

Standardizing emergency nursing  
orientation for consistent, high-quality  
patient care



Now more than ever, emergency department nurses need to be supported with the most current, evidence-based educational resources.

Providing nurses with standardized education is essential to delivering quality patient care, even in the highest-pressure environments.

As a Level I Trauma Center with academic and community emergency services treating approximately 110,000 patients a year, the University of Kentucky (UK HealthCare) must ensure that its emergency nurses are prepared for anything. And with a significant percentage of high-acuity cases moving through the emergency department before reaching the ICU, its nurses must be deeply knowledgeable of both emergency and Acute Care Nursing (ACN) techniques.

UK HealthCare sought to standardize care, deliver evidence-based education, enhance progress tracking, and improve synthesis of educational materials. To do so the organization selected Elsevier's ENA: Emergency Nursing Orientation 3.0 (ENO), a custom on-line course consisting of both emergency nursing and ACN modules. This evidence-based, peer-reviewed course, created in partnership with the Emergency Nurses Association (ENA), replaced UK HealthCare's previous paper-based training system, saving department leadership significant time and ensuring training is always based on the most current information.

According to Patricia Kunz Howard, PhD, RN, CEN, CPEN, TCRN, NE-BC, FAEN, FAAN, Enterprise Director of Emergency Services at UK HealthCare, in the years since its implementation ENO has proven integral to ensuring that each nurse at UK HealthCare, both new and experienced, is prepared to deliver consistent, high-quality patient care.



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### More effective education and progress tracking

Clinical information learned in a traditional classroom setting can be difficult to recall in the stressful emergency care environment. ENO's highly interactive, flexible structure gives nurses a more effective set of tools for success. The course is designed to be integrated into a blended-learning orientation program to better address the unique needs of individual learners via case studies, classroom lectures, and simulation scenarios.

For administrators, the ability to track progress is key for managing competency and standardization. ENO gives Dr. Howard and her staff more insight into how nurses are performing with assessments and online tracking.



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She reports that the modules are very intuitive and easy to use. The course's structure fits well into daily workflows, granting more freedom for nurses to complete the lessons at their own pace.

The program also includes a Knowledge Inventory Tool (KIT), a pre-test used to identify knowledge gaps and suggest relevant lessons to meet each learner's unique needs.

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– Anna Ellis, RN, BSN, CEN,  
Staff Development Instructor,  
Emergency Services, UK Healthcare

### Virtual Learning in the “New Normal”

Online learning was an integral part of UK HealthCare's culture long before 2020 imposed a new set of norms and pressures on health systems, hospitals, and clinicians. Yet the COVID-19 pandemic only emphasized the importance of the organization's commitment to online learning and evidence-based care. Much of the department's previous in-person orientation has now moved online, and Ellis says ENO's flexible structure has been beneficial at a time when so much is changing so quickly.

While the clinical evidence on COVID-19 was still rapidly evolving, Ellis says her team found the review of existing, related modules quite valuable. All nursing staff was required review the Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS) module to refamiliarize themselves with the unique presentation of these patients. The Influenza module was also among the top reviewed courses, as staff sought out as much information related to pandemic disease as possible.

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## Positive outcomes

According to both Dr. Howard and Ms. Ellis, ENO has made the entire orientation process more rewarding, efficient, and ultimately successful. Improvements in collaboration have been noticeable, and emergency services employee retention exceeds the national average.

“We can see from the improvement in pre- and post-testing just how valuable the curriculum is and how much of a difference it has made to knowledge acquisition and retention,” Ellis noted.

Ultimately, nurses with a strong educational foundation aren't just more engaged – they are more likely to promote positive outcomes and patient satisfaction. As Dr. Howard explained, her nurses are more confident now, and in a high-stakes emergency care setting, being ready to make a call with conviction and certainty is an invaluable trait.

All of this speaks to how powerful the program is. Administrators are given the tools to better manage and support their staff, and the nurses themselves gain a targeted, interactive opportunity to build critical knowledge and skills. And as a result, patients receive high-quality, standardized care.

**“It’s an invaluable resource. The images and content from Elsevier are top quality, and our nurses are more confident knowing the skills they’re learning and the and knowledge they’re building match the latest evidence.”**

– Anna Ellis, RN, BSN, CEN,  
Staff Development Instructor,  
Emergency Services, UK Healthcare

## About UK HealthCare

The University of Kentucky (UK HealthCare) is committed to the pillars of academic health care – research, education, and clinical care. Dedicated to the health of the people of Kentucky, UK HealthCare provides the most advanced patient care and serves as an information resource. UK HealthCare strengthens local health care and improves its delivery system by partnering with community hospitals and physicians. UK HealthCare supports education and research needs by offering cutting edge services on par with the nation's best providers.

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