



Project News #12



Future Nurse Practitioner Practice: FAQs

In this issue of the newsletter, we answer questions we have received about Nurse Practitioner (NP) practice in the new regulatory model. But first, here are some updates.

- Implementation of the new national NP regulatory model is well underway. We recently completed the NP Practice Analysis Validation Survey, which Measure Learning is analyzing. Thank you to all NPs who responded to the survey. The results are being used to finalize the practice analysis, which will inform the development of the new NP exam. Watch out for an update about the practice analysis validation results and the next steps in the NP exam development process in a future issue of this newsletter.
- To prepare future NPs to practice across clients' lifespans and practice settings, Canadian universities are reviewing their NP education programs and aligning curricula with the revised NP ELCs. Some of these NP programs will begin in September 2024, and the first cohort of graduates will be eligible to write the new national NP exam in 2026.
- Universities are phasing out the NP programs based on categories or streams of practice (e.g., Family All Ages or Primary Care, Adult, and Pediatric). Neonatal NP programs will still be available in some jurisdictions, and details related to entry-to-practice requirements and inter-jurisdictional mobility are being worked out.

Q: How will NPs be prepared for practice across clients' lifespans and across practice settings?

A: NPs will be educated with foundational knowledge, skills, and judgment that prepare them for practice across the continuum of care, clients' lifespans or client populations and practice settings.

The revised NP ELCs were developed using a role-based framework representing the multiple roles NPs assume when providing services in diverse practice settings. NP students will have access to various practicums to develop their foundational knowledge for advanced practice. Even though they may not have practicums in every possible practice area, they will still be prepared with the foundational knowledge, skills, and judgment through various educational opportunities and practicums in diverse practice settings, providing care to clients of diverse ages.

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The chart below shows the profile of an NP at entry-to-practice and post-entry-to-practice under the new national NP regulatory model.

NP at Entry-to-Practice

- Brings their RN knowledge and experience
- Educated to diagnose and manage care across client life span and practice settings – based on the NP-ELCs
- Common entry-level exam across Canadian jurisdictions
- Regulated as an NP (not regulated by category or streams of practice)
- Varied opportunities to begin NP practice – across the lifespan and practice settings

NP Post Entry-to-Practice

- Continue to gain NP knowledge and experience
- May gain additional NP specialization – based on interests and healthcare needs and opportunities
- Areas of practice or specialization may change over time
- Continue to be regulated as an NP (not by category or streams of practice)
- Opportunities for career mobility and progression

Q: What type of entry-to-practice education will future NPs receive?

A: NP education programs will use the revised NP ELCs to create curricula that provide the foundational knowledge that would prepare NPs to provide care across clients' lifespans within their professional scope of practice and competence.

Since regulators are responsible for program approval, educational programs will have to meet the requirements of their respective jurisdictions that determine whether their nursing curriculum aligns with the updated NP ELCs.

Q: Are nursing regulators removing specialty practices for NPs?

A: No. Nursing regulators do not, and have never, regulated specialty practice or specialization for NPs.

Historically, regulators have regulated entry-to-practice for NPs by categories or protected titles defined by the patient population in which they practice. There may have been some inconsistent language between jurisdictions that use “categories” or “specialties” in reference to NPs’ streams of practice, but we are working on consistent descriptive language. With this change, NPs across Canada will be registered in a single category—NP.

We value continuing competence and access to specialized nursing care. After entering practice, an NP may still choose to pursue additional specialization, which may be obtained through formal courses, experience, continuing education, and other opportunities.

The benefit of this change is that future NPs will be able to move and progress across practice settings, domains of practice, and employers. This can improve the agility and mobility of NPs, helping with the evolving needs of the Canadian healthcare system. All NPs are accountable for ensuring they have the knowledge, skill, and judgment to provide care in their chosen practice area.

Q: What can employers expect from NPs entering practice after the national NP regulatory model is fully implemented in 2026?

A: NPs will have the entry-level/foundational knowledge, skills, and judgment to start their career in providing NP care across the continuum of care, across the lifespan of clients and practice settings. They will continue to require orientation in their employers’ specific practice setting.

Employers may choose to develop practice-setting training or residencies to assist NPs with transitioning to specialty areas of practice. Leveraging these training opportunities is a great option for NPs who desire or are hired to work in practice settings that may benefit from specialized knowledge and skills when they begin working as NPs. NPs will also continue to learn and grow their knowledge and skills to build and maintain competency in their desired area of practice.

More information about the NPR-FIPP project can be found [here](#). You can also contact the regulator in your jurisdiction for more information.

Please submit any other questions by [completing our inquiries form](#) at the bottom of the project page.