support safe, collaborative, and high-quality nursing care.

PN3033 Nursing Theory III

This course focuses on nursing care for adults experiencing acute and chronic health challenges. Students integrate assessment findings, pathophysiology, pharmacology, and evidence-informed nursing interventions to support clinical reasoning and decision-making. Emphasis is placed on medical-surgical nursing care, prioritization, interprofessional collaboration, and responding to changing client needs.

Semester 4

PN4002 Pharmacology II

This course builds on previous pharmacology learning and further develops knowledge of medication therapies used in nursing practice. Students examine drug classifications, mechanisms of action, therapeutic uses, adverse effects, interactions, contraindications, and nursing considerations. Emphasis is placed on medication safety, client teaching, symptom management, clinical judgment, and the application of pharmacological knowledge to support safe, person-centered care.

PN4003 Pathophysiology II

This course builds on previous pathophysiology learning by examining progressive and chronic health alterations. Students explore disease progression, related clinical manifestations, and the physiological changes that affect function, cognition, and quality of life. Emphasis is placed on applying pathophysiology knowledge to the interpretation of signs, symptoms, and diagnostic findings to support clinical reasoning and understanding of client health conditions.

PN4008 Nursing Clinical IV

This course provides students with supervised clinical experiences that build on previous clinical learning and support increasing independence in the delivery of nursing care. Students integrate knowledge from nursing theory, pathophysiology, pharmacology, and nursing practice while caring for clients with diverse health needs. Emphasis is placed on prioritization, clinical judgment, medication administration, communication, documentation, collaboration, and coordination of care. Reflective practice supports the continued development of professional accountability, confidence, and readiness for entry-level practical nursing practice.

PN4013 Nursing Theory IV

This course builds on previous nursing theory learning and focuses on the care of clients experiencing a range of acute, chronic, mental health, cognitive, and rehabilitative health challenges. Students integrate assessment findings, pathophysiology, pharmacology, therapeutic approaches, and evidence-informed nursing interventions to support clinical judgment and person-centered care. Emphasis is placed on mental health and substance use, adaptation and recovery, functional independence, quality of life, ethical decision-making, and collaborative care.

PN4023 Nursing Practice IV

This course builds on previous nursing practice learning and supports the integration and refinement of knowledge, psychomotor skills, clinical judgment, and numeracy required for entry-level practical nursing practice. Students develop and strengthen advanced nursing skills related to maternal-child care, airway and chest tube management, enteral and parenteral nutrition, medication administration, and intravenous therapy. The course includes an IV therapy initiation component with theoretical and laboratory learning focused on safe peripheral intravenous practice. Emphasis is placed on skill integration, safe practice, professional accountability, and readiness for entry to practice.

PN5010 Nursing Practice V

This culminating preceptorship course provides students with the opportunity to consolidate and apply knowledge, clinical judgment, and professional practice developed throughout the Practical Nursing program. Under the guidance of an approved preceptor, students assume increasing responsibility for the prioritization, coordination, and delivery of safe, competent, and accountable nursing care. Emphasis is placed on clinical judgment, medication safety, communication, documentation, collaboration, client safety, and professional accountability. Successful completion of the preceptorship supports the transition from student to entry-level Registered Practical Nurse practice.