



CONTINUING NURSING STUDIES

Registered Nurse First Assistant (RNFA) Program

Registration Information 2021

Introduction

The Registered Nurse First Assistant (RNFA) Program is an individualized program of instruction designed to prepare Registered Nurses (RN) for an advanced practice role assisting the physician during surgery.

Delivery

The RNFA Program utilizes self-directed learning modules and a clinical preceptorship experience with an approved RNFA, general or cardiac surgeon.

Continuing Nursing Studies within the Centre for Nursing Studies (CNS) facilitates the theoretical portion of the program and, collaborates with the perioperative program of health care agencies to facilitate the clinical experience.

Please refer to the *CNS Continuing Nursing Studies Student Handbook 2021-2022* located at www.cns.easternhealth.ca

Entry and Exit Policy

Entry to this program is based on provincial need, the number of RNFAs and physicians available to assist in surgery. Perioperative nurses wishing to avail of this program are selected and at times sponsored by hospital boards requiring this advanced practice role in their Perioperative programs.

Pre- Admission Checklist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful completion of an undergraduate nursing degree or equivalent diploma. • Practicing RN license • Current BLS • Current ACLS (for those working within a cardiovascular OR) • Provide an up to date CV • Minimum of 3 years of current perioperative experience with demonstrated competency in scrub and circulating roles • Employment at a hospital where the RNFA role is supported • Confirmation and credentials of an approved preceptor whom can be either a licensed RNFA (general or cardiac surgery), general surgeon, or cardiac surgeon. • Confirmation from the perioperative manager that the candidate will not be working as a perioperative nurse (scrub/circulating) during the completion of RNFA clinical hours. • Postgraduate course in operating room nursing is preferred but not required

Once entry to the program is granted, a one-year maximum is allowed for completion. Since each student progresses at their own pace, graduation from the program can occur at any point during the one-year time allocation.

The cost of the program is **\$2000.00** for in-province students, or **\$3000.00** for out-of-province students. The purchase of text books are the student's responsibility; tuition cost does not include text books. Full tuition payment is required prior to commencement of the program.

Refer to *Section 2.2 Admission, Financial and Registration Information and Regulations of the CNS Continuing Nursing Studies Student Handbook 2021 – 2022*.

Clinical Preceptorship Experience

When in the surgical setting, the student will work with a **certified general surgeon, a general surgery focused RNFA, a cardiac surgeon, or a cardiac surgery focused RNFA** on a one-to-one basis. The manager in the operating room and the prospective cardiac or general surgeon facilitate this learning experience. The preceptor will evaluate the learner through oral and written evaluations on an ongoing basis. Students are also responsible to keep a written log and evaluation of cases. It is in this setting that mastery learning is tested, and the learner must be satisfactorily competent to complete the program.

Learning & Assessment

The RNFA Program is divided into three components:

1. The first is theoretical and is comprised of four print-based modules delivered via distance education. You must achieve **75%** in each of the module exams.
2. A research paper is also required before completion of the program. Students usually complete the paper before beginning the clinical portion of the program; a **75%** grade is required for the research paper.
3. After all the modules are completed you will spend a minimum of **200 hours** in the clinical preceptorship portion of the program with the cardiac, general surgeon, or RNFA. The required 200 hours refer to 200 hours of general or cardiac surgical time (cut to close). The student works with the preceptor (surgeon), following their schedule.

Clinical components are mastery oriented and students are required to obtain a satisfactory clinical evaluation. While 200 hours is the minimum requirement, extra time may be needed to reach level of mastery.

- For the general surgery stream at least a minimum of 100 hours is required in general surgery.
- For cardiovascular at least a minimum of 150 hours is required in cardiovascular surgery (e.g.: CABG, AVRS, etc.).

Learning Environment

RNFA students complete the theoretical portion of the program at home or in a study environment of their own choosing. Exams may be written at the Centre for Nursing Studies or if out of town, an invigilator will be required to facilitate the exams. Any student who requires extra guidance can contact Continuing Nursing Studies faculty any time during regular working hours.

Learning Materials and Resources

Extensive study materials have been prepared by CNS for this Program. These include:

1. a set of study modules
2. access to various other learning materials

The self-learning modules all attempt to provide the following guidance:

- specific learning objectives
- directed reading in textbooks, articles, readings, etc.
- extra information not provided in directed reading
- learning activities within objectives, comprehension checks at the end of units and post-tests at the end of modules to check your understanding and comprehension of information as you proceed through the modules

Evaluation of the Program

Evaluation is ongoing throughout the program and at the completion of the program. Both students and preceptors are encouraged to verbalize or write their thoughts on how the program is being managed at least once a month. Evaluation forms are completed at the end of each module and at the end of the program. These forms are reviewed by the program committee and changes and improvements are made where possible.

Registered Nurse First Assistant Program

Program Objectives

1. Discuss the role and responsibilities of the Registered Nurse First Assistant (RNFA) in Newfoundland and Labrador.
2. Use current theory and research as a basis for practice.
3. Use the nursing process and critical thinking for making valid clinical judgments.
4. Apply principles of asepsis and infection control.
5. Describe and demonstrate competencies related to first assist (soft tissue handling, wound exposure, hemostasis, needles and suturing, knot tying).
6. Demonstrate the ability to build a collaborative relationship with the physician and other members of the health care team.
7. Develop an attitude of lifelong learning to maintain competency.

Purpose

The purpose of the Registered Nurse First Assistant Program is to provide the advanced knowledge and clinical skills necessary to prepare the operating room nurse to practice in collaboration with, and at the direction of, the surgeon during the intraoperative phase of the perioperative experience. The advanced intraoperative competencies necessary for this role include: handling tissue, providing exposure, using instruments, suturing and knot tying, and providing hemostasis.

RNFA Theory Modules

The RNFA Program is a self-directed modularized learning process. The program offers four modules of theory. Each student must successfully complete all four modules. The following chart summarizes content found in modules, estimated time of completion and evaluation.

Advantages

1. This program allows students to proceed at their own pace.
2. Materials (not including text books) and current information are readily available to students.
3. Preceptors (physicians, RNFA), are highly qualified professionals who work exclusively with the RNFA's, or in the role as a RNFA.

**Registered Nurse First Assistant Program
Program Content**

Module	Contents	Estimated time for completion	Evaluation
Module One Role and Responsibilities of the RNFA	Unit 1. Scope of Practice 2. Legal Regulation 3. Ethical Issues 4. Collaborative Practice 5. Leadership Skills 6. Nursing Research	100 hours	Exam
Module Two Asepsis and Infection Control	Unit 1. Chain of Infection 2. Wound Healing 3. Asepsis 4. Infection Control 5. Multiply-Resistant Organisms	50 hours	Exam
Module Three Surgical Techniques Related to the RNFA	Unit 1. Nursing Process 2. Tissue Handling & Methods of Exposure 3. Providing Hemostasis 4. Needles & Suturing	50 hours	Exam
Module Four Surgical Procedures for General Surgery <i>Or...</i> Module Five Cardiovascular System and Surgical Procedures	Unit 1. General Surgery 2. Gynecology 3. Urologic Procedures 4. Peripheral Vascular Surgery 5. Orthopedics <i>Or...</i> 1. A&P Fluid, Lytes & Acid-Base Balance 2. Diagnostic & Therapeutic Procedures and Monitoring 3. Open Heart Procedures 4. Peripheral Vascular Procedures 5. Harvesting Bypass Conduits for Cardiac Surgery 6. Infection Control & Surgical Site Infections	100 hours	Exam