

User Guide: National Occupational Standard for Personal Care Providers



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All information can be found on the website, nos-nnp.ca.

Backgrounder

The National Occupation Standard for Personal Care Providers guide (NOS) was developed out of the vital importance of personal care providers in the health care system at large in Canada, and the understanding that there is a need to support Personal Care Providers as members of a national occupational group that can be identified by consistency in skill sets and knowledge.

In considering individual provinces and territories, there are a limited number of personal care provider standards, and where they do exist, there is a range in educational outcomes. Establishing an alignment of educational outcomes among provinces and territories is essential to support the recognition of a national occupation. Consistent educational outcomes support development of roles and responsibilities in the workplace. There is also a need for workforce data to understand the number of personal care providers working in Canada, which could be another area of continued development of the occupation beyond alignment of educational outcomes.

These different aspects of consideration of an occupation are needed for the future as the importance of the personal care provider role continues to grow. The extent of these informational deficits was made clear during the pandemic, and as a foundation to move forward, the NOS was created and completed in October 2022 out of an initiative of the federal government.

The creation of the guide was led by Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan) and funded by the Government of Canada's Sectoral Initiatives Program. Over 600 individuals connected to long-term care, home care and community support services contributed to the development of this guide led by a national working group and national advisors.

The ambition is that the NOS will serve as a support to employers, educators, policy makers, researchers, and job seekers to make informed decisions about educational curriculums and learning outcomes, hiring requirements, skills training and career choices for personal care providers. At this time of incredible challenges in health care and long-term care workforce development, finding a pathway forward on consistent expectations for education of personal care providers is essential.

With the development of the NOS completed, there is a need for the next steps to advance consistent educational outcomes that support workplace practices for personal care providers in collaboration with the many national stakeholders. The Canadian Association for Long Term Care (CALTC) is deeply committed to workforce development, and as such has agreed to act as the steward of the NOS document and support the mobilization efforts of this standard in the short term, while we work with stakeholders to consider a longer term future path.

Getting Started

The NOS can be accessed [here](#). It is recommended you utilize the user guide as you go through the NOS.

Numerous stakeholders were engaged in the development of the NOS, focusing on the competencies of the role, with the intention of being a reference to help educators, employees and employers understand what personal care providers are qualified to do within their scope of knowledge based on educational competency outcomes.

Overview

While the NOS has been created from input and representation across Canada and is a standard that respects regional differences that may be impacted by policies, procedures and legislation. The NOS is based on a comprehensive job task analysis (page 4) and represents the knowledge, skill and judgement required at the entry level entering the occupation.

Using the NOS

The NOS can be used in a variety of ways including:

- Informing curricula and training for educational institutions by meeting high level educational outcomes of the occupation.
- Facilitating consistent identification of the role as defined occupation across all Canadian jurisdictions.

- Strengthening recruitment efforts by informing employers on the competency standards that reflect the knowledge, skill, and judgement of the personal care provider occupation.
- Identifying career development opportunities to promote employee retention through continuing education that align with the NOS.
- Enabling students, new graduates, and job seekers to make informed employment and career decisions.
- Bringing national alignment in the PCP competency outcomes that define the occupation and support their identification as a distinct occupational group across Canada.
- Streamlining collaboration between healthcare employers, newcomers and those who support their immigration and credential recognition assessment.

Educational Institutions

Alignment of curriculum outcomes to match the competency outcomes of the NOS are key to national adoption of the National Occupational Standard for Personal Care Providers (NOS). As part of the NOS, competencies and sub-competencies were identified to reflect the scope of the PCP occupation and allow them to be identified as a unique occupation. Colleges are encouraged to align these competency outcomes with existing program curriculum and address any gaps in competency development.

The NOS for Personal Care Providers is not meant to replace existing educational curriculums, but to recognize the consistent competencies that are needed to recognize PCPs as a defined national occupation and address any potential gaps. There is flexibility in how competencies can be considered within a program curriculum as part of foundational skills, communication, lab and clinical setting experiences, or other targeted areas of education.

At this stage of awareness development of the NOS for PCPs, all institutions offering a recognized program are encouraged to start with a self-assessment of the current educational curriculum and the NOS. The following tool has been developed to guide a self assessment.

Educational Institution Program Self-Assessment

Please answer the following questions about the program you currently offer. For questions with a rating scale, 1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest, 1 meaning

your program does not do this at all and 5 meaning your program always does this. Each section is attributed to competencies as part of the NOS, please review the corresponding competencies when completing the assessment.

Please refer to [Appendix A](#) for the self-assessment rubric to compliment and support understanding for determining what level your program is currently at. Examples are included so circle the level that corresponds best with what your program currently offers.

General Program Questions

Q1	Does my institution currently offer a personal care provider program utilizing curriculum approved by my province/territory?	Yes	No
Q2	Does the program my institution offers provide placement/practicum/on the job experience?	Yes	No

A.1. Person-Centred Care and Support Competencies

Q1	Does the program portray an accurate picture of what providing care looks like? Example: Learning about the care needs over the lifespan. See A.1.11, A.1.10, A.1.1	1	2	3	4	5
Q2	Does the program offer explanations/experience on the care students will provide when working? Refer to A.1.1 through A.1.12	1	2	3	4	5
Q3	Does the program teach about medical/health conditions students may encounter in their work with clients/patients? Refer to A.1.1, A.1.5, A.1.11, A.1.12	1	2	3	4	5

Please provide examples of how your curriculum aligns with person-centred care. These examples can be submitted on a separate page as needed.

A.2. Collaborative Care Competencies						
Q1	Does the program offer the opportunity to work alongside other care providers (nurses, doctors, etc.)? Refer to A.2.2, A.2.3	1	2	3	4	5
Q2	Does the program offer opportunities to work with a group or team to complete various tasks? Refer to A.2.2, A.2.3, A.2.5	1	2	3	4	5
Q3	Does the program teach students how to follow a plan or set of tasks? Refer to A.2.1, A.2.4	1	2	3	4	5

Please provide examples of how your curriculum aligns with collaborative care. These examples can be submitted on a separate page as needed.

A.3. Promote Safe Environment Competencies						
Q1	Does the program encourage a safe learning environment? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like infection prevention control practices? • Keeping students safe during course work Refer to A.3.1, A.3.3, A.3.4, A.3.5	1	2	3	4	5

Q2	Does the program inform students on how to report suspected situations of abuse and/or neglect? Refer to A.3.2	1	2	3	4	5
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Please provide examples of how your curriculum aligns with promoting a safe environment. These examples can be submitted on a separate page as needed.

B.1. Communication Competencies						
Q1	Do courses provide opportunity for students to work on their communication skills? Refer to B.1.1, B.1.2, B.1.3	1	2	3	4	5
Q2	Does the program offer opportunities for students to problem solve? Refer to B.1.2, B.1.4	1	2	3	4	5
Q3	Does the program inform students how to communicate in the workplace in a professional manner? Refer to B.1.3	1	2	3	4	5

Please provide examples of how your curriculum achieves communication competencies. These examples can be submitted on a separate page as needed.

B.2. Diversity and Inclusion Competencies

Q1	Does the program expose students to different environments of care? Refer to B.2.2	1	2	3	4	5
Q2	Does the program teach students about potential cultural needs of clients? Refer to B.2.1 through B.2.4	1	2	3	4	5

Please provide examples of how your curriculum achieves diversity and inclusion competencies. These examples can be submitted on a separate page as needed.

B.3. Professionalism Competencies

Q1	Does the program offer opportunities to utilize their professionalism in placement/lab? Refer to B.3.3	1	2	3	4	5
Q2	Does the program explain how to care for one-self and well-being? Refer to B.3.5	1	2	3	4	5
Q3	Does the program share opportunities for professional development? Refer to B.3.1, B.3.2, B.3.4	1	2	3	4	5

Please provide examples of how your curriculum supports students in achieving professionalism. These examples can be submitted on a separate page as needed.

Total

To determine your total score, count the number of times each level was selected on the self-assessment rubric. Put the totals of the count below each section. Take all the section totals and multiply them by their level (1 through 5). Add up that amount and you will get your total score.

Interpretation of results

Based on your score, you will fall into one of the following categories:

Aligns with NOS: 70 - 90

Progressing toward NOS: 40 - 69

Opportunity to align with NOS: 18 – 39

Aligns with NOS

If you achieve a total of 70 – 90, congratulations, your program aligns with the National Occupational Standards for Personal Care Providers. Keep up the great work with your curriculum and teaching. Be on the lookout for future opportunities to be recognized more formally by the NOS team.

Progressing towards NOS

If you achieve a total of 40 – 69, your program is well on its way to aligning with the National Occupational Standards for Personal Care Providers. To achieve aligning with the NOS, you are encouraged to review the NOS along with the User guide for ideas on where you can home in on the competencies to support students in achieving them. Check back on our website for additional resources to support aligning with the NOS.

Opportunity to align with the NOS

If you achieve a total score of 18 – 39, your program could use a tune up to meet the core competencies outlined in the NOS. Start by reviewing the NOS and user guide to determine areas that could be easily adapted to meet the core

competencies. Check back on our website for additional resources to support aligning with the NOS.

More formal recognition is anticipated in the future to recognize how your institution currently aligns with the NOS. Use this first self-assessment as a starting point to familiarize yourself with the NOS and the curriculum you currently offer.

Occupation Development

The Competency Profile for Personal Care Providers

The competencies of the National Occupational Standard have been divided into skills for specific tasks that most personal care providers will have performed (depending on the employment setting and provincial/territorial legislation). While the examples are not exhaustive, the NOS was reviewed by hundreds of individuals, with the six competencies being mutually agreed upon as the main skills personal care providers need to be successful in their role.

Technical Competencies

- Provides Person-Centred Care and Support ([page 11](#))
- Provides Collaborative Care ([page 14](#))
- Promotes a Safe Environment ([page 15](#))

Foundational Competencies

- Communication ([page 17](#))
- Diversity and Inclusion ([page 18](#))
- Professionalism ([page 19](#))

Review pages [11 through 20](#) for specific examples of the skills that fall under these competencies. These examples expand on the competencies, list sub-competencies and include performance indicators.

National Occupational Classification

The National Occupational Classification (NOC) is a descriptor of all occupations in the Canadian labour market that was first published by ESDC

Canada in 1992. In considering the competencies of the NOS for PCPs, it encompasses two occupations: [44101](#) – Home support workers, caregivers and related occupations and [33102](#) – Nurse aides, orderlies and patient service associates. As part of the NOC, the main duties of [44101](#) and [33192](#) are listed, many of which align with the performance indicators in the NOS.

The NOS reflects a task analysis therefore it is based on an entry level employee and does not represent the potential entire practice of an experienced PCP. However, as the occupation continues to develop in the workplace, it will be essential on an on-going basis to re-evaluate the NOS for PCPs to ensure it remains on point with expectations of the occupation.

Support

While the NOS for PCPs is currently in its infancy, we welcome feedback and comments on the NOS. Please reach out to projectmanager@caltc.ca with any inquiries. Additionally, visit nos-nnp.ca to learn more about current initiatives, download the NOS and learn about the Steering Committee.

Appendix A

Educational Institution Program Self-Assessment Rubric

Please answer the questions about the program you currently offer on the self-assessment page. This rubric is meant to compliment and support understanding for determining what level your program is currently at. For questions with a rating scale, 1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest, 1 meaning your program does not do this at all, 2 your program does this seldom, 3 your program does this some of the time, 4 your program does this most of the time, and 5 your program always does this. Examples are included so circle the level that corresponds best with what your program currently offers.

Question Category	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
General Program					
Question 1	No				Yes
Question 2	No				Yes
A.1. Person-Centred Care and Support Competencies					
Question 1	Program does not utilize examples of what providing care looks like	Program provides limited examples of what providing care looks like	Program provides some examples of what providing care looks like	Program provides many examples of what providing care looks like	Program always provides examples of what providing care looks like
Question 2	Program does not offer explanations or experiences on care students will provide	Program offers limited explanations or experiences on care students will provide	Program offers some explanations or experiences on care students will provide	Program offers many explanations or experiences on care students will provide	Program always offers explanations and experiences on care students will provide
Question 3	Program does not	Program offers	Program offers some	Program offers many	Program always

	teach examples about medical conditions students may encounter in the field	limited examples about medical conditions students may encounter in the field	examples about medical conditions students may encounter in the field	examples about medical conditions students may encounter in the field	provides examples about medical conditions students may encounter in the field
Total for A.1					

A.2. Collaborative Care Competencies

Question 1	Program does not offer opportunity to work alongside other care providers	Program offers limited opportunity to work alongside other care providers	Program offers some opportunities to work alongside other care providers	Program offers many opportunities to work alongside other care providers	Program always offers opportunities to work alongside other care providers
Question 2	Program does not offer opportunities to work in or with a group/team	Program offers limited opportunities to work in or with a group/team	Program offers some opportunities to work in or with a group/team	Program offers many opportunities to work in or with a group/team	Program always offers opportunities to work in or with a group/team
Question 3	Program does not teach students how to follow a plan or set of tasks	Program teaches students a limited amount on how to follow a plan or set of tasks	Program teaches students some information on how to follow a plan or set of tasks	Program teaches students lots of information on how to follow a plan or set of tasks	Program always teaches students how to follow a plan or set of tasks
Total for A.2					

A.3. Promote Safe Environment Competencies

Question 1	Program does not encourage a safe		Program sometimes encourages a safe		Program always encourages a safe
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	learning environment		learning environment		learning environment
Question 2	Program does not inform students on how to report suspected situations of abuse and/or neglect	Program provides limited information to students on how to report suspected situations of abuse and/or neglect	Program provides some information to students on how to report suspected situations of abuse and/or neglect	Program provides lots of information to students on how to report suspected situations of abuse and/or neglect	Program always provides information to students on how to report suspected situations of abuse and/or neglect
Total for A.3					
B.1. Communication Competencies					
Question 1	Program does not provide opportunity for students to work on their communication	Program provides limited opportunity for students to work on their communication	Program provides some opportunity for students to work on their communication	Program provides many opportunities for students to work on their communication	Program always provides opportunities for students to work on their communication
Question 2	Program does not offer opportunities for students to problem solve	Program offers limited opportunities for students to problem solve	Program offers some opportunities for students to problem solve	Program offers many opportunities for students to problem solve	Program always offers opportunities for students to problem solve
Question 3	Program does not inform students on how to communicate in the workplace	Program informs students limited information on how to communicate in the	Program informs students some information on how to communicate in the	Program informs students significant information on how to communicate in the	Program always informs students how to communicate in the workplace

	in a professional manner	workplace in a professional manner	workplace in a professional manner	workplace in a professional manner	in a professional manner
Total B.1					
B.2. Diversity and Inclusion Competencies					
Question 1	Program does not expose students to different environments of care	Program exposes students limitedly to different environments of care	Program exposes students some of the time to different environments of care	Program exposes students most of the time to the different environments of care	Program always exposes students to the different environments of care
Question 2	Program does not teach students about potential cultural needs of clients	Program teaches students limited information about the potential cultural needs of clients	Program teaches students some information about the potential cultural needs of clients	Program teaches students significant amount of information about the potential cultural needs of clients	Program always teaches students about potential cultural needs of clients
Total B.2					
B.3. Professionalism Competencies					
Question 1	Program does not offer opportunities to utilize their professionalism in placement/lab	Program offers limited opportunities to utilize professionalism in placement/lab	Program offers some opportunities to utilize professionalism in placement/lab	Program offers significant opportunities to utilize professionalism in placement/lab	Program always offers opportunities to utilize professionalism in placement/lab
Question 2	Program does not explain how to care	Program offers limited explanation	Program offers some explanations on how to	Program offers significant explanation	Program always explains how to care

	for oneself and well-being	s on how to care for oneself and well-being	care for oneself and well-being	s on how to care for oneself and well-being	for oneself and well-being
Question 3	Program does not share opportunities for professional development	Program offers limited opportunities for professional development	Program offers some opportunities for professional development	Program offers significant opportunities for professional development	Program always offers opportunities for professional development
Total B.3					
Sub-Total	Count x 1	Count x 2	Count x 3	Count x 4	Count x 5
Total Score					

To determine your total score, count the number of times each level was selected. Put the totals of the count below each section. Take all the section totals and multiply them by their level. Add up that amount and you will get your total score. Refer to the **Interpretation of results** on page 10 of this document to determine where your institution falls.