

MIDWIVES, REGISTERED NURSES, AND REGISTERED PSYCHIATRIC NURSES

# Certified and Specialized Practices Course Review Policies

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## 1 Introduction

The [Health Professions Act](#) (HPA) is the provincial statute that guides the work of the British Columbia College of Nurses and Midwives (BCCNM or “the college”). The HPA requires that BCCNM serve and protect the public and carry out its responsibilities in the public interest. BCCNM approves courses leading to certification under the authority as set out in the respective Nurses (Registered) and Nurse Practitioner, the Registered Psychiatric Nurses Regulations, and the Midwives Regulation.

Decisions about course<sup>1</sup> approval are made by BCCNM’s board following a review and recommendation to the board by the Education Program Review Committee (EPRC). The certified practices and specialized practices approved by BCCNM and the requirements for certified practice and specialized practice registration are outlined in the BCCNM bylaws.

Registered Nurses and Registered Psychiatric Nurses<sup>2</sup> who complete BCCNM-approved certified practice courses, and Registered Midwives who complete BCCNM approved specialized practice courses are eligible to proceed with the certified practice or specialized practice accordingly.

Registered Nurses, Registered Psychiatric Nurses, and Registered Midwives who are certified by BCCNM are authorized to perform certain restricted activities within their autonomous scope of practice. Specific decision support tools (DSTs) set out the activities that are included in the certified practice. The certified practice DSTs and the competencies for Remote Practice, RN First Call, and Reproductive Health are maintained by the [Nurses and Nurse Practitioners of BC](#) (NNPBC). The certified practice DSTs for Opioid Use Disorder are maintained by the BC Centre for Substance Use. Specialized Practice Frameworks are maintained by [BCCNM](#).

## 2 Policy definitions

*Approval* is a status granted by the board to the provider(s) of a certified practice course(s) or specialized practice(s) course(s) that meets the certified and specialized practice education standards and enables registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses to apply for certified practice registration or registered midwives to apply for specialized practice registration with BCCNM.

*BCCNM Standards of practice* means standards, limits, or conditions for the practice of a designated health professional by registrants, established in accordance with section 19(1)(k) or (1.1) of the HPA. They apply across all settings and domains of practice. For all nursing designations, the standards of practice are comprised of: 1) professional standards (and code of ethics for RPNs only), 2) practice standards, and 3) scope of practice standards.

*Board* means the BCCNM board, BCCNM’s governing body.

*Chair* and *vice-chair* mean the members of the EPRC designation by the board from among the EPRC members to serve as chair and vice-chairs as provided for in the BCCNM bylaws.

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1 For the purposes of accuracy and consistency, the term course, rather than program, is used throughout this document to describe the preparation for certified or specialized practice.

2 Certified practices for Registered Psychiatric Nurses applies to Opioid Use Disorder only.

***Certified practices*** means the restricted activities that are subject to regulatory provisions within the Nurses (Registered) and Nurse Practitioners Regulation and Registered Psychiatric Nurses Regulation. These provisions require registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses to successfully complete a certification program approved by BCCNM before carrying out the restricted activities designated as certified practices. Certified practices are also referred to as BCCNM-certified practices to distinguish them from activities that employers or other organizations certify.

***Certified practice course*** means a course that prepares students<sup>3</sup> with the requirements to be eligible for certified practice registration with BCCNM.

***Established practice course*** means a course that has been approved by BCCNM.

***Competencies*** means entry-level competencies applicable to the course being reviewed.

***Curriculum*** means the foundational values, beliefs, and concepts; outcomes/goals/objectives; and overall structure of a course. This includes how learning is sequenced and built upon to provide the learning experiences necessary to achieve the competencies and apply the DSTs for the specified certified practice or the framework for the specified specialized practice.

***Deputy registrar*** means the deputy registrar of Regulatory Policy & Programs or another member of the BCCNM senior staff holding responsibility for education program review, or a person acting in such a position.

***Discontinued course*** means one in which the last class of students has been admitted, or the date for the last student intake has been established.

***Education Program Review Committee or EPRC*** means the committee established by the board in the BCCNM bylaws that conducts reviews of new and established education programs and courses. The EPRC makes recommendations to the board about education program recognition, certified practice course approvals, and specialized practice course approvals. The BCCNM bylaws set out the powers and duties of the EPRC.

***Education programs*** means programs or courses of academic or technical education offered as qualifying their graduates to meet the competencies and BCCNM standards of practice for certified practices courses or the competencies and frameworks for specialized practices courses.

***New certified practice or new specialized practice course*** means a course that has not been approved by BCCNM.

***Notice of intent*** means the notification submitted to the committee describing plans to offer a new or substantially changed course.

***Specialized practice*** means the restricted activities that are subject to regulatory provisions within the Midwives Regulation. The provisions require registered midwives to successfully complete a

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<sup>3</sup> Hereafter, "students" mean nurses who are enrolled in a certified practice course or midwives who are enrolled in a specialized practice course.

certification program approved by BCCNM before carrying out the restricted activities designated as specialized practices.

*Specialized practice course* means a course that prepares students with the requirements to be eligible for specialized practice registration with BCCNM.

### **3 Education Program Review Committee**

- 3.1 Per the BCCNM bylaws, all members of the EPRC are appointed by the board, and the EPRC consists of not fewer than nine members, of whom not less than one-third must be public representatives.
- 3.2 The BCCNM bylaws set out the powers and duties of the EPRC including but not limited to: 1) conducting reviews of certified practice courses and specialized practice courses not yet approved by the college for the purposes of registration; and 2) conducting reviews of certified courses and specialized practice courses approved by the college for the purposes of registration.

### **4 Conflict of interest**

- 4.1 The EPRC and staff shall examine on a case-by-case basis any conflicts of interest at the outset and throughout the process of each course review. Everyone shall disclose, for examination and decision before a course review commences and at any time during the review, any actual or perceived conflict of interest arising for an individual who is to be involved in that course review.
- 4.2 Representatives of courses being reviewed shall have the opportunity to bring to the attention of the EPRC or BCCNM staff any alleged conflicts of interest arising for committee members, BCCNM staff, or subject matter experts who are, or are to be, involved in the course review.

### **5 Confidentiality and disclosure of education program information**

- 5.1 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). Pursuant to these provisions, all information, documents, and correspondence about course 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 programs through education program review-related activities to the provincial government.

- b) A list of currently approved courses is made public by BCCNM through the BCCNM website.
- c) Information collected from or about educational institutions and education course providers may be disclosed by BCCNM to its subject matter experts and other contractors who are legally bound to meet the same confidentiality requirements as apply to BCCNM.
- d) 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.

## 6 Course review process

- 6.1 The review of an established course shall be timed with the intent that it will be completed prior to the expiration of the current approval to ensure there is not an unjustifiable break in approval.
- 6.2 The Deputy Registrar (on behalf of the Board) may modify or vary the review process for a new or established course.
- 6.3 Courses offered by private institutions in BC will not ordinarily be recommended by the committee for board approval unless the private institution is registered with the Private Training Institutions Branch.
- 6.4 Following initiation of the review process, evidence of how the course addresses education standards and indicators, and/or specialized practice framework certification training course content requirements is submitted.
- 6.5 BCCNM staff and/or subject matter experts contracted by BCCNM conduct the assessment and prepare a report on the findings of the assessment for the EPRC.

## 7 Education standards and indicators

The EPRC requires evidence to assess whether the education standards and/or specialized practice framework certification training course content requirements are met. The following are the education standards and indicators against which certified and specialized practice courses shall be reviewed.

***Curriculum Standard*** – The curriculum builds upon the BCCNM standards of practice to provide the learning experiences necessary for registered nurses, registered psychiatric nurses, and students to achieve the certified practice competencies and apply the DSTs<sup>4</sup> or registered midwives and students to achieve the specialized practice competencies and apply the frameworks.

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<sup>4</sup> Hereafter, “competencies” and “decision support tools (DSTs)” mean the competencies and DSTs for the specific certified practice course or the “competencies” and “framework” for the specific specialized course being reviewed.

### Indicators of the Curriculum Standard

- a) The course is clearly described, and its foundations are congruent with the achievement of competencies and BCCNM standards of practice for certified practice or BCCNM specialized practice frameworks for specialized practice.
- b) The course requires students to apply RN, RPN or NP competencies and BCCNM standards of practice for certified practice or the RM competencies and BCCNM specialized practice framework for specialized practice while learning to provide care directly with clients and engaging with interprofessional education and care.

***Students Standard*** – Students demonstrate progress toward the achievement of the competencies and application of the DSTs or competencies and application of specialized practice frameworks.

### Indicators of the Students Standard

- a) Students receive well-timed formative and summative feedback to achieve competencies and apply DSTs or specialized practice frameworks.
- b) Students have access to sufficient learning resources to support their achievement of the competencies and application of DSTs or specialized practice frameworks.
- c) Program policies and resources support faculty to fail students or remove them from the practice setting for reasons of unprofessional/unethical behaviour or unsafe practice.
- d) Students who are successful at course completion have achieved the competencies and are able to apply the DSTs or the specialized practice frameworks to provide safe, competent, and ethical care.

***Course Evaluation Standard*** – Certified practice or specialized practice course evaluations demonstrate student preparedness for practice upon course completion.

### Indicator of the Course Evaluation Standard

- a) A plan for implementation of formative and summative course evaluation is clearly presented.

## 8 Substantially changed course

- 8.1 A substantial change means the revision of a course that includes a major change, rather than a formative modification, in one or more of the following:
  - o How the curriculum addresses the achievement of the competencies and application of the DSTs or the specialized practice framework, including changes in the nature and extent of learning opportunities in the curriculum
  - o Learning resources to support student achievement of the competencies and application of the DSTs or the specialized practice framework including laboratory and/or learning experiences with clients

- Expectations about overall student performance, including evaluation of student practice and/or policies about safe student performance
  - Any other significant change that will or may impact on the ability of the students to achieve the requirements to proceed in the certified practice registration process with BCCNM following completion of the course
- 8.2 A course provider proposing to make substantial changes to an established course is expected to submit in writing, the course provider's intent to make a substantial change to an established course.
- 8.3 Upon receipt of a course provider's written notification of a substantial change, BCCNM staff conduct a preliminary review and determine what additional evidence the EPRC may require to assess the change. The EPRC determines whether any further review is required before the next scheduled review.
- 8.4 If the EPRC determines a review is required before the next scheduled review, then Board approval is required prior to offering the substantially changed course. If a course provider makes a substantial change before it is reviewed by the EPRC and approved by the board, the course provider cannot assume that graduates of the course will be eligible for certification with BCCNM.

## 9 New course

- 9.1 A course provider proposing to offer a new, course may, at the determination of BCCNM staff or the Deputy Registrar, be required to submit, in writing, the course provider's intent to offer the new course to BCCNM's EPRC. For students to be eligible for certification with BCCNM, a new course must have board approval prior to enrolling students into the course.
- 9.2 If students are enrolled to a new certified or specialized practice course before it is approved by the board, students who complete the new course may not be eligible for certified or specialized practice registration with BCCNM.
- 9.3 Upon receipt of a course provider's written intent to offer a new course, BCCNM staff will determine the reporting requirements as part of a comprehensive review that may include evidence of the education standards and indicators and/or specialized practice framework certification training course content requirements.
- 9.4 If the report submitted does not provide sufficient evidence to complete the assessment of the Education Standards and Indicators and/or specialized practice framework certification training course content requirements, the EPRC may require 1) supplementary evidence or 2) a revised report. If the supplementary evidence or revised report again does not provide sufficient evidence to complete the assessment of Education Standards and Indicators and/or specialized practice framework certification training course content requirements the EPRC may recommend the board deny the course provider's application for course approval.
- 9.5 The EPRC makes a recommendation to the board to approve or not approve the new course.



- 9.6 If the EPRC recommends that the board deny the application for course approval and the board declines to approve the new course, BCCNM will not accept or consider, another proposal for a new course until at least one year after the date of the board's decision.

## 10 Discontinuing a course

- 10.1 A course provider must submit in writing its intent to discontinue a BCCNM-approved course and provide a plan for course completion for students currently enrolled in the course.
- 10.2 BCCNM staff or the EPRC will determine what, if any, additional information is required from the course provider.

## 11 Recommendations to the board

- 11.1 Decisions about course approval are made by the board following a review and recommendation to the board by the EPRC.
- 11.2 Recommendations to the board may include, but are not limited to, recognition length, extensions to course approval, substantial changes, conditions on approval (if any), requirements for interim reports, warning of withdrawal of approval, or withdrawal of approval.
- 11.3 In the case of a review of a new or established course, the recommendation will be to approve the course for a maximum of three years; or in the case of a new course, to not approve the course.

## 12 Decisions of the board

- 12.1 The Registrar/Chief Executive Officer may, on behalf of the board, act upon recommendations from the EPRC respecting a course provider's course approval and communicate about them to the course provider, if the approval status of the course 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.
- 12.2 The board, after considering the report and recommendations of the EPRC respecting a course, may:
- a) Approve the course for a period of time no longer than the maximum recognition period permitted under this policy, subject to any terms and conditions;
  - b) Where a deficiency in the Standards or Indicators is identified in the report, give recognition to the program on terms and conditions designed to correct the deficiency and may warn the course provider that approval of its course may be withdrawn if the next review does not indicate satisfactory improvement; or
  - c) Withdraw approval of the course if the terms and conditions have not been met and a warning of withdrawal of course approval was given following the most recent review or interim report respecting the program and is still in effect.

- 12.3 The board may vary the process for a course review as the board considers necessary or appropriate, including without limitation, authorizing, or directing that BCCNM staff and/or external subject matter experts conduct or oversee the review and authorizing BCCNM staff to make recommendations directly to the board without reference to the EPRC.
- 12.4 The board may vary a decision previously made.

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