

BC Health Care Assistant Programs - Practice Education Policy Requirements For Medication Assistance & Medication Administration

[Recognized BC Health Care Assistant \(HCA\) Programs](#) must have written policies in place¹ clarifying the role of HCA students during practice education placements for medication assistance and medication administration.

As outlined in the HCA Program Provincial Curriculum (2023), [Personal Care and Assistance Course](#):

Medication assistance includes activities taught in the HCA curriculum that an HCA student could **only perform if assigned** by a regulated health professional and as indicated in the client's health care plan, for a client who is able to direct their own care. The medication assistance activities taught in the HCA curriculum that HCA students are allowed to perform are:

- Reminding the client to take their medication.
- Reading the medication label to the client.
- Providing the medication container to the client.
- Opening blister packs or dosettes.
- Loosening or removing container lids.
- Recapping the device or closing the medication container or bottle.
- Placing the medication in the client's hand.
- Steadying the client's hand while the client places medications in their mouth or administers their own eye drops, nasal sprays, or other medication.
- Using an enabler (such as a medicine cup, spoon, or oral syringe) to assist the client in getting the medication into their mouth.
- Supervising clients during self-administration.
- Providing the client with water or other fluids for rinsing the client's mouth or to help them swallow medication.

Medication administration includes restricted activities taught in the HCA curriculum that an HCA student could **only perform if delegated by an RN, RPN, or NP to perform for a specific client**, and as indicated in the client's care plan². The medication administration activities taught in the HCA curriculum that HCA students are allowed to perform under a delegation are:

- Inserting a rectal suppository or enema.
- Applying a prescription cream or ointment.
- Applying a transdermal patch.
- Administering prescription ear or eye drops.

At a minimum, recognized BC HCA programs must ensure that all HCA students are assessed and deemed competent in these activities in the lab setting.

¹ BC HCA Educator policies should align with practice education partner site policies.

² See the [BCCNM Practice Standard for NPs, RNs, and RPNs, Delegation to Unregulated Care Providers](#).

BC HCA Educator policies must indicate that:³

1. HCA students are **only allowed** to perform medication assistance and medication administration activities taught in the provincial curriculum, outlined above.
2. HCA students are **only allowed** to perform medication assistance and medication administration activities during clinical placements where they are under the direct supervision of an HCA Clinical Instructor who is a BCCNM regulated nurse and meets minimum [HCA Instructor Qualifications](#).
3. HCA students are **not allowed** to perform medication assistance or administration activities during practicum and preceptorship placements because they are not under the direct supervision of an HCA Clinical Instructor who is a BCCNM regulated nurse and meets minimum [HCA Instructor Qualifications](#). They must observe these activities only, in all settings (i.e., Multi-level and/or Complex Care, Acute Care, Assisted Living, Home Support, Group Home).
4. **Medication administration during clinical placements requires delegation from an RN, RPN, or NP.** Medication administration may be delegated by a RN, RPN, or NP who is an employee of the practice setting if the HCA Clinical Instructor is not authorized to delegate.
5. HCA students under the age of 19 are **not allowed** to perform medication assistance and medication administration activities during clinical, practicum, or preceptorship placements.⁴ They must practice these activities in lab settings only.

Additional Notes:

Employer and educator policies cannot broaden what is authorized by regulatory colleges for the delegation of restricted activities. For more information, see the [INTERPRETIVE BULLETIN on Scope of Practice, Restricted Activities, and the use of Delegation and other Authorizing Mechanisms](#).

This document may be subject to change based on what regulatory colleges determine is appropriate for delegation.

³ Educators may establish more restrictive policies when it comes to HCA students performing medication assistance and/or administration during practice education. Under no circumstances, can more lenient policies be established.

⁴ The [Residential Care Regulation 70.2.a](#) prohibits people under 19 years of age from storing, handling or administering medication at residential care facilities. This applies to residential care facilities covered under either the [Hospital Act](#) or the [Community Care and Assisted Living Act](#).