

# Interprofessional Education (IPE): Steps to Developing an IPE Program at Seneca College

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## What is Interprofessional Education?

Interprofessional education (IPE) occurs when students from two or more professions learn about, from, and with each other to enable effective collaboration and improve health outcomes (WHO, 2010).

## Why Interprofessional Education is Important

Studies show that when health care professionals work together in interprofessional teams, the quality of care improves. Interprofessional teams have been shown to deliver safe, high quality care, lower costs, decrease length of stay, and reduce medical errors in hospitalized patients (Buring et al., 2009). The goal of interprofessional education is to prepare health professional students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for collaborative interprofessional practice. As well, studies show that students learn more from active learning than passive learning activities (Morrell et al., 2021). In order to develop an interprofessional education program, the first steps in establishing a program must be determined.

## Establishment of an Interprofessional Education Committee

The School of Nursing is interested in developing an interprofessional education program at Seneca College. To develop an interprofessional education program, authors have suggested following a few different steps (Bridges et al., 2011). The first step is to establish an interprofessional education committee. Chairs and Deans that represent the health programs would work together to establish an Interprofessional Education Committee (IPEC).

## Determine Goals of the IPEC

The goals of the IPEC could include:

- a. Lead the development of innovation models of IPE and contribute to knowledge

creation and translation;

- b. Establish curricular and co-curricular content and design, including the development of collaborative competencies and assessment strategies in both the academic and clinical practice settings;
- c. Develop and recommend policies regarding content and curricular design to Schools and Programs;
- d. Review and evaluate the quality of a joint IPE curriculum and establish processes for continuous curriculum enhancement;
- e. Recommend adoption of IPE curricular content to curriculum committees of relevant programs;
- f. Create opportunities for students to learn with, from, and about other health professions;
- g. Map the existing curricular and co-curricular learning opportunities across the schools; and
- h. Conduct a gap analysis for the purpose of collaborating in developing new IPE activities that are aligned with each School's program framework for IPE.

### **Determine Priorities of the IPEC**

After goals are established by the IPEC, requests for volunteers to the interprofessional education committee could be made to address substantive issues of how to operationalize interprofessional education. The IPEC would need to determine the priorities of the IPE program. Discussion and collaboration could include topics about

- What interprofessional competencies do we want our students to demonstrate?
- How will we teach these competencies to students?
- How will we know that students have achieved these competencies?
- Where in the curriculum will this learning be embedded?

The IPEC could consider using the six common interprofessional competencies discussed in the literature to teach and evaluate: communication skills, person-centred care, role clarification, team functioning, collaborative leadership, and interprofessional conflict resolution. The IPEC could contemplate using techniques and tools described in the literature to teach the competencies, including developing case studies, simulations, games, and embedding IPE into existing courses. The IPEC may want to use the *Student Perception of Interprofessional Clinical Education Revised* (SPICE-R) instrument, pre- and post-technique, to assess the change in students' understanding of the competencies.

### **Outcomes and Evaluation**

To determine outcomes and evaluation of the program, the IPEC could

- a. Develop program-level outcomes for interprofessional education (IPE) that are aligned with the Canadian Interprofessional Health Collaborative (CIHC) framework, the competencies developed by the schools' regulating bodies, and the Mission of the School.
- b. Develop an assessment framework to evaluate the progression of students' competence on the IPE competencies for collaborative practice.
- c. Align current IPE activities with the program level goals.

Chairs and Deans may consider holding a faculty development retreat to build capacity for assessing IPE.

### Summary

Interprofessional education programs have been established at many universities and colleges throughout Canada and the world. Preparing students in health programs to collaborate effectively with other health care professionals after graduation has been shown to be vitally important to improve clients' health outcomes and reduce costs. Seneca is poised to embark on this challenge now with the upcoming commencement of new and recently established programs in Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Personal Support Worker, and Honours Bachelor of Healthcare Management. These new programs can link with the many well-established programs in the School of Health Sciences, School of Nursing, School of Community Services, School of Public Safety, and School of Early Childhood Education to enrich the interprofessional education collaboration initiative and build a robust program.

### References

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[https://www.who.int/hrh/resources/framework\\_action/en/](https://www.who.int/hrh/resources/framework_action/en/)

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