

Basic Critical Care Nursing Program Frequently Asked Questions

Why should I consider the Basic Critical Care Nursing program? What sets this program apart from other programs?

The Basic Critical Care Nursing (BCCN) program:

- 1) provides positive challenges - registered nurses can obtain specialized knowledge, skill and expertise in critical care.
- 2) satisfies the nurses readiness to learn - critical care provides registered nurses with endless opportunities to gain knowledge and expertise in a highly technical and cutting edge environment.
- 3) encourages learning in a supportive mentoring environment - experienced critical care nurses will act as mentors or preceptors and support new critical care nurses to learn how to care for critically ill patients and their families.
- 4) acknowledges adult learning principles - SIAST has options available for the adult student and learner to consider in obtaining an advanced certificate in Basic Critical Care Nursing.
- 5) education is recognized as you will receive transfer credit for the University of Saskatchewan and Athabasca University post RN degree programs.

What are the program highlights?

The Basic Critical Care Nursing program offers:

- a variety of modes of learning.
- distance and self-directed learning that is combined with face-to-face labs, tutorials, and clinical experiences.

As a new grad, can I apply to take the program?

While it may be preferable to have RN experience in a high acuity clinical practice setting prior to entering the program, it is not required. The program accepts experienced or novice nurses who have compassion for patients with critical illness 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, family crisis and changing technology. Critical care 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 they will participate in a clinical experience.

When can I start courses in the program?

You must first successfully meet the admission requirements for the program.

Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region and Saskatoon Health Region **sponsored** applicants are usually enrolled in an 11-week fast-track BCCN program. This is offered with two or three different intake dates per year.

Non-sponsored applicants are usually enrolled in a 28-week BCCN program. This allows you to continue to work and go to school at the same time. This is offered once per year starting in September.

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

You need to complete the lab, tutorials, 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.

How likely am I to get a job in the critical care setting after I complete the program?

Extremely likely - virtually every graduate who chooses to apply for work in the critical care setting has been successful.

Can I continue to work while enrolled in the program?

If you are enrolled in the 11-week delivery option, you will find the workload very demanding and we suggest that working while taking the program would be very challenging.

If you are enrolled in the 28-week delivery option, you should be able to work part-time or full-time. You will be required to attend tutorials, labs, and clinical in Regina or Saskatoon.

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. You will also have contact with your fellow students during labs, tutorials, and clinical experiences.

I already have considerable critical care nursing experience. What options are available to me?

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

Experienced critical care nurses who want to obtain their advanced certificates can register as students in the full program and challenge any portion of the program (theory, lab and/or clinical) or the entire program. For more information see [PLAR Availability](#).

Registered Nurses sponsored by Regina Qu'Appelle or Saskatoon Health Regions have the opportunity to complete the Cardiovascular Component courses from the Basic Critical Care Nursing program. Upon successful completion of the courses, you will receive a Statement of Achievement and be credited 121 practice hours towards eligibility to maintain registration from the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association if you are currently registered in Saskatchewan while taking the courses.

How will I communicate with the faculty?

Program faculty are available to support you via the telephone, email and, in some situations, in person.

We encourage students to discuss any difficulties they encounter throughout the program with the faculty. You should not struggle with a problem too long as this may delay your progress in the program.

How will I progress through the program?

Each course is divided into learning outcomes and steps. Learning steps will guide you through the use of resources and will include learning activities to support learning regarding the subject material.

Enrichment materials are listed in the course manuals. Journal articles are available from Wascana Campus and Kelsey Campus libraries, hospital resource centres and/or regional colleges. Videos and DVDs are available from Wascana Campus and Kelsey Campus libraries.

After completing the learning activities, you will complete the review exercises to test your knowledge. Answer keys are provided. Tutorials / labs are offered to enhance your learning. Attendance is mandatory.

Each course has specific strategies for evaluating theoretical knowledge. Strategies include exams, case studies, assignments and clinical logs.

Where will my clinical practice education take place?

Each clinical practice experience has learning outcomes so locations may vary depending on the availability of experiences. Your clinical practice education will occur in the Cardiac Surveillance Unit or Cardiac Care Unit, and the Intensive Care Unit in either Regina or Saskatoon.

Your clinical practice education is completed with experienced registered nurse preceptors.

When do I participate in the clinical practice education courses?

Clinical practice experiences are either completed following each section of the matching theory course(s) or are integrated with theory. You have a limited time frame in order to complete your clinical experience.

Where do 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 in the test centers located at SIAST Wascana Campus in Regina or SIAST Kelsey Campus in Saskatoon.

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 your orientation. The exams are multiple choice and require the writer to know how to use a mouse and read onscreen instructions.

What is the cost to take the program?

The annual cost varies according to the current tuition rate and the credit units for each course that you are taking.

Tuition for the entire program is due in the fall on the first day of orientation.

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 Basic Critical Care Nursing.

What other recognition will I receive after completing the program?

Graduates are credited with 354 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 transfer credits within the Post RN degree programs at the University of Saskatchewan and Athabasca University.