

Practice Education Guidelines for BC Student Practice Issues

July 2021

Intent / Purpose

- Minimize the health and safety risks to Health Care Organizations' (HCO) Clients and Workers, and the Post-Secondary Institutions' (PSI) Students and Educators while taking part in practice education experiences.
- Support student learning in a safe environment during practice education experiences.
- Delineate the roles and responsibilities for identifying, communicating, addressing, reporting, and supporting Student practice issues that arise during practice education experiences.

Definitions

Refer to: [Standard Terms and Abbreviations](#)

<i>Duty to Report</i>	"A registrant must report in writing to the registrar of an other person's college if the registrant, on reasonable and probable grounds, believes that the continued practice of a designated health profession by the other person might constitute a danger to the public." ¹
<i>Fitness to Practice</i>	"...the physical, mental, and emotional capacity to practice safely in accordance with the student placement." ²
<i>Learning Contract</i>	"...meant to deal with inappropriate behaviour or address deficiencies in academic performance or attendance. The intent ...is to formalize the manner in which the student may fulfill the expected behaviour or course learning outcomes." ³ "...an agreement negotiated between a learner and a supervisor to ensure that certain activities will be undertaken in order to achieve an identified learning goal, specific evidence will be produced to demonstrate that goal has been reached." ⁴ Also known as a Student Performance Contract, Learning Plan
<i>'Need to know' and 'Least Privilege' Principles</i>	"The "need to know" principle states that authorized users of a system should only have access to the minimum amount of [personal] information that is necessary to perform their duties within a public body or an organization. The "least privilege" principle requires that each authorized user in a system be granted the most restrictive access privileges needed for performing authorized tasks. The principles are reflected in privacy law but not always expressly stated." ⁵
<i>Practice Issue</i>	"any issue or situation that either compromises client care/service by placing a client at risk, or affects a [student]'s ability to provide care/service consistent with their Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, other standards and guidelines, or agency policies or procedures." ⁶

¹ Government of British Columbia. (2019). *Health Professions Act [RSBC 1996] Chapter 183: Duty to Report Registrant 32.2-1*. Queen's Printer, Victoria, B.C. Retrieved June 15, 2019 from http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96183_01

² Alberta Health Services. (2018). *Practice Support Document – Guideline: Fitness to Practice: Student Placements*. Retrieved June 16, 2019 from <https://extranet.ahsnet.ca/teams/policydocuments/1/clp-ahs-gdl-fitness-practice-student-placements.pdf>

³ British Columbia Institute of Technology. (2009). *Procedure 5100-PR1: Student Reports, Student Performance Contracts*. Pg. 3. Retrieved June 15, 2019 from https://www.bcit.ca/files/pdf/policies/5100_pr1.pdf

⁴ Open Educational Resources of UCD Teaching and Learning. (n.d.). *Engaging Students: Learning Contracts*. University College Dublin. Retrieved June 15, 2019 from http://www.ucdoer.ie/index.php/Learning_Contracts

⁵ Doctors of BC, College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC, Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. (2017). *BC Physician Privacy Toolkit: A guide for physicians in private practice*. (3rd ed.). Pages 65-66. Retrieved April 5, 2019 from https://www.doctorsofbc.ca/sites/default/files/ptv3.0_full_document.pdf

⁶ Adapted from Nova Scotia College of Nursing. *Resolving Professional Practice Issues Practice Guideline*. Halifax, Nova Scotia. Page 1. Retrieved October 29, 2020 from <https://www.nscn.ca/professional-practice/practice-support/practice-support-tools/professional-practice/resolving-professional-practice-issues-practice-guideline>

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<i>Trauma-Informed Practice</i>	Recognizing the link between substance use, mental health, stigma, health care access barriers, and other challenges, and making sure that people feel safe and are not re-traumatized by their care. ⁷
<i>Workplace Impairment</i>	“... being mentally or physically unable to perform assigned work functions safely due to the use or after-effects of alcohol, cannabis, illegal drugs, prescription drugs, or over-the-counter medications, or any other issue that may impair judgment or performance” ⁸

Practice Education Guidelines

The PSI clearly communicates expectations for the practice education experience, learning goals, process for providing feedback, and process for addressing practice issues to the Students, Educators, and/or the HCO Supervisors.

All parties recognize the importance of creating and maintaining a practice education environment where:

- The Students feel safe, supported, included, and respected.
- The Students are offered learning opportunities that aide in meeting their learning goals and expectations while minimizing the risks for errors (see [PEG Respectful Practice Education Experiences](#)).

When a practice arises during a practice education experience, the HCO Supervisor and/or PSI Educator addresses it with the Student as soon as possible, so that:

- The Student is informed of practice issues in a timely and confidential manner.
- The PSI Student is given the opportunity to remediate the practice issue.
- The Educator can support the student’s learning in a timely manner, as needed.

Any plan to remediate a practice issue is collaboratively developed, implemented, and evaluated with the Student and the PSI Educator, with input from HCO Educator as needed.

⁷ BC Mental Health & Substance Use Services. (2020). *Trauma-Informed Practice*. Provincial Health Services Authority. Retrieved October 29, 2020 from <http://www.bcmhsus.ca/health-professionals/clinical-professional-resources/trauma-informed-practice>

⁸ WorkSafeBC. (2018). *Guide to Managing Workplace Impairment and Developing an Impairment Policy*. Retrieved June 15, 2019 from <http://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/books-guides/guide-managing-workplace-impairment-developing-impairment-policy?lang=en>

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Critical practice issues that must be addressed include, but are not limited to:

- a pattern of unsafe practices that compromises the physical, mental, or emotional safety of HCO Clients, Workers, or others in the practice education setting
- confidentiality breaches
- falsification of information
- unprofessional or unethical behaviour
- disrespecting or not valuing the rights of others
- inability to practice safely (unfit for duty) due to physical, cognitive, psychological, or emotional impairment
- absenteeism from the practice setting such that the Student is at risk of not achieving practice education learning goals

If the practice issue involves unsafe, unprofessional, or unethical behaviour, the HCO Supervisor and/or PSI Educator:

- Reports the Student to the PSI.
- Should the Student be a registrant of a regulatory body (a second-credential program Student),
 - Consults the discipline's practice standards and guidelines of the regulatory body.
 - Reports (duty to report) to the regulatory body depending on the nature of the practice issue.
- Should the Student be a sponsored/funded employee of the HCO,
 - Consults the HCO and PSI policies and procedures.
 - Informs the Student's employer about the practice issue and actions taken, as appropriate.

The HCO manager (or delegate) of the practice education setting is notified of any practice issue that compromises, or has the potential to compromise, the safety of HCO Clients, Workers, or others.

Depending on the extent of the practice issue, the HCO Supervisor, manager, and/or PSI Educator could ask Student to leave the practice education setting. If asked to leave, the PSI and HCO Practice Education Coordinators are notified as soon as possible.

The HCO Supervisor and/or PSI Educator document all relevant information about the practice issue in an objective manner, detailing the learning objective(s) not being met and specific examples of the practice issue.

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All parties will access, collect, use, disclose, and destroy information related to Student practice issues:

- based on the 'need to know' and 'least privilege' principles
- with the highest degree of anonymity possible
- according to privacy and confidentiality policies and guidelines of the PSI and HCO (see [PEG Privacy and Confidentiality](#))

The HCO or PSI has the authority to suspend or terminate the Student's practice education experience if, despite discussion and reasonable opportunity for remediation, the practice issue persists and there is a risk that the Student will not be successfully complete the practice education experience.

If the PSI identifies a Student who poses or could pose a health and safety risk to HCO Clients or Workers, or members of the public, the PSI immediately advises the HCO Practice Education Coordinator and, if necessary to protect others, suspends the Student's participation in the education program (see [Educational Institution Affiliation Agreement Template](#)).

The HCO has the authority to terminate the Educational Institution Affiliation Agreement if the PSI has not taken reasonable steps to address critical practice issues that have caused or are likely to cause an adverse effect on the health or safety of HCO Clients (see [Educational Institution Affiliation Agreement Template: Termination 11. \(a\) \(iii\)](#)⁹).

Roles, Responsibilities and Expectations

Post-Secondary Institutions

- Develop and communicate policies for Students' code of conduct, performance, and fitness to practice that include procedures for addressing academic and non-academic issues in the practice education setting.
- Provide support and guidance to the PSI Educator and/or HCO Supervisor when practice issues arise.
- Take action to address critical practice issues in a timely manner, including removing the Student from the practice education setting if needed.
- Notify the HCO Practice Education Coordinator of any critical practice issues that impact the health and safety of HCO Clients or compromised the operations of the HCO.

⁹ Health Care Protection Program. (2008). *Risk Note: Managing Risk in Educational Affiliation Agreements - Educational Institution Affiliation Agreement Template*. Retrieved October 27, 2020 from <https://www.hcpp.org/?q=node/17>

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- Suspend or terminate the Student's practice education experience as appropriate and according to PSI policy.
- Treat all communication and documentation about practice issues as confidential.

PSI Educators

- Ensure Students are prepared for the practice education experience including completing all the pre-requisites and orientation (see [PEG Orientation – Students](#)).
- Comply with and assist Students to comply with PSI policies, protocols, and/or procedures for addressing Student practice issues in the practice education setting.
- Follow PSI process for evaluating Student practice in the practice education setting.
- Work with the Student, and HCO Supervisor when appropriate, to remediate the practice issue by implementing a learning plan (such as a learning contract) with clearly defined outcomes and strategies for how the Student will remediate the practice issue.
- Maintain ongoing communication with the Student, and HCO Educator when appropriate, to monitor and document the Student's progress.
- Consult the discipline-specific regulatory practice standards and guidelines to determine the need for reporting the Student if the Student is a member of a regulatory body.
- Notify the HCO manager (or delegate) and/or HCO Practice Education Coordinator of practice issues that compromise, or have the potential to compromise, the health and safety of HCO Clients/Workers or impact HCO operations, and actions taken.
- Document all relevant information about the practice issue in an objective manner, detailing the learning objective(s) not being met and specific examples of the practice issue.
- Determine the final outcome of the Student's achievement of the course outcomes.
- Treat all communication and documentation about the practice issue as confidential.

Students

- Be accountable and responsible for own professional and personal conduct.
- Complete all pre-requisites and orientation for the practice education setting (see [PEG Orientation – Students](#)).

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- Communicate own learning needs, competencies, experience, abilities, and limitations to the PSI Educator and/or HCO Supervisor/Worker throughout the practice education experience (see [PEG Student Practice Activities, Limits, and Conditions](#)).
- Carry out only those activities and tasks permitted by the PSI education program, the HCO's policies, standards, guidelines, and/or protocols, as well as their regulatory body (if applicable)¹⁰ (see [PEG Student Practice Activities, Limits, and Conditions](#)).
- Seek support and supervision, as appropriate (see [PEG Supervision of Students](#)).
- Comply with HCO and PSI policies, protocols, and/or procedures, including, but not limited to:
 - standards of conduct
 - respectful workplace
 - privacy and confidentiality
 - workplace health and safety
 - fitness to practice (fit to work)
- Take necessary steps to provide safe services and/or health care in the practice education setting.
- Act to remedy the practice issue as soon as possible.
- Take part in developing a plan for remediation (or learning plan/contract as needed) and be accountable for achieving jointly identified outcomes.

Health Care Organizations

- Communicate policies and guidelines to PSIs related to (but not limited to) standards of conduct, respectful workplace, privacy and confidentiality, workplace health and safety, and fitness to practice.
- Collaborate with the PSI when needed to provide the Student opportunities for remediation.
- Notify the PSI Practice Education Coordinator of any critical practice issues.
- Suspend or terminate the Student's practice education experience in collaboration with the PSI Practice Education Coordinator and Educator if, after focused remediation, the Student demonstrated a consistent pattern of placing the HCO, its Clients, or its workers at serious risk for harm.

¹⁰ UBC School of Nursing – Okanagan Campus. (2017). *Scope of Practice: Psychomotor Skills for BSN Students – Standards, Limits, Conditions*. University of British Columbia. Retrieved July 11, 2019 from <https://nursing.ok.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2016/02/BSN-Scope-of-Practice-Mar2017.pdf>

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- Treat all communication and documentation about the practice issue as confidential.

HCO Supervisors

- Create and sustain a supportive and safe learning environment where Students feel safe to express their learning needs and limitations.
- Assist the Student to comply with HCO and PSI policies, protocols, and/or procedures, including (but not limited to) standards of conduct, respectful workplace, privacy and confidentiality, workplace health and safety, and fitness to practice.
- On a regular basis:
 - Offer constructive feedback to the Student on performance and progress.
 - Update the PSI Educator on the Student's progress.
- When a practice issue is identified:
 - Interrupt or suspend the Student's involvement in health care or service when the Student's actions or intended actions could place the HCO or its Clients at serious risk.
 - Discuss concerns directly with the Student in private as soon as possible in a safe and trauma-informed way.
 - Collaborate with the Student on a plan for remediation.
 - Involve the PSI Educator as needed.
 - Alert the PSI Educator when concerns exist over the Student's ability to successfully complete the practice education experience.
 - Contribute to the plan for remediation (or learning contract as needed) with the PSI Educator and Student as needed.
 - Provide the Student with opportunities to remediate the practice issue.
 - Take part in monitoring and providing feedback on the Student's progress.
 - Document all relevant information about the practice issue in an objective manner, providing detailed specific examples, and share with the Student and responsible PSI Educator.
 - Promptly report critical practice issues (such as unsafe, unprofessional, unethical, and/or unfit practice) directly to the PSI Educator and HCO manager (or designate).

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- Notify the PSI Educator and HCO manager (or delegate) immediately if a Student needs to leave the practice education setting because :
 - The Student is unable to practice safely due to physical, cognitive, psychological, or emotional impairment, **and**
 - There is a clear and present need to preserve the health and physical, mental, or emotional safety of HCO Clients, Workers, or others in the practice education setting, or to protect HCO property.
- If the Student is a member of a regulatory body, consult with the PSI Educator and HCO Practice Education Coordinator about discipline-specific regulatory practice standards and guidelines to determine whether the practice issue warrants reporting to the regulatory body.
- Treat all communication and documentation about the Student's practice as confidential.

References and Resources

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Guideline Review History

Version	Date	People Responsible	Brief Description (reason for change)
1	March 2007	Authors/Editors: Carol A. Wilson (BCAHC), Barb Collingwood (BCAHC) Reviewers: Practice Education Committee of the BC Academic Health Council (Grace Mickelson, Chair)	
2	March 2013	Editors: Andrea Stack (NHA) Angela Wolfe (FHA) Deb McDougall (BCHAC)	Content update Health Profession Regulatory College contact information included in resources Template / terminology updated
3	March 2021	Editor: Carol A. Wilson (PHSA) Reviewers: Judy Lee (KPU) BJ Gdanski (PHSA) Ministry of Health (Allied Health Policy Secretariat and Nursing Policy Secretariat) Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training (Health Education Reference Committee) Health Authority Practice Education Committee	Updated definitions and references Updated guidelines Roles/responsibilities updated and expanded Consistent with language in the affiliation agreement template Expanded to encompass student practice issues in a variety of placements: group and one-to-one, clinical and non-clinical