

Policy: Professional Conduct

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to outline professional conduct expectations for faculty and students of the NESA BN Programs.

DEFINITIONS:

Professional conduct is behaviour that supports, enables, and facilitates excellence in nursing education and practice for oneself and others. It identifies one as a member of a professional community where professional values are lived and shared, and where accountability for one's actions is expected.

Unprofessional conduct is behaviour that is in conflict with the values of the profession, and therefore deemed as unacceptable within a professional community. Such behaviour may impede, negatively impact, or otherwise compromise the NESA BN Programs or endanger the safety and well-being of other students, faculty, or community members. The NESA BN Programs, as a professional community, has the right to establish consequences for unprofessional conduct, up to and including involuntary withdrawal from a course or the programs.

Professional boundaries separate therapeutic behaviour from any behaviour which, well intentioned or not, could lessen the benefit of care to clients, families, and communities. Professional boundaries set limits to relationships, which establish a safe and therapeutic connection between the professional and others as outlined in College of Registered Nurses of Alberta's *'Professional Boundaries: Guidelines for the Nurse-Client Relationship'* (2020)

POLICY SCOPE:

This Professional Conduct Policy extends to all faculty and students in the NESA BN Programs.

POLICY STATEMENT(S):

As a professional in the NESA BN programs, I will:

1. Demonstrate respect and the professional values of registered nursing in all my interactions with colleagues and patients.
2. Demonstrate commitment to my scholarly work.
3. Preserve and protect the confidentiality of my patients, and my colleagues.
4. Protect and maintain professional boundaries between self and others (i.e. peers, instructors, patients)

5. Advocate for and work to maintain a learning environment that:
 - a. honours everyone's right to be heard
 - b. values and respects diversity
 - c. requires honesty, expects integrity and demands accountability
 - d. is a safe place for learning, and is free of judgment and hostility
6. Commit to holding myself and others accountable to upholding these principles.

SPECIFICS OF THE POLICY:

1. Formal Communication:

- Communications sent within the NESAs BN Programs and to other professional contacts are to be respectful in tone and content.
- Students/faculty/instructors are required to use LC or U of L e-mail rather than non-institutional accounts when communicating with one another.
- Faculty will guide students as to the appropriate use of technology for any specific course or practice environment.
- Faculty/students are not expected to respond to messages on evenings, weekends, or during statutory holidays and vacation, but are free to do so if they wish and are encouraged to respond in a timely manner to matters of urgency.
- Faculty/students are accountable to check messages regularly and be aware of course or program information disseminated.

2. Professional Behavior and Interactions:

Faculty will:

- demonstrate an attitude reflective of sincere interest in student success and provide opportunities for students to seek support when necessary
- openly and frequently acknowledge and commend student successes
- create a positive learning environment where students feel safe and supported, and take action to address situations where students express feelings of discomfort or anxiety
- encourage students to express concerns in a constructive and professional manner

Students will:

- use direct and appropriate channels of communication to provide feedback in a constructive manner
- recognize, respect and be open to the perspective, knowledge, and experience of practice partners
- communicate with practice partners in a manner that supports the development of positive, professional, and reciprocal relationships

APPENDIX:

N/A

RELATED POLICIES/ASSOCIATED GUIDELINES:

- NESA BN Program Policy: Media (2013) Date added
- NESA BN Program Guideline: Participation in Social Media (2021) Date added
- University of Lethbridge Harassment & Discrimination Policy (2016)
- Lethbridge College Student Rights & Code of Conduct Policy (2020)
- Lethbridge College Respectful Campus Policy (2012)
- Lethbridge College Workplace Relationships Policy (2009)

REFERENCES:

College of Registered Nurses of Alberta. (2020). *Professional Boundaries for Registered Nurses: Guidelines for the Nurse-Client Relationship*. Retrieved from [professional-boundaries-guidelines-for-the-nurse-client-relationship-2020.pdf \(nurses.ab.ca\)](https://www.nurses.ab.ca/professional-boundaries-guidelines-for-the-nurse-client-relationship-2020.pdf)

Canadian Nurses Association. (2017). Code of ethics for registered nurses. Retrieved from [Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses \(hl-prod-ca-oc-download.s3-ca-central-1.amazonaws.com\)](https://www.cna.ca/en/ethics/code-of-ethics-for-registered-nurses)

****NOTE: NESA Policies exist within organizational frameworks of policy for Lethbridge College and the University of Lethbridge, and within agreements established with practice partner organizations. If and when NESA policies are found to differ from such policies and agreements, it is important to note that such policies/agreements will take precedence over NESA program policies.***

Revised By/date:	Approved by/date:
Policy Review Committee: February 2015	NESA Joint Faculty Council: May 12, 2015
Policy Review Committee: December 2015	Not Required: editorial changes
Policy Review Committee: December 2016	Not Required: editorial changes
Policy Review Committee: December 2017	Not Required: editorial changes
Policy Review Committee: April 2019	Not Required: no change
Policy Review Committee: February 2020	Not Required: editorial changes/link update
Policy Review Committee: January 2021	Not Required: editorial changes
Policy Review Committee: February 2022	Not Required: editorial changes