

Perioperative Nursing RN Program Frequently Asked Questions

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Is the program accredited or approved?

The Perioperative Nursing /RN program is approved by the Operating Room Nurses Association of Canada (ORNAC).

When can I start?

The program is offered twice a year starting in Fall and Winter. It is designed to enable completion in approximately eight months on a full-time basis or within three years on a part-time basis. Please contact the program for further details regarding the differing pacing of the program.

Do I need to come to Saskatchewan to complete the program?

You need to complete the lab and clinical experience components of the program in Saskatchewan, and you must obtain a current nursing registration in the province. Traditionally, the clinical sites have been in Regina and Saskatoon. Students may participate in the preceptored portion of the clinical component at a SIAS pre-approved site.

Special requests for a group of students to have the lab and clinical delivered in other locations will also be considered. If a health care facility or organization is interested in entering into a contractual arrangement with SIAS to deliver the program, discussions can be arranged to explore the request and facilitate the process.

Can I receive transfer credit for my prior work experience?

Experienced perioperative nurses should contact a program faculty member who will determine if a Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is appropriate for them.

As a new graduate, can I apply to take this program?

While it may be preferable to have RN experience in an acute care setting prior to entering the program, it is not required. The program accepts experienced or novice nurses that have compassion for patients experiencing stressful life events and who are willing to provide comprehensive nursing care in intense, unpredictable environments.

Applicants should be creative problem-solvers who enjoy a fast-paced practice setting dealing with high acuity patients, and changing technology. Perioperative nurses need to work effectively in teams and be willing to explore ethical and moral issues.

Applicants must also be licensed with the registered nurses' licensing body in the province where you will participate in the clinical experience.

Can I still work while I am completing the program?

Yes, and most students continue to work at their jobs while completing the online component of the program.

How will I progress in the program?

The program is delivered over the internet, so you can build your professional credentials while maintaining job and family responsibilities. There are six courses completed over approximately 22 weeks and clinical components consisting of a one-week lab and approximately ten weeks of clinical experience. Some courses have prerequisites.

Each course is divided into learning outcomes and steps. Each course has specific strategies for evaluating theoretical knowledge. This could be through exams or assignments. The assignments are described in detail within each course. All exams are written online.

You will participate in a psychomotor skills lab prior to attending the clinical component of the program. It provides you with an opportunity to apply theory to practice. The five-day lab consists of a demonstration of essential psychomotor skills, practicing skills under supervision, and a performance exam.

The approximate 10-week (400 hours) clinical practice experience takes place after successful completion of the lab. The lab and clinical take place in preapproved agencies within Saskatchewan health regions.

Where can I do my clinical practice education?

You need to complete the lab and clinical components of the program in Saskatchewan. However, special requests to complete the lab and clinical in other locations outside of Saskatchewan may be considered. If a health care facility wants to enter into a contractual arrangement with SIAST to deliver the program within their facility, discussions can be arranged to explore their request and facilitate the process.

I have always attended formal classroom education. Distance learning seems like it would be a lonely experience. Is there any way I could have contact with my classmates?

While distance learning can be a lonely experience, all students are given the opportunity to complete a Freedom of Information consent form. If you agree to allow our faculty to release your contact information to other students, then you can be linked up with your classmates. Your information is only given to other classmates and is only released with your consent. Online students have an opportunity to chat, conduct discussions via the online course and are encouraged to exchange contact information with other students if they choose to do so. The program strives to create community of e-learners who are interactive and share the learning experience(s) with one another.

I have never taken online courses before. How do I know if I have the attributes to be a successful online learner?

Distance education takes added time and energy, therefore it is suggested that you evaluate your readiness for learning via distance. Self assessment tools to determine if online learning is right for you are available on the internet and on request to the program.

Personal attributes of the successful online learner are:

- Ability to assume responsibility for own learning
- Self-directed and motivated
- Persistent and confident
- Ability to problem-solve
- Active in their learning
- Effective time management skills
- Disciplined to study without external reminders

Basic technical skills that you need include:

- Basic computer literacy
- Word processing
- Searching on the internet
- Taking time to complete available online tutorials and use help screens

What kind of supports can I put in place to ensure I am successful as an online learner?

SIAST has a wealth of tutorials and support tools to ensure your success. A successful online student searches out these tools and uses them. When a student is registered into a SIAST course for the first time, the student is also enrolled in a free orientation course called "Online learning made easy." Students are strongly encouraged to complete this short course to learn about supports SIAST has in place to enhance your success. Students who complete the orientation tools before the course begins have reduced frustration when the course starts. Student success is also enhanced through family and employer support. Families can provide childcare or assist with household chores. When employers allow flexible hours for school obligations or use of a computer at work, success is also enhanced. Some students have found that having a personal laptop that can be taken with them wherever they go enhances their success.

Do I need to have good computer skills to take online courses?

No, even students who do not have good computer skills can succeed in the online courses. In fact, some of the students who start with limited computer skills enjoy the online courses the most!

You will develop skills quickly and remember, you will receive lots of support. The online learning made easy course is made available to all students in the perioperative nursing programs.

Online is a wonderful and rich learning environment that offers interactive learning exercises, connection to an online community of learners and a wide range of audio/visual learning aids. Previous online students who were initially hesitant to access online learning have commented that they wish all the courses were available online.

How will I communicate with the faculty?

Program faculty are available to support you via the telephone, email, online communication tools (video chat) and, in some situations, in person.

Where will I write my exams?

An approved test site will be assigned to you when you are registered in program courses. Generally, students write their exams online at SIAST approved test centers in or close to your home community.

When you write your exams online, test center staff will orientate you to the test-writing software. You must schedule an extra 15 minutes before your first exam for the orientation. The exams are multiple-choice and require you to use a mouse and read onscreen instructions.

Where can I buy my books and other materials?

Information on purchasing textbooks and course manuals will be provided when you register. Material is available for purchase online, by phone, or in person.

What completion document do I receive after completing the program?

Upon graduation, you will receive an advanced certificate in Perioperative Nursing / RN.

What other recognition will I receive after completing the program?

Graduates are credited with 675 practice hours towards eligibility to maintain registration with the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association (SRNA) if you are a registered nurse in Saskatchewan while taking the program.

You will receive three transfer credits within the Post RN degree program offered by the University of Saskatchewan and six transfer credits within the Post RN degree program offered by Athabasca University.

You will be eligible to become a candidate to write the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) national certification exam earning a CPN(C) designation (if you meet the required clinical hours required by the CNA).