

## DHS 129 Curriculum Changes

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**Q: For the new section called “recognizing the general effects of prescribed routine medications,” what sort of documentation or training is required?**

**A:** The focus for routine medication instruction should be on why a nurse aide needs to know the general effects of medications, how to find the information about the drugs, and what a nurse aide should do if they see problems. For example if someone is on Warfarin, explain what the medication is for, what the problems might be, what they should report to a nurse, etc.

A focus on the high risk medications, such as those at <http://www.ismp.org/Tools/highalertmedications.pdf>, is recommended. The references being used or considered by the medication aide courses (intended to deliver a 60 plus hour course ) are also excellent references: Medication Administration Made Incredibly Easy by Lippincott, Mosby’s Textbook for Medication Assistants by Sorrentino, Administering Medications by Donna Gauwitz.

**Q: What are the attendance policy requirements?**

**A:** The new regulations require a minimum 120 hours of instruction which include at a minimum 32 hours of clinical. A program’s application packet must include an attendance policy that specifies exactly what the policy requires.

If a student is allowed absences, those must be identified in the policy as well as what make-up work is required. The attendance policy has to clearly state at what point is the absenteeism excessive and the student will be dropped from the program. Any time classes are cancelled due to inclement weather that time will need to be made up and the policy must specify how that will be accomplished.

Any absent time in the clinical area that drops the number of hours below the approved number of clinical hours must be made up. For example, if a program’s clinical hours are 32 and a student is ill on day 3 of clinical, day 3 of clinical will need to be made up in a clinical setting. If a program has 40 hours of clinical time and a student misses day 3 due to illness, day 3 of clinical will need to be made up in a clinical setting.

A program will be held to the number of hours identified for each section. If a program applies for approval as a 120 hour course with 40 hour classroom, 40 hours lab, and 40 hours of clinical then students must complete 40 hours of each. In the past programs were approved at 120 hours, however attendance polices often let students complete the course with as little as 100 hours of training with the argument being the program met the minimum training requirement. Programs will now be held to the number of hours approved divided out per how the program requested in its application.

**Q: Does the independent work assigned to the student outside of class such as reading, watching videos count towards the 120 hours of instruction?**

**A:** Assignments given to the student with the expectation that they will do it independently must not be considered part of the instructional time. This is considered homework and is a requirement over and above the face-to-face instruction.

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**Q: What are the expectations for making up missed days such as snow days, instructor illness, other class cancellations?**

**A:** The minimum training requirement is 120 hours so missed days must be made up. The attendance policy needs to address this issue.

**Q: Can DVD instruction be included in the 120 hours?**

**A:** Video/DVD/Blackboard vs. Face-to-Face Instruction

In general, face-to-face instruction (onsite classroom or live distance learning classroom) is the preferred method for teaching a nurse aide course but video based instruction (video, DVD, Blackboard or other electronic media) is another method by which to present information. When using these methods, the Department recommends that a portion of time is allotted for face-to-face interaction following the video presentations for the student to ask questions about the material viewed. The following information must be included as part of a program application:

**Video/DVD/Blackboard:**

Any program that uses a video/DVD/Blackboard method in place of face-to-face instruction must include the following as part of the application packet:

1. A complete list of Videos/DVDs to include author, title, and time per topic in the lesson plan.
2. Policies that describes how the student will view the required materials.
3. Policies that describe how the program will verify that the student did view the required materials in place of face-to-face instruction. This documentation must be part of the student's record that must be available upon request.

Homework assignment information must also be included as part of the training program application.

**Face-to-Face Instruction:**

Those training programs that use the face-to-face method of providing instruction and supplement some of the training by presenting the information with the use of video must include the following as part of the application packet:

1. A complete list of Videos/DVDs to include author, title, time per topic in the lesson plan.
2. A lesson plan that indicates where the video is used instead of face to face.

Those training programs that provide face-to-face instruction and require students to read textbooks, view videos or complete exercises outside of the classroom must not count that time as classroom hours. Activities completed outside of class are considered homework. Homework assignment information must also be included as part of the training program application.

**Q: What needs to be submitted with the application (primary instructor information, background checks, clinical sites, etc.)?**

**A:** A new application packet must be completed. A list of the primary instructors, classroom sites and clinical sites affiliated with the program is required. Primary instructor application information is only needed if a program is adding a new primary instructor. The same is true for new classroom or clinical sites (include name and physical address of site). If further information is needed regarding an instructor, classroom or clinical site, the information will be requested.

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**Q: Is the application available on line?**

**A:** The application is not available online but a word-fillable copy may be requested via email. The application may be completed electronically but must be printed, signed and mailed with all necessary documentation. Please do not submit the application electronically.

**Q: What must be included in the curriculum for the new subheading “alternative methods to pain prevention?”**

**A:** Units of instruction that teach the basic, non-pharmacological attempts to relieve pain, such as backrubs, repositioning etc.

**Q: The new application packet included a sample certificate. Does a program have to issue a certificate or can transcripts be used?**

**A:** Both federal and state law requires the program to issue a certificate of completion. A transcript does not meet that requirement. The template of the certificate of completion can be modified by the training program; however, it must include the name of the training program, total number of hours for the program, specify the number of classroom hours and clinical hours, and be signed by at least the primary instructor.

**Q: The sample certificate has a place for the instructor and the administrator to sign. Does an administrator have to sign it?**

**A:** The certificate attached to the packet was a sample format. Programs may follow that format or design their own but the certificate should include the total number of hours of classroom and clinical instruction. An administrator signature is not required.

**Q: Incomplete requests need to be submitted to the Department for approval. Will this continue under the new regulations?**

**A:** Yes, programs are approved for two years and a course has both a start date and an end date as published in the school’s course outline and syllabus for each class. Any time a student is unable to finish the course session within the approved time-frame; a written request for a waiver to allow that student to complete the missing course work with another class must be submitted to the Department. Documentation to support the waiver must be included with the request.

Even though the Technical College system allows a course to give a student an incomplete so that the student can finish up the course work at a later time, a nurse aide program approval does not permit this without a waiver.

**Q: Does the make-up work need to be completed within the same semester?**

**A:** In most cases the course should be completed in the same semester; however, it will depend on each student’s circumstance and the documentation that is provided to support the request. Each request is reviewed on a case by case basis.

**Q: What about incompletes for the 2009 spring semester?**

**A:** All incompletes for the 2009 spring semester must be made up by June 30, 2009. Current program approvals will end on June 30<sup>th</sup> so no program may carry over any students past June 30<sup>th</sup>.

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**Q: Will programs be issued new program numbers?**

**A:** All programs will be issued new numbers. Programs within a program such as ESL, Blackboard, etc. will also be issued a program number. If the program offers a Blackboard course in addition to the regular nurse aide course, complete those pages of the application that pertain to the program specifics and submit it along with the main application. The portion of the application that relates to the actual curriculum pages 8-23 does not have to be resubmitted as the ESL or Blackboard course will still follow the same curriculum it is just administered in a different format.

**Q: Will missing primary instructor information delay the review of an application?**

**A:** Missing primary instructor information will not delay the review of an application; however, if information is required, it will be requested. Prompt submission of requested information will ensure prompt program approval.

**Q: If a class will end in July, must the application be submitted and approved prior to the deadline in order for that class to run?**

**A:** All spring classes must be completed by June 30<sup>th</sup>. If a class is scheduled to begin in June that will not end until mid July, that class must be approved under the new application and curriculum guidelines and the application must be submitted 90 days prior to the start date.

**Q: Does the curriculum require an increased focus on dementia training?**

**A:** Yes, the Department sought input from many interested parties regarding the nurse aide training requirements. Many stakeholders supported increased training in the area of Alzheimer's and dementia. There are not a required number of hours but programs must address the topic areas identified in DHS 129. Some possible resources include the "Art of Dementia Care" from Delmar and the Wisconsin Alzheimer's Institute at <http://www.medsch.wisc.edu/wai/links.html>.

**Q: What is the recommended instructor to clinical ratio?**

**A:** The recommended ratio is one instructor for 6 to 8 students. Current programs with a higher ratio may be allowed to continue with that ratio on a case by case basis.

**Q: What is the recommended instructor-to-trainee ratio (min/max) for classroom?**

**A:** There is none specified and that is left up to the individual training program.

**Q: How extensive a description of accommodations for students with handicapping conditions is required?**

**A:** A program must have a policy in place that addresses how students with disabilities will be accommodated in both the classroom and clinical setting. For example, a student with a learning disability may have tests read to them, may be allowed extended time on tests, etc. The policy must address students who are deaf or hard of hearing, visually impaired, physically disabled, etc. Programs must also have pre-admission policies regarding minimum requirements to be accepted into the program, such as the ability to hear, see, lift a certain number of pounds, read and write at a certain grade level, etc. Because these students will be working in a healthcare setting providing assistance to vulnerable individuals, the nurse aide program's admissions policy may differ from the college's overall admission policies. The goal must be to ensure the safety of both the student and the residents.

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**Q: What format is required for the test bank? Hard copy, CD, or stick??**

**A:** The format depends on the test bank itself. For example, if a program is using the test bank that comes with the assigned textbook, a copy of the CD is required; if the program is creating a test bank, an electronic or hard copy is appropriate.

**Q: What is the directive for how many questions come from each category for developing tests?**

**A.** There is no mandatory number of questions per category. The Department recommends that there be at least one question from each of the care areas. Many of the programs are moving towards creating the exams from the test bank of questions that comes with most text books. In this manner, a new exam is created each time. If a program uses a test bank from a DVD, the program must indicate which one and what edition. If retests are allowed, a different test must be used and this must be included in the grading process.

The Department must be able to verify that the exam was taken and it was scored correctly. A copy of the actual exam must remain on file until it is reviewed during the onsite visit. After the onsite visit, the actual exam can be destroyed as long as the scores are maintained.

**Q: Are new caregiver background checks required for every primary instructor?**

**A:** A caregiver background check is required to be completed once every four years. If it will expire in 2009 another background check must be completed and a copy submitted to OCQ. Please provide a list of approved primary instructors. Additional information will be requested if necessary.

**Q: Are new clinical site contracts required?**

**A:** Clinical site contracts that are current do not have to be submitted again, however, a list of approved clinical sites is required. Copies of agreements are on file at the Department. Additional information will be requested if necessary.

**Q: Are clinical contracts dated prior to 2009 acceptable?**

**A:** Many clinical contracts are "non-ending" or "non expiring" so they roll over from year to year. If the program's contract with the clinical site indicates it does not expire, a new contract is not required. If a contract will expire prior to 2010, a new contract is required.

**Q: Is blood pressure required training for nurse aides?**

**A.** Blood pressure is not a federal or state mandated task for a nurse aide. Most facilities across the state do not permit nurse aides to take a blood pressure. If a facility does allow or require a nurse aide to take a blood pressure then it is the facility's responsibility to have an RN delegate that act to the aide and provide the necessary instruction, competency follow-up and supervision as specified in the nurse practice act. Further, taking blood pressure is no longer a "skill" since most facilities have gone to electronic blood pressure devices that only require the person to put on a cuff and push a button. If there is any question about a client's blood pressure, it should be double checked manually by a nurse. If a program includes blood pressure instruction as part of the curriculum then the program must include more than 120 hours of instruction. This would be true for glucometer checks as well. .