



## CONTINUING NURSING STUDIES

Registered Nurse First Assistant  
(RNFA) Program

Registration Information

Revised April 2008

## **Introduction**

The Registered Nurse First Assistant (RNFA) Program is an individualized program of instruction designed to prepare registered nurses for an advanced practice role assisting the physician in general surgery or cardiac surgery.

## **Delivery**

The RNFA Program utilizes self-directed learning modules and a mentored experience with the surgeon. This course was developed and implemented in 2000.

The Continuing Nursing Studies department within the Centre for Nursing Studies administers the theoretical portion of the program and, in conjunction with the perioperative program of health care agencies, facilitates the clinical experience.

## **Entry and Exit Policy**

Entry to this program is based on provincial need for surgery and the number of physicians and RNFA's available to assist in surgery.

Specific entrance requirements include:

- Entry to this program is based on provincial need and the number of RNFA's and physicians available to assist in surgery.
- Perioperative nurses wishing to avail of this program are selected and sponsored by hospital boards requiring this advanced practice role in their Perioperative programs.
- Current ACLS.
- Minimum of 3 years current perioperative experience with demonstrated competency in scrub and circulating roles.
- Postgraduate course in operating room nursing is preferred

Once entry to the program is granted, a one-year maximum is allowed for completion. Since each learner progresses at his/her own pace, graduation from the program can occur at any point during the one-year time allocation.

The cost of the program which includes all materials (modules, books, and readings) is \$1500.00. Full tuition payment is required prior to commencement of the program.

If necessary, learners may withdraw from the program at anytime. A tuition refund is provided within 30 days from the starting date (100% refund minus a 10% administration fee and cost of course materials).

## **Mentored Clinical Experience**

When in the surgical setting, the learner will work with a qualified physician on a one-to-one basis. The Manager in the operating room and the Chief of Surgery facilitate this learning experience. The physician and Manager evaluate the learner through oral and written evaluations on an ongoing basis. Learners are also responsible to keep a written log and evaluation of cases. It is in this setting that mastery learning is tested, and the learner must be satisfactorily competent to complete the program.

## **Learning Activity Package**

The Program is divided into two specific components. The first is theoretical and is comprised of five modules. No fixed time limit is imposed other than the maximum course completion time of one year. Once all of the theory is mastered, the second component, a clinical component, is facilitated for the learner. This portion of the program has a minimum requirement of 200 hours and must be carried out in a surgical unit. The learner works with the mentor (physician) following his/her schedule.

## **Assessment of Learners**

For the theoretical portion of the program, learners are required to obtain a 75% on a written examination for each module. These examinations are all multiple choice and once corrected are reviewed with the learner to provide immediate feedback in difficult areas. Each learner is permitted to write two supplementary examinations during the program. Tutoring and special assistance are offered as necessary throughout the program.

Clinical components are mastery oriented and learners are required to obtain a satisfactory clinical evaluation. While 200 hours is the minimum requirement, extra time may be needed to reach level of mastery.

## **Learning Environment**

RNFA learners complete most of the theoretical portion of the program at home or in a study environment of their own choosing. Exams may be written at the Centre for Nursing Studies or if out of town, a tutor will be provided to invigilate exams. Any learner who wishes extra guidance can contact Continuing Nursing Studies any time during regular working hours.

## **Learning Materials and Resources**

Extensive study materials have been prepared by Continuing Nursing Studies for this Program. These include:

1. a set of study modules
2. required readings, articles, pamphlets and brochures included with modules
3. access to various required texts
4. access to other learning materials from the Centre for Nursing Studies

The self-learning modules all attempt to provide the following guidance:

- specific learning objectives
- directed reading in accompanying textbooks, articles, readings, etc.
- extra information not provided in directed reading
- learning activities within objectives, comprehension checks at the end of units and post-tests at the end of modules to check your understanding and comprehension of information as you proceed through the modules

## **Evaluation of the Program**

Evaluation is ongoing throughout the program and at the completion of the program. Both learners and mentors are encouraged to verbalize or write their thoughts on how the program is being managed at least once a month. Evaluation forms are completed at the end of each module, during the clinical experience, and at the end of the program. These forms are reviewed by the program committee and changes and improvements are made where possible.

## **Advantages**

1. This program allows learners to proceed at their own pace.
2. Materials and current information are readily available to learners.
3. Tutors are available to work with learners on a one-to-one basis or in very small groups.
4. Mentors (physicians) are highly qualified professionals who work exclusively with the RNFA's.

## **Registered Nurse First Assistant Program**

### **Program Objectives**

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1. Discuss the role and responsibilities of the Registered Nurse First Assistant (RNFA) in Newfoundland and Labrador.
2. Use current theory and research as a basis for practice.
3. Use the nursing process and critical thinking for making valid clinical judgments.
4. Apply principles of asepsis and infection control.
5. Describe and demonstrate competencies related to first assist (soft tissue handling, wound exposure, hemostasis, needles and suturing, knot tying).
6. Demonstrate the ability to build a collaborative relationship with the physician and other members of the health care team.
7. Develop an attitude of lifelong learning to maintain competency.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Registered Nurse First Assistant Program is to provide the advanced knowledge and clinical skills necessary to prepare the operating room nurse to practice in collaboration with, and at the direction of, the surgeon during the intraoperative phase of the perioperative experience. The advanced intraoperative competencies necessary for this role include: handling tissue, providing exposure, using instruments, suturing and knot tying, and providing hemostasis.

### **RNFA Theory Modules**

The Registered Nurse First Assistant Program is a self-directed modularized learning process. The program offers five modules of theory. Each learner must successfully complete all five modules. The following chart summarizes content found in modules, estimated time of completion and evaluation.

## Registered Nurse First Assistant Program

### Program Content

Module	Contents	Estimated time for completion of Module	Evaluation
<b>Module One</b>  Role and Responsibilities of the RNFA	<b>Unit</b> 1. Scope of Practice 2. Legal Regulation 3. Ethical Issues 4. Collaborative Practice 5. Leadership Skills 6. Nursing Research	100 hours	Exam
<b>Module Two</b>  Asepsis and Infection Control	<b>Unit</b> 1. Chain of Infection 2. Body's Response to Infection 3. Asepsis 4. Infection Control 5. Multiply-Resistant Organisms	50 hours	Exam
<b>Module Three</b>  Use of the Nursing Process for Clinical Decision Making	<b>Unit</b> 1. Nursing Process 2. Cardiac and Hemodynamic Considerations 3. Respiratory/Metabolic/Hematopoietic Considerations 4. Anesthetic Considerations 5. Perioperative Considerations	50 hours	Exam
<b>Module Four</b>  Surgical Techniques Related to the RNFA	<b>Unit</b> 1. Soft Tissue Handling 2. Methods of Providing Wound Exposure 3. Providing Hemostasis 4. Needles, Suturing, and Knot Tying	50 hours	Exam

<b>Module</b>	<b>Contents</b>	<b>Estimated time for completion of Module</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
<b>Module Five</b> Surgical Procedures for General Surgery	<b>Unit</b> 1. General Surgery 2. Gynecology 3. Urologic Procedures 4. Peripheral Vascular Surgery 5. Orthopedics	100 hours	Exam

**Or**

<b>Module</b>	<b>Contents</b>	<b>Estimated time for completion of Module</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
<b>Module Five</b> Cardiovascular System and Surgical Procedures	<b>Unit</b> 1. A&P Fluid, Lytes and Acid-Base Balance 2. Diagnostic and Therapeutic Procedures and Monitoring 3. Open Heart Procedures 4. Peripheral Vascular Procedures 5. Harvesting Bypass Conduits for Cardiac Surgery 6. Infection Control and Surgical Site Infections	100 hours	Exam

**CENTRE FOR NURSING STUDIES  
CONTINUING NURSING STUDIES**

**REGISTERED NURSE FIRST ASSISTANT  
(RNFA) PROGRAM**

**REGISTRATION FORM**

- General Surgery  
 Cardiovascular

**SECTION I**

ARNNL Registration No. \_\_\_\_\_

First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Maiden Name
Street Address	City/Town	Province	Postal Code
Phone (Home)	Phone (Business)	Phone (Cell)	Fax Number
E-Mail Address (Compulsory)	Emergency Contact Person	Telephone	
CPR certification date	CPR expiry date	ACLS certification date	ACLS expiry date
Desired Date to Commence Program/Course		Number of years since last practicing as RN	

**SECTION II: PAYMENT**

**II a.**            Cheque [  ]            Cash [  ]            Credit Card [  ]            Debit [  ]  
                      \* Sponsor [  ]

**Amount Paid:** \_\_\_\_\_

Cheque or money order should be made payable to the Centre for Nursing Studies.

Master Card / VISA Cardholder's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Master Card/Visa # \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**IIb. \* Sponsored students must complete the following information.**

Sponsoring Agency:	Contact Person:
Address:	
Phone No.	Fax No.
	E-Mail:

The CNS acknowledges and respects privacy of individuals. The personal information included on this form is collected under the authority of Sections 32 and 33 of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act and will be used for processing your application and for the administration of student records. Direct any questions about this collection to: Privacy Officer, Eastern Health, Quality and Risk Management, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor, Southcott Hall, 777-8025.

**SECTION III: POST SECONDARY EDUCATION** (University, Technical, Vocational, Nursing, Workshops, In-Services, First Aid, CPR, Etc.)

Institution	Location	Program Of Study	Certificate / Diploma	Year/s Attended

**SECTION IV: REFERENCES:** Please print the names, full addresses, and telephone numbers of two individuals providing your references.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION V: EMPLOYMENT HISTORY** (beginning with most recent):

Current Employing Health Board: \_\_\_\_\_ Current Work Site: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Immediate Supervisor/Manager: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Employment in Nursing: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**COPY OF ACTIVE RN LICENSE IS REQUIRED.**

I hereby verify that the information given on this Registration Form is correct. I agree to be governed by the policies, rules, and regulations as set forth by the Centre for Nursing Studies.

Permission is granted to The Centre for Nursing Studies to: i) contact previous employers and/or educational institutions to obtain personal references, to verify educational background, and/or to provide the clinical preceptor with this information  
 ii) provide verification of successful course completion to the licensing body and/or sponsoring agency.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of Learner