

Practical Nursing Education Program Review Policies

British Columbia College of Nursing Professionals

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Introduction

Purpose of this Policy

This policy sets out the British Columbia College of Nursing Professionals (BCCNP) requirements for the recognition of practical nursing (PN) education programs (hereon in referred to as “PN programs”) in British Columbia (BC).

Authority

The *Health Professions Act* (HPA) requires that BCCNP serve and protect the public at all times and carry out its responsibilities in the public interest. BCCNP reviews PN programs in accordance with its duties and objects under the *Health Professions Act* (HPA), the powers of the Board under the HPA, and the authority delegated to the Education Program Review Committee (EPRC) under BCCNP’s bylaws. The Board has authority under section 19(1)(m) of the HPA to establish conditions or requirements for registration of a person as a member of the college, including standards of academic or technical achievement, and section 19(1)(m.1) empowers the Board to specify academic or technical PN programs that are recognized by BCCNP as meeting those standards. The EPRC makes recommendations to the Board regarding its exercise of this authority, in accordance with BCCNP Bylaw 23 and this policy.

Board and Education Program Review Committee

BCCNP’s Board has established through Bylaws, a Education Program Review Committee (EPRC), who is responsible for establishing, implementing, enforcing and evaluating the standards of education and recognizing PN programs (Bylaw 23). Following a PN program review, the BCCNP Board makes a decision about PN program recognition based on a recommendation from the Education Program Review Committee (EPRC).

BCCNP lists recognized PN programs in Schedule B of its Bylaws. Graduates of recognized PN programs will meet the conditions and requirements for registration established in Bylaw 48 (1) (a).

BCCNP Staff

Staff are available to provide PN programs with interpretation of EPRC requirements, the Practical Nursing Education Program Review Policies, and Practical Nursing Education Program Review Guidelines.

Site Visitors

BCCNP contracts experienced, knowledgeable nursing educators to act as site visitors. EPRC provides them with direction to gather information through an on-site visit. The site visitors report their findings in a timely manner to the PN program and to EPRC.

1.0 Policy Definitions/Descriptions

Access practical nursing education program is a condensed program that prepares health care assistants to become licensed practical nurses (LPNs) in BC.

Board means the BCCNP Board.

BCCNP Standards of Practice are the requirements for LPNs in all settings and domains of practice. The standards include: (1) Practice Standards, (2) Scope of Practice Standards, and (3) Professional Standards.

Curriculum is the program philosophy, organizing concepts, purpose, learning outcomes, framework, and matrix, planned educational experiences, and human and physical resources, as outlined in the [Practical Nursing Program Provincial Curriculum \(PNPPC\)](#) and the [Access Practical Nursing Program Provincial Curriculum \(APNPPC\)](#).

Discontinuing PN program is one in which the last class of students has been admitted or the date for the last student intake has been established.

Entry to Practice Competencies for Licensed Practical Nurses are the expected competencies for LPN practice across Canada.

Generic practical nursing education program prepares students to become LPNs in BC.

Interim report is created by a PN program to provide evidence of progress in meeting specific indicators of the Practical Nursing Education Standards that EPRC assessed as partially met or not met. If required, it is in the recognition letter as a condition of recognition.

Notice of intent is a report submitted to EPRC by an educational institution that is proposing to offer a new PN program, or an existing recognized PN program that is proposing to make a substantial change.

Practical Nursing Education Indicators provide evidence of how well a PN program meets the Practical Nursing Education Standards.

Practical Nursing Education Program Review Guidelines outline the PN program review process and provide templates to assist PN programs to demonstrate how they have met the minimum requirements for recognition.

Practical Nursing Education Standards include: (1) Curriculum, (2) Students and (3) Graduates. During a PN program review, EPRC reviews and evaluates these minimum requirements for recognition.

Private Training Institutions Branch (PTIB) is a branch of the Ministry of Advanced Education that administers the [Private Training Act](#) and associated regulations. Private training institutions in British Columbia require a certificate from PTIB if they provide, or offer to provide, at least one career-related program with 40 hours or more of instructional time, and tuition of at least \$4000¹.

Program review is the process of evaluating a PN program against the Practical Nursing Education Standards. There are two stages of PN program reviews: (1) – initial reviews, and (2) established reviews.

(1) Initial reviews have two steps.

- **Step one** addresses the Curriculum Standard and plans for the Students and Graduates Standards. Step one occurs before the PN program begins. The maximum length of recognition after step one is four years.
- **Step two** addresses all three Practical Nursing Education Standards with an emphasis on the Students and Graduates Standards. Step two occurs once PN programs have evaluation data from graduates and employers. The maximum length of recognition after step two is five years.

(2) Established reviews address all three Practical Nursing Education Standards comprehensively. The maximum length of recognition after an established program review is five years.

Recognition is the status the Board may grant to a PN program following a program review.

Schedule B is a document attached to BCCNP's Bylaws, which lists all generic and access practical nursing education programs that BCCNP currently recognizes.

Self-evaluation report is created by a PN program applying for recognition. The report is a self-assessment that presents evidence demonstrating the achievement of the Practical Nursing Education Standards and Indicators.

Site visit is an on-site visit that is a required part of all PN program reviews. Based on EPRC instructions, site visitors collect and verify evidence by observing and speaking directly with those involved in the PN program.

¹ Private Training Institutions Branch. (2016, September 2). Retrieved from <http://www.privatetraininginstitutions.gov.bc.ca/>

Site visitors are nurses who have experience in curriculum development, implementation, or evaluation in nursing education, and experience with practical nursing practice. They are practising registrants of BCCNP, the College of Registered Nurses of British Columbia, or the College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of British Columbia. The site visitors are selected, contracted, and oriented by BCCNP staff.

Site visitors' report is written by the site visitors. It responds to EPRC instructions/questions and conveys the findings of the site visit.

Education Program Review Committee (EPRC) is a statutory committee of BCCNP's Board that oversees the establishment, implementation, and evaluation of the BC Practical Nursing Education Program Recognition process. EPRC makes recommendations to the Board about PN programs applying for BCCNP-recognition.

Substantial change is a major change to a recognized PN program in one or more of the following:

- (a) Campus location including moving the campus within or outside of the current municipality.
- (b) An increase in the number of students beyond 10 percent of what BCCNP has currently recognized for a PN program at a specific campus.
- (c) How the curriculum addresses the Entry to Practice Competencies for Licensed Practical Nurses and the BCCNP Standards of Practice, including changes in the nature and extent of learning opportunities in the curriculum.
- (d) Learning resources and infrastructure available to support student achievement of the Entry to Practice Competencies for Licensed Practical Nurses and BCCNP Standards of Practice, including simulation resources, faculty resources and PN program learning experiences with clients.
- (e) Discontinuation of a PN program may require a review to ascertain what plans are in place to maintain the integrity of the existing curriculum and to support students to meet the Entry to Practice Competencies for Licensed Practical Nurses and BCCNP Standards of Practice.

Supplementary evidence - information requested by EPRC when sufficient evidence was not provided by the PN program.

Warning to withdraw program recognition – a decision made by the Board that program recognition may be withdrawn.

2.0 Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality

- 2.1** At the beginning of each EPRC meeting, each member discloses any conflict of interest related to the PN programs under review.
- 2.2** Before accepting an assignment, each site visitor discloses any conflict of interest related to the PN program under review.
- 2.3** Staff give PN programs under review the opportunity to identify any conflict of interest related to site visitors or EPRC members.
- 2.4** Staff, site visitors and EPRC members sign confidentiality agreements. They keep all information, documents and correspondence about program reviews and decisions confidential.
- 2.5** BCCNP maintains a list of recognized PN programs on its website. All other details of the review and decision remain confidential, subject to the obligations of BCCNP under the [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#).
- 2.6** If EPRC determines it is necessary in the public interest, it may disclose information, documents or correspondence about a PN program to PTIB or another body responsible for granting accreditation to the PN program.

3.0 Program Reviews

- 3.1** EPRC reviews every recognized PN program at least once every five years.
- 3.2** Educational institutions with both access and generic PN programs are reviewed together.
- 3.3** An additional PN program review may be initiated by EPRC or at the request of the PN program.
- 3.4** PN Program reviews begin a minimum of six months in advance of the PN program's recognition expiry.
- 3.5** If a PN program cannot meet its report submission timelines due to extenuating circumstances, it can apply to EPRC for an extension.
- 3.6** If a PN program cannot complete the PN program review process in time due to extenuating circumstances, the PN program can apply to EPRC to recommend an extension of its recognition to the Board.
- 3.7** PN Programs must follow the Practical Nursing Education Program Review Guidelines.
- 3.8** PN Programs must use BCCNP's document templates for reports submitted to EPRC.
- 3.9** The PN program self-evaluation report submitted to the EPRC shall adhere to the guidelines developed by the Committee.

4.0 Practical Nursing Education Standards & Indicators

4.1 EPRC ordinarily reviews and evaluates PN programs that comply with the [Practical Nursing Program Provincial Curriculum \(PNPPC\)](#) and the [Access Practical Nursing Program Provincial Curriculum \(APNPPC\)](#).

4.2 EPRC reviews and evaluates PN programs based on the following three standards and their related indicators.

1. Curriculum Standard: The curriculum provides the learning experiences necessary for students to achieve the Entry to Practice Competencies for Licensed Practical Nurses and to meet BCCNP Standards of Practice for LPNs.

Indicators

- a) The curriculum clearly describes how the PN program incorporates the Entry to Practice Competencies for Licensed Practical Nurses and BCCNP Standards of Practice.
- b) The PN program learning outcomes incorporate the Entry to Practice Competencies for Licensed Practical Nurses and BCCNP Standards of Practice for LPNs.
- c) The nursing theory and practice courses systematically introduce and build upon the Entry to Practice Competencies for Licensed Practical Nurses and BCCNP Standards of Practice for LPNs.
- d) The curriculum requires students to engage in collaborative practice with members of the inter-professional health care team.
- e) There are sufficient learning resources to support student achievement of Entry to Practice Competencies for Licensed Practical Nurses and BCCNP Standards of Practice for LPNs.
- f) The program has processes in place to remain current with changes in equipment, policy and procedures in the practice setting.

2. Students Standard: Students demonstrate progress towards achieving the Entry to Practice Competencies for Licensed Practical Nurses and meeting BCCNP Standards of Practice for LPNs.

Indicators

- a) The PN program informs students about the requisite skills and abilities needed to achieve the Entry to Practice Competencies for Licensed Practical Nurses.
- b) The PN program uses the Requisite Skills and Abilities to support students to achieve the Entry to Practice Competencies for Licensed Practical Nurses and to meet BCCNP Standards of Practice for LPNs.
- c) The PN program tracks practice learning experiences to give each student experience with a wide variety of clients in various settings and to meet the PNPPC requirements for LPNs.
- d) The PN program provides a comprehensive orientation and ongoing support for faculty and preceptors.
- e) PN program policies support faculty to fail students or remove them from the practice setting for reasons of unprofessional/unethical behaviour or unsafe practice.
- f) PN program policies address student progression, failure and readmission.
- g) Qualified faculty with appropriate experience, in sufficient numbers, support students and preceptors.
- h) Faculty and preceptors give students timely formative and summative feedback about their ability to achieve the Entry to Practice Competencies for Licensed Practical Nurses and to meet BCCNP Standards of Practice for LPNs.
- i) Faculty use a variety of approaches to help students identify and use evidence-informed practice.
- j) Faculty support students to understand the role of, and to work with, a wide variety of other members of the inter-professional health care team.
- k) Students demonstrate their ability to provide safe nursing care using simulation before they practice with clients.
- l) Before graduation, students have achieved the Entry to Practice Competencies for Licensed Practical Nurses and

can be expected to meet BCCNP Standards of Practice for LPNs upon entrance into the profession.

- 3. Graduates Standard:** Graduates of the PN program achieve the Entry to Practice Competencies for Licensed Practical Nurses and meet BCCNP Standards of Practice for LPNs.

Indicators

- a) The PN program has a plan for formative and summative program evaluation that includes the Entry to Practice Competencies for Licensed Practical Nurses and BCCNP Standards of Practice for LPNs.
- b) The PN program monitors, analyzes and uses PN program evaluations and graduate success rates on the Canadian Practical Nurse Registration Examination for PN program quality improvement.
- c) The PN program solicits feedback from graduates about how well their PN program prepared them to achieve the Entry to Practice Competencies for Licensed Practical Nurses and to meet BCCNP Standards of Practice for LPNs.
- d) The PN program solicits feedback from preceptors and employers about how well the PN program prepared graduates to achieve the Entry to Practice Competencies for Licensed Practical Nurses and to meet BCCNP Standards of Practice for LPNs.

5.0 Committee Assessment of Practical Nursing Education Standards

- 5.1** The Committee assesses each standard as being met, partially met or not met.
- 5.2** A standard may be assessed as partially met or not met when deficiencies are identified in evidence regarding indicators of the standards.
- 5.3** When the evidence shows that deficiencies exist in a PN program or when the evidence available is uncertain, the Committee assesses the risk to the public.
- 5.4** Interim reports are requested to monitor progress and identify deficiencies when a standard is partially met or not met.
- 5.5** When the Committee assesses that the deficiencies identified present an imminent or future risk to the public, a recommendation with a warning attached may be made.

6.0 New PN Programs

- 6.1** An educational institution proposing to offer a new PN program submits a notice of intent (NOI) to EPRC. Board recognition is required before educational institution implements the new PN program.
- 6.2** PN programs provide clear evidence of adequate clinical placements for each level in their notice of intent.
- 6.3** The EPRC reviews the NOI and if accepted, instructs the institution to submit a self evaluation report that addresses the Curriculum Standard and plans for the Students and Graduates Standards (see step 1 of program review).
- 6.4** The EPRC determines if the review should be conducted in steps over a period of years with reports and recommendations to the Board after each step.
- 6.5** If the EPRC recommends that the Board deny the PN program's application for recognition and the Board declines to recognize the PN program, the educational institution may not submit another NOI until at least one year after the date of the EPRC's recommendation.
- 6.6** If an educational institution implements a PN program before the Board recognizes it, its graduates may not meet the education requirement for registration with BCCNP.

7.0 Substantially Changed PN Programs

- 7.1** An educational institution proposing to make a substantial change to a recognized PN program, submits a notice of intent (NOI) to EPRC.
- 7.2** Board recognition is required before the PN program implements the change.
- 7.3** If an educational institution implements a substantial change to their PN program before the Board recognizes the PN program, its graduates may not meet the education requirements for registration with BCCNP.
- 7.4** PN programs provide clear evidence of adequate clinical placements for each level in their notice of intent.
- 7.5** Upon receipt of a notice of intent about a substantial change, EPRC determines the following:
 - a)** the evidence it requires to assess the change, and
 - b)** whether it requires another PN program review before the next scheduled review.
- 7.6** EPRC may require a discontinuing PN program to:
 - a)** submit a modified self-evaluation report, and
 - b)** undergo a PN program review to extend the length of recognition needed to enable students currently enrolled and/or the last intake of students to graduate. The purpose of the discontinuing PN program review is to confirm that plans are in place to maintain the integrity of the existing curriculum and to support students to achieve Entry to Practice Competencies for Licensed Practical Nurses and be expected to meet BCCNP Standards of Practice for LPNs.

8.0 Self-Evaluation Reports & Site Visits

The review process includes submission of a self-evaluation report and a site visit.

8A Self-Evaluation Reports

- 8A.1** PN programs submit their self-evaluation report by the due date.
- 8A.2** PN program reviews occur at the campus level.
- 8A.3** Educational institutions offering their PN program at multiple campuses may be scheduled for review within the same time frame. They submit information that is campus-specific, and information that is the same across all campuses.
- 8A.4** If the self-evaluation report does not provide sufficient evidence for EPRC to complete its assessment of the Practical Nursing Education Standards, EPRC may give the PN program the opportunity to submit:
- a) supplementary evidence; or
 - b) a revised self-evaluation report.
- 8A.5** In cases of (a) or (b) above, staff may reschedule the site visit, and EPRC will give the PN program a due date for the supplementary evidence or revised self-evaluation report.
- 8A.6** If the evidence submitted in a recognized PN program's revised (second) self-evaluation report is not satisfactory, EPRC:
- a) rejects the report;
 - b) assesses the current and future risks the PN program poses to the public as outlined in section 10 of this policy; and requests a third self-evaluation report; and
 - c) recommends the Board warn the PN program that its recognition may be withdrawn if the revised (third) self-evaluation report does not indicate satisfactory improvement in accordance with section 11 of this policy.
- 8A.7** If the third self-evaluation report of a recognized PN program does not indicate satisfactory improvement, EPRC recommends the Board withdraw recognition in accordance with section 13 of this policy.
- 8A.8** If the evidence submitted in an unrecognized PN program's second report is not satisfactory, EPRC:
- a) rejects the second report; and

- b) recommends the Board deny the PN program's application for recognition in accordance with section 13 of this policy.

8B Site Visit

- 8B.1** The purpose of a site visit is to collect evidence to augment the self-evaluation report and/or verify evidence as requested by the EPRC. Site visitors do not assess whether the nursing education standards are met and they do not make recommendations to the EPRC about recognition status.
- 8B.2** Following review and acceptance of the self evaluation report by EPRC, BCCNP staff will confirm site visit arrangements.
- 8B.3** The EPRC's request for evidence is outlined in writing by BCCNP staff and provided to the site visitors and the PN program in advance of the visit.
- 8B.4** The site visitors shall then submit a written report to the EPRC.

9.0 Interim Report

9.1 PN programs submit their interim report on the date specified in the recognition letter. The interim report only addresses the specific indicators that EPRC assessed as incomplete or ambiguous.

9.2 As a result of the assessment of an interim report the committee may:

- a) recommend to the board acceptance of the interim report as having met the terms and conditions of recognition; or
- b) before rejecting an interim report:
 - i. give the PN program the opportunity to submit supplementary evidence of progress; or
 - ii. negotiate a remedy and timelines for compliance that the committee recommends to the Board as sufficient for acceptance of the interim report as having met the terms and conditions of recognition
- c) reject the interim report because it does not meet the terms and conditions of recognition and warning the educational institution that recognition of its PN program may be withdrawn if the next review does not indicate satisfactory improvement.

10.0 Assessment of Risk to the Public

- 10.1** When assessing risk to the public, EPRC considers the nature and extent of the incomplete or ambiguous information submitted by the PN program.
- 10.2** EPRC assesses both the imminent risk to the public and the future risk to the public.
- 10.3** EPRC considers the following factors when assessing the risk to the public:
- a)** specific, realistic plans presented by the program to resolve incomplete or ambiguous information;
 - b)** PN program/institution strengths that may mitigate risk to the public;
 - c)** evidence that the educational institution understands the information required, and is planning for satisfactory improvements; and
 - d)** evidence of a pattern that incomplete or ambiguous information identified during previous PN program reviews is still not being addressed satisfactorily.

11.0 Warning to Withdraw PN Program Recognition

11.1 When EPRC has assessed that there is a risk to the public, it may recommend the Board issues a warning to withdraw PN program recognition. In such cases, the length of the warning period will be determined in accordance with the guidelines set out below.

11.2 When recommending a warning, EPRC considers:

- a)** Fairness to students enrolled in the PN program.
- b)** The impact on students' ability to complete the PN program and become eligible for registration.
- c)** The time needed for students enrolled in the PN program to graduate.
- d)** The time needed to allow the PN program a reasonable opportunity to demonstrate satisfactory resolution of the incomplete or ambiguous information, without risking the students' success or ability to meet the Entry-to-Practice Competencies.

12.0 Action on EPRC Recommendations

- 12.1** When no change to Schedule B is required, the Chief Executive Officer/Registrar may act on recommendations from EPRC on behalf of the Board. The Chief Executive Officer/Registrar reports to the Board the actions taken on its behalf.
- 12.2** When a change to Schedule B is required, the Board must approve EPRC recommendations.
- 12.3** An EPRC recommendation to warn withdrawal of recognition places a PN program's recognition status in jeopardy and requires Board approval.
- 12.4** Staff communicate EPRC recommendations and Board decisions to the president of the educational institution.

13.0 Board Decisions

13.1 After considering EPRC recommendations about a new or substantially changed PN program, the Board may:

- a)** give recognition for up to four years subject to any conditions the Board may determine;
- b)** give recognition on conditions designed to correct incomplete or ambiguous information and warn the educational institution that recognition of its PN program may be withdrawn if the next review does not indicate satisfactory improvement; or
- c)** decline to recognize, or withdraw recognition, if the recognition requirements have not been met.

13.2 If a dispute arises as to whether a change to a PN program is considered a substantial change or a new PN program review, the question is referred to the Board whose decision is final.

13.3 After considering EPRC recommendations about a recognized PN program, the Board may:

- a)** give recognition of no longer than five years, subject to any conditions the Board may determine;
- b)** give recognition to the PN program on conditions designed to correct the incomplete or ambiguous information and warn the PN program that recognition may be withdrawn if the next review does not indicate satisfactory improvement; or
- c)** withdraw recognition if the conditions of recognition have not been met and a warning was given at the time of the last review or interim report.

13.4 Where both EPRC and the PN program consent, the Board may vary a decision previously made.

References

[Access Practical Nursing Program Provincial Curriculum](#)

[CRNBC Guidelines for Nursing Education Programs](#)

[CRNBC Nursing Education Program and Course Review Policies](#)

[Journal of Nursing Regulation](#)

[Practical Nursing Education Program Review Guidelines](#)

[Practical Nursing Education Program Review Templates](#)

[Practical Nursing Program Provincial Curriculum](#)

[Private Training Institutions Branch](#)