Department of Nursing and Health Sciences

Collaborative Assessment of Student Abilities (CASA) Student Guide

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COLLABORATIVE ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT ABILTIES (CASA) OVERVIEW

The CASA is an online (exception NURS 4152) standardized assessment process for clinical courses in the Department of Nursing & Health Sciences. The number of CASA documents to be completed is course dependent and will be outlined in the course syllabus. Throughout the BN Program students may complete clinical experiences in multiple areas, during one clinical course. Therefore, students may not always complete midterm and final CASAs within the same placement area. As an example, they may complete a midterm CASA at the end of one clinical placement area, and a final CASA at the end of their next clinical placement area.

The CASA is structured to allow assessment of student performance in relation to the five abilities that are addressed in the Bachelor of Nursing (BN) Program. These include:

- Knowledge and Its Application
- Communication
- Critical Thinking/ Skills of Analysis
- Professional Identity/ Ethics
- Social Justice/ Effective Citizenship

Each clinical course has specific outcomes related to the above abilities. When completing the CASA, students must respond to each course outcome. Instructors rate students for each course outcome using progress designations. Midterm designations include: Continue to Develop, Needs to Demonstrate Improvement, and Unsatisfactory. It is not uncommon for students to have some 'Needs to Demonstrate Improvement' on the midterm CASA. The final CASA has two levels of performance: Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory. Clinical courses are graded on a credit/noncredit basis. Students must receive a satisfactory rating on each course outcome to receive credit in the course.

Midterm Progress Designations
CONTINUE TO DEVELOP (CD) To date, the student is performing at the expected level according to course outcomes. The student seeks guidance as necessary and incorporates feedback to improve nursing care. The student must demonstrate continued progress to achieve a satisfactory designation at the end of the course.
NEEDS TO DEMONSTRATE IMPROVEMENT (NDI) The student often requires assistance to transfer knowledge to practice. Frequent guidance and direction are required to complete care. Nursing care, at times, lacks depth and detail. Recognizes learning opportunities but often requires assistance/direction to take action. There is limited opportunity to focus on this outcome; therefore, further assessment is required to determine a consistent level of satisfactory performance.
UNSATISFACTORY (U) The student demonstrates an unsafe level of knowledge. There are frequent difficulties in transferring knowledge to practice. Nursing care is frequently incomplete and potentially unsafe. The student does not seek guidance and does not respond to feedback.

Final Progress Designations
SATISFACTORY (S) The student performs at the expected level. The student demonstrates an ability to transfer knowledge to practice. Nursing care is completed with depth and detail.

The student seeks guidance as necessary and is able to incorporate feedback to improve nursing care. Overall, the student provides consistent, safe nursing care.

UNSATISFACTORY (U) The student demonstrates an unsafe level of knowledge. There are frequent difficulties in transferring knowledge to practice. Nursing care is frequently incomplete and potentially unsafe. The student does not seek guidance and does not respond to feedback. There was limited opportunity to demonstrate satisfactory performance related to this outcome.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING GOALS (PLG)

Students will create PLG's at the outset of each clinical course. Goals are unique to each student, are a way of identifying individual learning needs, and should be linked to course outcomes. Prior to writing learning goals, students should consider their experiences and feedback from previous clinical practicums.

Students are expected to use the SMART format when developing learning goals. A SMART learning goal is: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant, **T**ime-limited (College of Nurses of Ontario, 2014). Students and instructors will review learning goals during midterm and final CASA meetings.

The first section of the CASA is designated for PLG's. Students will enter their PLG's in their entirety (e.g., goals, action plan, and measurement outcomes) once the goals have been reviewed by their clinical instructor. Students are expected to comment on their progress with meeting these goals on their midterm and final CASAs.

COMPLETING THE CASA

STUDENT Guidelines
1. Preparing to Write the CASA • Students should make frequent notes regarding clinical experiences in a Word document. The student should write detailed accounts of clinical experiences linking these to appropriate course outcome(s). Include the dates, or week of experiences. This should occur daily or weekly.

2. Responding to Outcomes
- Students must respond to each course outcome in paragraph form (based on notes from Word document as suggested above). Point form is unacceptable.

- Specific examples of clinical experiences are required. including timeframes (e.g., dates, or week of experience). Examples include both positive and negative experiences, the learning that occurred from these experiences and plans for improvement.

- It is important there is no breach of confidentiality. The following should NOT be included in CASA examples: client identifiers such as name, initials, DOB, etc.

- Do NOT include names of peers and health care team members. Students should refer to others in a general way using their title such as RN, LPN, charge nurse, physician, peer, family member, etc.

- CASA entries must be original work and reflective of the student's current clinical experience. Please refer to the university's academic calendar (Section VIII- Academic Offences).

3. Midterm/ Final Summary Comments
Prior to writing the Midterm/Final Summary Comments the student should reflect on their clinical experiences and identify:
- Strengths in clinical practice
- Progress with professional learning goals
- Areas of clinical practice to continue to develop, and
- Effective learning strategies in clinical practice.

INSTRUCTOR Responsibilities

- Instructors will review the student's CASA for completeness; ensuring entries meet the CASA guidelines. Instructors will ask students to rewrite or add to their CASA if guidelines are not met.

- The instructor is not required to provide a comment under an ability if a student is assigned a CD or S for all course outcomes under that ability. If the instructor assigns a U or NDI for a course outcome, the instructor will provide specific rationale for the designation under the appropriate ability.

- Within the Instructor Summary, the instructor will provide feedback on student's strengths and areas for improvement including specific learning strategies when required.

- Instructors will provide students the opportunity to review feedback prior to meeting.

- Instructors are expected to meet with each student to discuss the CASA and student progress in the course.

- Meetings should occur in a place that maintains the student's privacy (Ramani & Krackov, 2012) and may be in-person, or virtual. When the meeting is in-person the student must bring an electronic device to complete CASA sign-off.

- Overall student performance in the course will be discussed. Instructors and students should agree with progress designations assigned to course outcomes. In circumstances where the instructor and student cannot come to an agreement with the progress designations and/or feedback the student should arrange a meeting with the course coordinator.

- Additional comments may be added to the CASA at the time of the meeting if needed.

UNSAFE STUDENT PRACTICE

In instances when a student's practice becomes unsafe, the unsafe practice policy will be initiated. Please refer to the Unsafe Practice Policy for detailed information regarding levels of unsafe practice and required processes (located in the BN Student Handbook UNBSJ: or contact the clinical course coordinator).

References

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Melrose, S., Park, C., & Perry, B. (2015). Creative Clinical Teaching in the Health Professions. Retrieved from http://epub-fhd.athabascau.ca/clinical-teaching/

Ramani, S., Krackov, S. (2012). Twelve tips for giving feedback effectively in the clinical environment. *Medical Teacher, 34,* 787-791.