

# Education Program Review Policies

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## Introduction

The [Health Professions Act](#) (HPA) is the provincial statute that guides the work of the British Columbia College of Nurses and Midwives (BCCNM). The HPA requires that BCCNM serve and protect the public and carry out its responsibilities in the public interest.

Under HPA Section 16(2)(c), it is BCCNM's responsibility to set registration requirements for a person to become a member of the college. Section 19(1)(m) authorizes the Board to establish in bylaws the conditions or requirements for registration including standards of academic or technical achievement, and section 19(1)(m.1) authorizes the Board to specify education programs that are recognized as meeting those standards.

The purpose of the Education Program Review Policies is to provide for consistency and transparency in the process for review of entry-level nursing and midwifery education programs for recognition by BCCNM. The policies are intended for use in education program review by the Education Program Review Committee (EPRC), for BCCNM staff, for education programs that are currently recognized by BCCNM, and for new programs wanting to obtain recognition from BCCNM.

Decisions about program recognition are made by the Board following a recommendation by the EPRC. By graduating from BCCNM-recognized programs, graduates meet the education requirement when they apply for registration with BCCNM.

For Practical Nursing Programs, BCCNM only reviews programs that follow the Practical Nursing provincial curriculum set out by the British Columbia Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills.

## 1. Confidentiality and Disclosure of Education Program Information

- 1.1 HPA section 53 requires that a person must preserve confidentiality with respect to all matters or things that come to the person's knowledge while exercising a power or performing a duty under the HPA unless disclosure is (a) necessary to exercise the power or to perform the duty, or (b) authorized as being in the public interest by the Board. Under section 21 of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, BCCNM must withhold certain third-party information from Freedom of Information requests (unless the third-party consents to disclosure). BCCNM also has an Information Sharing and Disclosure Policy to guide BCCNM on information sharing in accordance with the law (the "BCCNM Policy"). Pursuant to these provisions, all information, documents and correspondence about program reviews shall be kept confidential by BCCNM and shall not be disclosed to third parties except as follows:
  - a. Under section 75 of the BCCNM Bylaws, the Registrar/Chief Executive Officer may disclose any information obtained about education programs through education program review-related activities to the provincial government.

- b. Information collected from or about educational institutions and education programs may be disclosed by BCCNM to its site visitors, subject matter experts and other contractors who are legally bound to meet confidentiality requirements.
- c. A list of currently recognized programs/courses is made public by BCCNM.
- d. BCCNM provides the outcome of psychiatric nursing education program reviews to other Registered Psychiatric Nurse (RPN) regulators in Canada.
- e. Information may be disclosed as otherwise required or authorized by law, including without limitation under the HPA and the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and in compliance with a court order.

## 2. Established Program<sup>1</sup>

- 2.1 To maintain BCCNM recognition status, an Established Program must provide evidence in a Program Review Report to address Education Standards and Indicators (Appendix A) approved by the Board.
- 2.2 BCCNM staff and/or subject matter experts contracted by BCCNM assess the evidence submitted by the Established Program and prepare a report on the findings of the assessment for the EPRC.
- 2.3 If the Established Program does not provide sufficient evidence to complete an assessment of its achievement of the Education Standards and Indicators, the Program may be provided the opportunity to submit supplementary evidence or a revised Program Review Report.
- 2.4 A Site Visit may be required as part of the review of an Established Program, as determined by BCCNM staff, the EPRC or the Board.
- 2.5 The EPRC will ordinarily recommend that the Board continue to recognize an Established Program that meets the following program recognition criteria:
  - a. The Established Program must meet without deficiencies the Critical Indicators 1.3 and 2.1; and
  - b. The Established Program must meet or exceed a total score for all Indicators of 86 out of 100, referred to as the cut score.

## 3. New Program

- 3.1 An educational institution proposing to offer a New Program must receive recognition of the program by the Board prior to admitting students.

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<sup>1</sup> Education programs that are currently recognized by BCCNM at the time of implementation of these policies will be considered Established Programs.

## EDUCATION PROGRAM REVIEW POLICIES

- 3.2 If an educational institution admits students to a New Program before it is recognized by the Board, the educational institution cannot assume that graduates from the Program will be eligible for registration with BCCNM.
- 3.3 An educational institution must first offer a BCCNM-recognized entry-level midwifery or nursing program before proposing to offer a new re-entry, refresher, or internationally educated midwifery or nursing program of the same designation.
- 3.4 BCCNM will not review a New Program until all required external approvals for the New Program have concluded.
- 3.5 An educational institution proposing to offer a New Program must communicate their intention in writing to BCCNM using the form provided by the BCCNM staff.
- 3.6 A New Program must provide evidence in a Program Review Report (Proposed New Program) to address the Education Standards and Indicators (Appendix A).
- 3.7 BCCNM staff and/or subject matter experts contracted by BCCNM assess the evidence submitted by the New Program and prepare a report on the findings of the assessment for the EPRC.
- 3.8 If the New Program does not provide sufficient evidence to complete an assessment of its achievement of the Education Standards and Indicators, the Program may be provided the opportunity to submit supplementary evidence or a revised Program Review Report (Proposed New Program).
- 3.9 A Site Visit may be required as part of the review of a New Program, as determined by BCCNM Staff, the EPRC, or the Board.
- 3.10 The EPRC will ordinarily recommend that the Board recognize a New Program that meets the following program recognition criteria:
  - a. The Program must meet without deficiencies the Education Standards and Indicators per the Program Review Report (Proposed New Program).

## 4. Site Visit

- 4.1 An on-site or virtual site visit may be made to any location at which the educational institution is offering the program that is undergoing a review with BCCNM, to collect evidence to augment the Program Review Report and/or verify evidence based on the Education Standards and Indicators.
- 4.2 The need for a site visit may be determined based on:
  - a. the previous review and stipulation in the last Board decision about recognition of the program and the next scheduled review, or
  - b. the assessment of the Program Review Report submitted during the current program review.

## 5. Risk Assessment

- 5.1 BCCNM will conduct a Risk Assessment when a BCCNM-recognized Established Program or proposed New Program does not meet the program recognition criteria or satisfy other terms and conditions previously imposed by the Board.
- 5.2 A Risk Assessment will consider the following factors:
- a. The nature and extent of the deficiencies in the recognition requirements;
  - b. Specific, realistic plans presented by the educational institution to correct the deficiencies;
  - c. The strengths of the program that mitigate any risks to the public;
  - d. Evidence that the educational institution is acting in a transparent and accountable manner regarding the deficiencies and planning for satisfactory improvements;
  - e. Evidence of any pattern over time that deficiencies identified during previous reviews are not being addressed satisfactorily; and
  - f. The nature, severity and probability of any harm to the public that may result from these deficiencies.
- 5.3 The EPRC may use the results of a Risk Assessment when making recommendations to the Board about program recognition, including any terms and conditions.

## 6. Recommendations to the Board

- 6.0.1 Following the review of an Established Program, the EPRC makes recommendations to the Board regarding program recognition length, and terms and conditions, if any.
- 6.0.2 Following the review of a New Program, the EPRC makes recommendations to the Board regarding preliminary program recognition length, and terms and conditions, if any.
- 6.0.3 The EPRC makes recommendations to the Board regarding extensions to program recognition in consideration of extenuating circumstances.
- 6.0.4 The Deputy Registrar may recommend the Board vary a decision previously recommended by the EPRC.
- 6.0.5 The Deputy Registrar may, on behalf of the Board, act upon recommendations from the EPRC respecting an educational institution's program recognition and communicate about them to the educational institution, if the recognition status of the program is not jeopardized by the action taken. The Registrar/Chief Executive Officer shall report to the Board at the earliest opportunity on the actions taken on its behalf.

## 6.1 RECOGNITION LENGTHS

- 6.1.1 The EPRC may recommend a recognition length not exceeding the following maximum durations for Established Programs:
- a. Practical Nursing and Psychiatric Nursing programs (diploma) - 5 years.
  - b. Midwifery, Nurse Practitioner, Psychiatric Nursing (degree), Registered Nursing programs -7 years.
- 6.1.2 The EPRC may recommend a recognition length for a period shorter than the maximum durations per Section 6.1.1 for New Programs.

## 6.2 TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- 6.2.1 The EPRC may recommend extension of recognition with terms and conditions for an Established Program if the Program does not meet the program recognition criteria set out in Section 2.5.
- 6.2.2 The EPRC may recommend granting preliminary recognition with terms and conditions for a New Program if evidence of program implementation is required.
- 6.2.3 The EPRC will review staff assessment of the evidence required as part of the terms and conditions for an Established or New Program and may recommend to the Board the following:
- a. Remove any conditions of recognition; or
  - b. Request additional terms and conditions; or
  - c. Issue a Warning of Withdrawal of Program Recognition.

## 6.3 DENIAL OF RECOGNITION FOR NEW PROGRAMS

- 6.3.1 The EPRC may recommend denying recognition of a New Program if it does not meet the program recognition criteria as set out in 3.10.
- 6.3.2 If the Board denies recognition of a New Program, the educational institution is not permitted to submit an application for a New Program for at least one year from the date of the Board's decision.

## 7. Warning of Withdrawal of Program Recognition

- 7.1 In addition to recommending terms and conditions per Section 6.2., when the EPRC has assessed that there is risk to the public, the EPRC considers recommending that a warning of withdrawal of program recognition be attached to the program's recognition. In such cases, the length of any warning period recommended to the Board shall be determined in accordance with the policy set out in the balance of Section 7.
- 7.2 The length of the warning period the EPRC recommends may vary because each recommendation will be based on a thorough review by the EPRC of the facts and circumstances or context of the particular education program.

- 7.3 Any EPRC recommendation to give a warning of withdrawal of recognition to a program places the recognition status of the program in jeopardy and shall be presented to the Board for decision before any actions are taken on behalf of the Board in furtherance of such withdrawal.
- 7.4 Issuance of the Warning of Withdrawal of Program Recognition by the Board initiates the corresponding Warning Period.
- 7.5 The duration of the Warning Period recommended to the Board shall be determined in consideration of the following factors:
- a. Fairness to students enrolled in the program in terms of the impact that recognition withdrawal would have on their ability to complete the program and proceed with BCCNM registration; and
  - b. A reasonable amount of time and opportunity for the program to demonstrate satisfactory resolution of the deficiencies identified by the EPRC.
- 7.6 If the Board issues a warning of withdrawal of program recognition to an educational institution, BCCNM shall encourage the educational institution to give accurate written information to its current and prospective students about the status of BCCNM's recognition of the program, including the fact of the warning and the terms and conditions attached to the program recognition.

## **8. Removal of Warning of Withdrawal of Program Recognition**

- 8.1 The EPRC will review staff assessment of the evidence required as part of the terms and conditions of the Warning of Withdrawal of Program Recognition, and may recommend to the Board the following:
- a. Remove any conditions of recognition; or
  - b. Request additional terms and conditions including maintaining the warning; or
  - c. Remove the warning of withdrawal of program recognition; or
  - d. Withdraw program recognition.

## **9. Withdrawal of Program Recognition**

- 9.1 If a recommendation to withdraw program recognition is to be considered by the Board, the affected educational institution shall be provided with
- a. A copy of the recognition report that is to be presented to the Board in support of the recommendation to withdraw recognition, and
  - b. A reasonable opportunity to deliver a written response for the Board's consideration before the Board decides whether to withdraw program recognition.

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- 9.2 If requested by the affected educational institution, representatives of the educational institution shall be provided with a reasonable opportunity to make a supplementary oral presentation at a Board meeting before the Board decides whether to withdraw program recognition.
- 9.3 When determining whether to withdraw program recognition, the Board considers:
- a. The assessed risks to the public;
  - b. The program's progress in addressing the conditions of recognition approved by the Board at the time of the previous program review;
  - c. The period for which the warning of withdrawal has attached to the program's recognition; and
  - d. Any written or oral submissions made by the educational institution in response to the recognition report/risk assessment.
- 9.4 If the Board decides to withdraw a program's recognition, an amendment to the BCCNM Bylaws is required to remove the program from the list in the relevant Schedule of recognized education programs. The process for a bylaw amendment is set out in the HPA and includes a notice period. During the notice period, the affected educational institution has a further opportunity to deliver to BCCNM additional written submissions for the Board's consideration before the Board decides whether to finally approve the bylaw amendment and file it with the Minister of Health. Unless the affected educational institution can demonstrate there are special circumstances, no further opportunity for the affected educational institution to make oral presentations to the Board will be available during the notice period. Program recognition continues until the bylaw amendment removing the program comes into force.

## 10. Substantial Changes to a Program

- 10.1 An educational institution proposing to make a substantial change to a recognized program is responsible for notifying BCCNM in writing of the proposed substantial change. Implementation of a substantial change prior to its review by BCCNM may result in the graduates of the program not being eligible for registration with BCCNM.
- 10.2 BCCNM staff will determine if additional evidence is required to assess the substantial change, and whether any further review of the program is required before the next scheduled review.

## Appendix A: Education Standards and Indicators

Standard 1: Structure (Total Weight 30%)		
Indicators		Weight %
1.1	Program governance	3
1.2	Program evaluation	4
1.3	Client and student safety <sup>2</sup>	2.5
	a) Orientation of students and program educators to practice settings	5
	b) Regulatory supervision of student activities in all practice learning activities that affect clients	5
	c) Regular assessment of student performance in theory, lab, simulation, and practice experiences	2.5
	d) Processes in place to prevent, manage, and learn from safety incidents	3
1.4	Qualified program educators who are LPNs, RNs, RMs, RPNs, and NPs and are registered with BCCNM	5
1.5	Program complement of qualified educators has current competence and is appropriate to support students	
Standard 2: Curriculum (Total Weight 50%)		
Indicators		
2.1	Curriculum incorporates the Entry-Level Competencies and BCCNM Standards of Practice <sup>3</sup>	25
2.2	Practice learning experiences support students to attain and demonstrate the Entry-Level Competencies and BCCNM Standards of Practice	15
2.3	Processes in place to communicate program expectations for student practice learning to agency staff/preceptors	5
2.4	Regular processes to evaluate course design and delivery in theory, lab, simulation, and practice learning courses	5
Standard 3: Outcome (Total Weight 20%)		
Indicators		
3.1	Registration exam scores – first time pass rates	8
3.2	Recent graduates' ratings of their perceived preparation to attain and demonstrate the entry-level competencies and BCCNM Standards of Practice	6
3.3	Feedback from program educators and preceptors on student attainment and demonstration of the Entry-Level Competencies and BCCNM Standards of Practice in the final practice learning experience	6
Total Weight of all Standards		100%

<sup>2</sup> Critical Indicator

<sup>3</sup> Critical Indicator

## Appendix B: Glossary

**BCCNM Standards of Practice** means standards, limits or conditions for the practice of a designated health profession by registrants, established in accordance with the HPA. For all nursing designations, the Standards of Practice are comprised of: Professional Standards (and Code of Ethics for RPNs only), Practice Standards, and Scope of Practice Standards. For midwives, the BCCNM Standards of Practice are referred to as Practice Standards which are comprised of: Scope and Model of Practice, and Standards and Guidelines.

**Critical Indicators** are those Indicators that programs will be expected to meet fully as a condition of program recognition. The Critical Indicators are: Indicator 1.3 (Client and Student Safety); and Indicator 2.1 (Curriculum incorporates the Entry-Level Competencies and BCCNM Standards of Practice).

**Curriculum** means the foundational values, beliefs and concepts; program or course outcomes/goals/objectives; and overall structure, including how learning is sequenced and built upon progressively to provide the learning experiences necessary for students to achieve the competencies and the BCCNM Standards of Practice for the applicable designation.

**Cut Score** also known as a passing standard, means the minimum score a program must achieve as part of the criteria for program recognition. The Cut Score for BCCNM education program review is 86%.

**Deputy Registrar** as designated by the Board is the staff member holding responsibility for program review.

**Education Program** means a program or course of academic or technical education offered as qualifying their graduates to meet a condition or requirement established in BCCNM Bylaws for registration with the college to practise one or more of the designated health professions of practical nursing, psychiatric nursing, nursing, or midwifery. Education programs include:

- a. an entry-level education program that prepares graduates for initial registration with BCCNM as a licensed practical nurse, nurse practitioner, registered midwife, registered nurse, or registered psychiatric nurse; or
- b. a re-entry or refresher program or a program for internationally educated nurses or midwives that prepares graduates to become eligible to proceed in the BCCNM registration process.

**Education Program Review Committee** or **EPRC** or **committee** means the committee established by the Board in the BCCNM Bylaws that conducts reviews of new and established education programs. The EPRC makes recommendations to the Board about education program recognition. The BCCNM Bylaws set out the powers and duties of the EPRC.

**Entry-Level Competencies** reflect the knowledge skills and judgement required of nurses or midwives in Canada to provide safe, competent, ethical and compassionate care. The entry-level competencies outline the essential competencies that nurses or midwives must possess in order to begin practice.

**Established Program** means an education program that has undergone a review by BCCNM addressing all the Education Standards and Indicators and is currently recognized by BCCNM.

**New Program** means a program that is new to the educational institution offering the program and is not currently recognized by BCCNM.

**Preliminary Recognition** means the status granted by the Board to a new program following the initial review of the program. Programs undergoing an initial review must meet the Education Standards and Indicators per the Program Review Report (Proposed New Program) Template.

**Program Review Report** means a report of the evidence and findings of an educational institution's comprehensive assessment of its education program against the BCCNM Education Standards and Indicators. The Program Review Report is submitted following initiation of the education program review process and presents evidence demonstrating achievement of the BCCNM Education Standards and Indicators.

**Program Review Report (Proposed New Program)** means a report of the evidence and findings of an educational institution's comprehensive assessment of its proposed new education program against the BCCNM Education Standards and Indicators. The Program Review Report (Proposed New Program) is submitted following initiation of the education program review process and presents evidence demonstrating achievement of the BCCNM Education Standards and Indicators.

**Recognition** means the status granted by the Board to an education program that meets the standards of academic or technical achievement and the qualifications required for graduates to proceed in the BCCNM registration process for a licensed practical nurse, nurse practitioner, registered midwife, registered nurse, or registered psychiatric nurse.

**Site Visitor** means BCCNM staff or subject matter experts contracted by BCCNM to conduct a virtual or in person visit to any location at which the educational institution is offering the program under review.

**Substantial change** means the revision of a recognized education program which includes a change in one or more of the following:

- a. how the curriculum addresses the entry-level competencies and the BCCNM Standards of Practice (e.g., learning resources, program infrastructure, lab/simulation resources, faculty resources and program learning experiences with clients);
- b. campus location, including relocation of a campus, establishing a new campus or satellite campus, or a change to the name of the educational institution;
- c. increase in the number of students beyond 10 percent of what BCCNM has currently recognized for a program;
- d. discontinuation of a program or closing of a campus;
- e. any other significant change that will or may impact on the ability of the students to achieve the requirements to proceed in the registration process with BCCNM following graduation from the program.

**Supplementary evidence** means the additional evidence education programs may be required to submit if the evidence submitted is not sufficient to complete the assessment of the Education Standards and Indicators. This evidence may be in the form of written documentation, a site visit (virtual or in person), interview, or other form of evidence as determined by the BCCNM staff, subject matter experts contracted by BCCNM or the EPRC.

**Warning of withdrawal of program recognition** means a warning issued by the Board to an educational institution that its program recognition may be withdrawn if certain terms and conditions of program recognition are not met within a specific timeframe.

**Withdrawal of recognition** means the process followed by the Board to amend the BCCNM Bylaws by removing a program from a Schedule of recognized education programs.

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