

## **Psychiatric Nursing Program Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Why should I consider the Psychiatric Nursing program? What sets this program apart from other programs?**

As a student in the Psychiatric Nursing program, you'll learn how to help clients with mental illness, psychiatric disorders and developmental and / or cognitive difficulties to function at their maximum potential.

The curriculum is client focused. Mental health promotion and primary health care are emphasized. The psychiatric nurse is a valuable member of an interdisciplinary health care team; therefore, 51% of the credit hours are allotted to clinical practice.

This program also stands out because the program is student focused. Due to the small numbers of students in each intake, there is opportunity to work closely with students and work towards student success. The program has over 50% devoted to clinical practice education.

### **Is the program approved?**

The program is approved by the Registered Psychiatric Nurses Association of Saskatchewan (RPNAS).

### **What is unique about psychiatric nursing practice?**

Registered Psychiatric Nurses (RPNs) form the largest single group of regulated professionals in Canada who provide mental health services. Their expertise and interest are specific in the areas of mental, social and developmental health and disorders. Registered psychiatric nurses are actively involved in assessing needs, developing coping skills, and planning, implementing and evaluating programs to meet the needs of clients affected by mental illness, psychiatric disorders, developmental and/or cognitive difficulties.

### **What is the format of psychiatric nursing education?**

The Psychiatric Nursing program balances theory with clinical practice education. Theory-based courses provide a strong foundation of knowledge, while practical labs and clinical practice education offer students practice to prepare for professional experience. Students learn about psychiatric nursing by actively participating in their learning. The evaluative tools being considered by the program include case studies, discussions, presentations (individual and in groups), reflective journals, portfolios, academic papers, etc. The program uses technology (e-learning strategies) in many of the assignments.

### **What is the annual intake of the program?**

In September of each academic year, there is an intake of 32 students.

## **Where is the location of the program?**

The first year of the program will be offered at SIAST Wascana Campus in Regina. Year 2 of the program is situated in the rural areas of North Battleford, Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, and Yorkton. These clinical practice education settings are negotiated on a yearly basis and the locations may change over time. In first year, you will be asked for input into where you wish to be placed and you are asked to move at least once to complete Year 2.

## **How long can I expect to wait before being accepted into the program?**

Decisions regarding acceptance into the program for the fall intake are determined in October of the previous year. If you are applying now, you can expect to wait at least a year before being accepted into the program. Currently, we have a number of potential candidates in the "applicant pool".

## **What classes can I take while I am waiting to get into the program?**

Transfer credits will be granted for classes related to anatomy and physiology. Each course is to be a three-credit university course.

Options include:

### SIAST

APHY 162 Anatomy & Physiology 1 and APHY 262 Anatomy & Physiology 2

### University of Regina

KHS 168 Human Anatomy and KHS 267 Human Physiology

### Athabasca University

Biology 235 Human Anatomy and Physiology (6 credits)

Further transfer credits will be granted for:

- any three-credit university course on Indigenous Studies
- university course related to healthy growth and development such as PSYC 210 Developmental Psychology from the University of Regina

In order to receive transfer credit for a course, 80% of the learning outcomes from the SIAST course must be matched with the education taken.

## **Will I be able to complete the entire program in Regina?**

The first year of the program is offered in Regina. Years two and three of the program are located throughout Saskatchewan. Moving to outlying areas throughout the province allows you to gain rich clinical experiences located outside of Regina. You will be expected to move at least once during the program for clinical placements.

At the beginning of Year 1, you will be provided information about the outlying placements and you will be asked to provide a first and second choice location for Year 2. The program negotiates annually for clinical placements and in the past has used North Battleford, Moose Jaw, Prince Albert and Yorkton. If you choose Moose Jaw, the clinical resources and theory component will be in Moose Jaw. The program cannot guarantee the annual use of these four locations.

## **How does the theory and clinical unfold in Year 2?**

The program uses a blended approach in Year 2. A combination of video-conferencing and course pages is used. This blended learning approach is supported in each location. The theory portion of the courses are delivered over three weeks followed by three weeks of clinical practice education and is repeated throughout the term in this manner.

Much of the theory is to be completed by students on your own, however, you will be guided by course schedule (s) for assignments / assigned readings / due dates for assignments and evaluative tools.

## **Is there consideration of equity seats within the Psychiatric Nursing program?**

There are equity seats allotted for the Psychiatric Nursing program.

## **Are transfer credits available from the Nursing Education Program of Saskatchewan (NEPS) and from the SIAST Practical Nursing program?**

Yes, transfer credits are available from both the Nursing Education Program of Saskatchewan and from the SIAST Practical Nursing program (2006-08 graduating class and onward). These will be considered on an individual basis.

## **If I am an LPN and interested in taking psychiatric nursing, how much transfer credit is available to me?**

If you are an LPN who graduated from the SIAST Practical Nursing program in 2008 and onward, you will receive transfer credit for most of the first year of the Psychiatric Nursing program. You will need to take the following Year 1 Psychiatric Nursing program courses: NRSG 100 Promotion to Psychiatric Praxis and NRSG 101 Introduction to Psychiatric Nursing Concepts.

## **If I have taken Year One/Two of the NEPS program, what transfer credits are available?**

You will receive transfer credit for the majority of the first year of the Psychiatric Nursing program. You will need to take the following Year 1 Psychiatric Nursing program courses: NRSG 100 Promotion to Psychiatric Praxis and NRSG 101 Introduction to Psychiatric Nursing Concepts.

## **Will ACCUPLACER be used by the Psychiatric Nursing program?**

ACCUPLACER cut scores have been established for the Psychiatric Nursing program. All students are required to write the ACCUPLACER when they have been accepted into the program and before they enter first year of the program. Required cut scores are 80 in arithmetic, reading comprehension, and sentence skills, and write placer at 8.

## **Can I take the program part-time?**

With the small intake, we expect our students to complete the program as it is being offered. There are no planned part-time options.

## **Can I apply if I am still in high school?**

Yes, you are able to apply when you are still in high school but expected to provide transcripts of your Grade 12 as soon as possible.

**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. SIAST bookstore will carry all the written materials that you require.

**What completion document will I receive after I have completed the program?**

Upon graduation, you will receive a diploma in Psychiatric Nursing.

Upon completion of the program, you will have the competencies and skills required to work in a variety of mental health settings. You will be able to register with the Registered Psychiatric Nurses Association of Saskatchewan (RPNAS) and your designation is that of a registered psychiatric nurse or RPN.

Psychiatric nurses are registered in the prairie provinces and there is agreed reciprocity with the prairie provinces. Contact RPNAS at [rpnas@rpnas.com](mailto:rpnas@rpnas.com) for further information.

**Are there opportunities to further education once I obtain my diploma in psychiatric nursing?**

It is hoped that there will be opportunities for the graduates of the SIAST Psychiatric Nursing diploma program are able to continue their education in psychiatric nursing and that the program will articulate to a degree in psychiatric nursing. Discussions are underway for Psychiatric Nursing program graduates to access a bachelor of psychiatric nursing program.