



Quality Nursing Education National Insights

Introduction

As the national voice for nursing education, research, and scholarship in Canada, the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing (CASN) speaks for our [member schools of nursing](#) who offer baccalaureate and/or graduate programs in nursing.

Following a two-year battle with a global pandemic that seriously challenged Canada's already complex health care system, schools of nursing are fighting to sustain high quality of nursing education in the face of threats on multiple fronts.

Through the [Quality Nursing Education National Insights Portal](#), CASN shares insights from our member schools about the challenges and strategies to address them. Centralizing insights and key messages from schools of nursing across Canada offers national support to local initiatives. Users are encouraged to reference what they find helpful and/or download the content in English or French for advocacy purposes in their local context.



Covid-19, In-Person Classes, Labs, and Clinical Placements

The pandemic caused a two-year period of repeated curricular disruptions forcing schools to repeatedly shut, open, shut, and reopen, and faculty and students shifted back and forth from in-person to remote learning. This disrupted student access to clinical placements as well as in-person classroom and laboratory learning. Endemic COVID-19 continues to fill hospital beds and experienced nurses have been leaving the profession in large numbers, further impacting clinical learning. The demands on nursing educators and on nursing students since the start of the pandemic have been heavy.

Did you know?

Studies demonstrate that entry-to-practice is highly stressful for new nursing graduates. Studies also show that increased stress among new nursing graduates leads to early departures from the nursing workforce (Boychuk Duchscher & Windey, 2018).⁵

Nursing is a complex and emotionally demanding profession that requires graduates to possess an in-depth theoretical and scientific foundation, strong clinical reasoning skills, solid clinical judgement, honed technical skills, compassion, caring, and emotional resilience.

Support practice-based learning

Students require robust practice-based learning experiences. Schools of nursing need support to establish more clinical placement and preceptor sites. They also require support to hire clinical instructors, preceptors, mentors, and coaches, and establish well-equipped simulation labs that will allow nursing students access to clinical placements and in-person laboratory learning.

Living with endemic COVID

As our provinces continue to open up with fluctuating COVID cases, schools of nursing must prepare nursing graduates to support Canadians in the context of endemic COVID. Governments must provide support for the long-term solutions to the current health care crisis – and strong educational preparation of practical nurses, registered nurses, and nurse practitioners as well as entry-to-practice support for all new nursing graduates provides a solution.

Nursing students require the clinical skills and emotional resilience that comes from robust practice-based learning

Governments must address the pandemic working conditions that have led to a nursing shortage.

⁵ Reference: Boychuk Duchscher, J., & Windey, M. (2018). Stages of transition and transition shock, *Journal for Nurses in Professional Development*, 24(4), 228-232. <https://doi.org/10.1097/NND.0000000000000461>

Conclusion

Maintaining Canada's high quality of nursing education is critical to the health and well-being of Canadians. Nursing is a complex and emotionally demanding profession. It requires an in-depth theoretical and scientific foundation, strong clinical reasoning skills, solid clinical judgement, honed technical skills, compassion, caring, and emotional resilience. Nursing incompetence or nursing error can put patients' lives in jeopardy. Maintaining the high-quality of Canadian health care must remain paramount.

CASN and our member schools of nursing are working tirelessly to maintain high-quality nursing education in Canada, and we look forward to strengthening alliances through communication, cooperation, and collaboration on strategies to resolve the current health human resource issues and rejuvenate the health care workforce.

For more information on this resource and how you can support Canadian schools of nursing, please [contact us](#).