

Nova Scotia Department of Health

Subject: Nova Scotia's Nursing Strategy
Co-operative Learning Experience Program

Effective date: April 2007
Review date: March 2009

Approved by: Original signed by Donna Denney
Nursing Policy Advisor

I. POLICY STATEMENT

The Nova Scotia Department of Health is committed to addressing the health human resource requirements for a quality health care system. The Nova Scotia Department of Health supports *Nova Scotia's Nursing Strategy, April 2001*, and is committed to the implementation of initiatives identified in that document.

The Department will support the Co-operative Learning Experience Program for eligible nursing students participating in university undergraduate nursing programs in Nova Scotia. The Co-operative Learning Experience Program is not just a work experience, but an opportunity for learning and reflection on nursing.

II. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 Co-operative Learning Experience: An employment experience designed for students to integrate theoretical learning with practical application within an employer-employee relationship.
- 2.2 Preceptor: A pre-selected, trained and experienced nurse (preceptor) who partners with a student or new employee (learner) to assist them in acquiring the necessary knowledge, skills and attributes required to function effectively in the workplace¹.

III. POLICY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are to:

- 3.1 support nursing students in developing practical skills
- 3.2 provide an opportunity for nursing students to better understand the role and responsibilities of nurses
- 3.3 introduce students to a range of practice options
- 3.4 promote integration of students into the workplace culture
- 3.5 provide an opportunity for nursing students to experience an employment relationship in the health care system
- 3.6 increase the likelihood that new graduates will remain in the province, especially in rural areas
- 3.7 decrease future workplace orientation costs

IV. APPLICATION

This policy applies to:

¹ Nova Scotia Provincial Preceptor Program (2004)

- 4.1 Third-year students in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing Programs at Dalhousie University, St. Francis Xavier University, and Cape Breton University
- 4.2 Eligible employers, including District Health Authorities (DHAs); IWK Health Centre; and Long Term Care facilities funded by the Department of Health

V. POLICY DIRECTIVES

5.1 Employer Responsibilities

- 5.1.1 Employers are responsible for identifying potential Cooperative learning experiences available in their facility and/or agency and, where possible, matching students to sites based on student learning objectives.
- 5.1.2 Eligibility criteria for preceptors will be determined by the employer (health care institution).
- 5.1.3 Individual employers will be responsible for identification of potential preceptors based on eligibility criteria.
- 5.1.4 The employer will be responsible for the provision of preceptor orientation and training to define their tasks and expectations.
- 5.1.5 The employer will be responsible for the provision of nursing student employee orientation.
- 5.1.6 Selected preceptors will be responsible for ensuring that experiences contribute to the achievement of student learning objectives and that a student evaluation is completed and provided to the university.
- 5.1.7 Nursing student employee benefits will be administered by the employer as per the Labour Standards Code and the Pay and Benefits Guidelines (Appendix I).
- 5.1.8 The employer will complete a letter of appointment outlining the terms and conditions of employment as per 5.1.6.
- 5.1.9 The employer will be responsible for completing a report (Appendix II) and appending it to an invoice for billing the Department of Health for eligible and appropriate costs as outlined in section 5.3.1. This report must be submitted to the Department no later than September 15 each year.

5.2 University Responsibilities

- 5.2.1 Eligibility criteria for nursing students will be determined by the university (educational institution).
- 5.2.2 The university will be responsible for informing the student population about the Co-operative Learning Experience Program and providing encouragement and support in the application process.
- 5.2.3 The university will assist the students in considering and developing their personal learning objectives.
- 5.2.4 The university will be responsible for the selection of students based on the eligibility criteria and the number of positions predetermined as per 5.3.1.
- 5.2.5 The university will be responsible for negotiating appropriate employment settings and for making Cooperative Learning Experience Guidelines available to employers.
- 5.2.6 The university will be responsible for identifying a "contact person" who will be available during the planning process and throughout the employment period. The contact person will be responsible for facilitating problem resolution for the duration of the Co-operative Learning Experience Program.

5.2.7 The university will be responsible for completing an evaluation and submitting the evaluation to the Nursing Policy Advisor and employers.

5.3 Nursing Policy Advisor Responsibilities

5.3.1 The Nursing Policy Advisor will be responsible for the determination of the following on a yearly basis:

- the number of positions from each eligible educational institution for which funding will be provided by the Department
- the hourly rate of pay
- the length of the program, including the number of weeks, average hours per week, as well as minimum and maximum number of hours required

5.3.2 The Nursing Policy Advisor will be responsible for providing to the university and employer, in writing, information as per 5.3.1.

5.3.3 The Nursing Policy Advisor will work with universities and employers to ensure to the extent possible:

- geographic distribution of students
- appropriate mix among acute care, mental health, and long term care service areas at a level appropriate to students who have completed third year in the nursing program
- Unfilled Cooperative seats are renegotiated in an appropriate manner.

VI. POLICY GUIDELINES

6.1 To support the placement of students in rural areas of the province, the Nursing Policy Advisor, Department of Health, will work with employers to identify, to the extent possible, non-transferable co-operative placement positions in rural areas. Selection criteria will include facilities that:

- Have previously had difficulty attracting students and preceptor supports;
- Have a well-developed succession plan; and,
- Are anticipating above-average retirement rates.

6.2 The Nursing Policy Advisor will participate in the Department of Health Business Planning process and make recommendations that support the Co-operative Learning Experience Program. Recommendations will be based on a yearly review of program results and priorities within the Nursing Strategy.

VII. ACCOUNTABILITIES

7.1 The university and the employer (health care institution) are responsible for the implementation of the program according to Departmental policy in support of policy objectives.

VIII. MONITORING

8.1 Participating universities are responsible for evaluation of the Co-operative Learning Experience Program and reporting on the educational benefits for students, preceptors, and agency administrators to the Department of Health and employers.

- 8.2 The Nursing Policy Advisor is responsible for monitoring policy implementation.
- 8.3 The Nursing Policy Advisor is responsible for monitoring effectiveness of program on Students transition into the workforce. .

IX. ENQUIRIES

All enquiries relating to the interpretation and application of this policy should be referred to:

Nursing Policy Advisor	Phone: 424-0122
Department of Health	Fax: 424-6690
P.O. Box 488	E-mail: NursingStrategy@gov.ns.ca
Halifax, NS B3J 2R8	

IX. APPENDICES

Appendix I - *Co-operative Learning Experience Program - Payment and Benefits Guidelines*

Appendix II - *Nursing Strategy – Co-operative Learning Experience Program – Employer Report Form*

Nova Scotia Department of Health

Subject: Nova Scotia's Nursing Strategy Co-operative Learning Experience Program - *Pay and Benefits Guidelines*

The following pay and benefits outline the relevant terms and conditions of employment as compensated by the Nova Scotia Department of Health. Co Op Nursing Students are employed in accordance with the Nova Scotia Labour Standard. They are not covered by NSNU, NSGEU or any other collective agreements. The period of employment will be ten (10) weeks in duration.

1. Students will receive a wage of \$14.30 per hour.
2. Students will receive an additional 4% vacation pay (in lieu of time taken as vacation).
3. Students will be paid for actual hours worked (not smoothed).
4. Students will receive the additional benefits of:
 - a. Holiday pay for Canada Day at time and one-half for hours worked plus a day in lieu (7.5 hours) **or** an additional day off (7.5 hours) if the holiday falls on a day of rest
 - b. Holiday pay for Labour Day at time and one-half for hours worked plus a day in lieu (7.5 hours) **or** an additional day off (7.5 hours) if the holiday falls on a day of rest
 - c. Overtime paid at time and one-half after 48 hours worked in a one week period based on the employer pay period.
 - d. Bereavement leave of 3 days unpaid for spouse, child, parent or guardian; 1 day unpaid for grandparent, grandchild, sister or brother
 - e. Workers Compensation
5. Students will **not** be entitled to:
 - a. Shift premium
 - b. Week-end premium
 - c. Paid sick leave
 - d. Paid family illness, emergency or medical/dental leave
 - e. Holiday pay for the civic holiday in August

NURSING STRATEGY – CO-OPERATIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCE PROGRAM – EMPLOYER REPORT FORM

Year _____

Requested by: _____ for reimbursement of Co-operative Learning Experience costs:
 (name of organization/facility)

STUDENT'S NAME	START DATE	END DATE	TOTAL # HOURS WORKED	AMOUNT PAID (hours worked X hourly rate)	OVERTIME/ VACATION PAY	TOTAL COSTS
					TOTAL COSTS	

Employer verification: I certify that the amounts in this claim meet the terms and conditions as outlined in the DoH Policy *Nova Scotia's Nursing Strategy Co-operative Learning Experience*.

Name (please print): _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

DOH USE ONLY	
Date Received: _____	Authorized Signature: _____