

## Policy: Attendance

### PURPOSE:

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The purpose of the attendance policy is to establish the requirements and expectations for student attendance for all orientations, classes, seminars, labs, and clinical experiences throughout their NESA BN program of study. Attendance is a fundamental expectation in the Bachelor of Nursing programs, reflecting the core professional values of accountability, collaboration, and integrity. Consistent presence and active participation are not only essential for academic success but also for developing the clinical reasoning, clinical judgment, and teamwork skills required in nursing praxis.

As future registered nurses, NESA BN Programs students are preparing to join a highly respected and trusted profession where reliability and professional presence directly impact patient safety and team dynamics. Demonstrating accountability through regular attendance is an early and essential step in becoming a competent, ethical, and collaborative healthcare professional. Your commitment to showing up—both physically and professionally—matters.

### DEFINITIONS:

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**Absence:** refers to not being physically present to engage in the scheduled activities for a course.

**Collaborative learning:** Collaborative learning is an educational approach that involves students working together in small groups to solve problems, complete tasks, or create products, with the goal of enhancing their understanding through active engagement, dialogue, and shared responsibility. It emphasizes the co-construction of knowledge, mutual accountability, and the development of interpersonal and professional skills (Barkley, Cross, & Major, 2014; Laal & Ghodsi, 2012)

**Fitness to Practice:** congruent with the “All the qualities and capabilities of an individual relevant to their practice as a nurse, including but not limited to freedom from any cognitive, physical, psychological, or emotional condition, and dependence on alcohol or drugs that impairs their ability to practice nursing” (CNA, 2017). There may be numerous conditions or changes in health status that can compromise a student’s fitness to practice.

**Nursing Praxis** includes all orientation, simulation, lab, and clinical experiences, components, activities, and scheduled hours assigned for the development of the competencies required for the professional practice of a baccalaureate prepared registered nurse.

## POLICY SCOPE:

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This policy applies to all students in the NESAs BN programs. Exceptions are as follows:

1. **Athletic Team Participation:** The NESAs BN programs acknowledge that some nursing students are members of their academic institution's official athletic teams and may have obligations to these teams to maintain scholarships. All members of a University of Lethbridge or Lethbridge Polytechnic athletic team who anticipate absence from theory and/lab, or praxis course related to athletic commitments are required to provide each instructor with a schedule of athletic commitments (provided by the athletics coach) at the start of the course, or as early as available, and discuss these potential absences with their instructor to determine if these absences can be appropriately accommodated without impacting the student's ability to attain the course outcomes and required praxis hours. Not providing your instructor with your schedule at the start of the course may jeopardize you being released to attend your athletic event. Please note that students on athletic teams must meet with an academic advisor at their respective institution to assist with course planning each semester and should attempt to register for courses so that their athletic commitments have the minimum impact on their academic commitments.
2. **CNSA Conference Attendance:** Official student delegates, and other nursing students who wish to attend an annual or regional (CNSA) conference **may** be granted permission to attend **one (1)** such conference during course or praxis time in each academic year, as long as participation in these activities will not adversely affect the achievement of course objectives. Allowance for travel time to the conference will be assessed and approved per conference. Permission to attend the conference **may** be granted for any student who: is in good standing within the BN programs, has no Enhancement Plan currently in effect, and adheres to the application process described in this policy. **(See NESAs BN Programs Guideline: CNSA Conference Delegate Application Form).**
3. **NESA Governance Committees:** We believe that it strengthens our program to bring student perspectives to NESAs governance committees. Whenever possible, meeting dates and times for the meetings of these committees will be set when the student member(s) has no classroom or praxis commitments **(See NESAs BN Programs Guideline: Student Participation in NESAs BN Programs Governance Policy).**

## POLICY STATEMENT(S):

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1. Attendance in nursing course work is a matter of professional conduct. Nursing students are expected to demonstrate accountability and integrity; this is consistent with the Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses (Canadian Nurses Association, 2017).
2. Attendance at all orientation sessions is mandatory and cannot be missed. If a student misses a praxis orientation session, the student will be removed from the course. Exceptions may be considered for extenuating circumstances (e.g., illness, bereavement). Students must contact the course instructor in these situations to discuss potential for alternate arrangements.
3. Regular and punctual attendance in all assigned praxis days is required to support optimal student learning and to meet professional program requirements (i.e. Entry-Level Competencies for the

Practice of Registered Nurses). Absence from required praxis hours may impact a student's ability to meet course outcomes and graduate.

4. Attendance at classes, labs and/or seminars for the course are mandatory. Students must attend these learning experiences to receive a pass in the course.
  - a. In the Bachelor of Nursing programs, lab sessions (on both campuses) where foundational information and skills are first introduced are critical to safe, competent nursing practice. If a student misses a lab in which these essential skills are taught, it is their professional responsibility to arrange and attend a make-up lab (Simulation Health Centre/Hub with a BN prepared facilitator). Items to cover will be provided by lab instructor.
    - **Students must complete the required lab practice and skill validation prior to demonstrating any skill in the praxis setting.** If a lab session is missed, it is the student's responsibility to notify their Praxis instructor and to refrain from performing the skill in Praxis until the missed content has been made up. Lab instructors will also notify the Praxis instructor via email. Students are accountable for ensuring they are adequately prepared to practice safely and in accordance with the standards of the program and the nursing profession. Failure to meet this expectation may result in being deemed unprepared for clinical praxis, which could affect course progression and overall program standing.
5. If an instructor deems a student unsafe or unprepared for a learning experience, the student may be excluded from the experience; thus, the student may not be able to meet the course requirements.
  - a. A student may be considered unsafe if their behaviours or actions:
    - pose a risk to the client, peer or staff safety and/or,
    - demonstrate impaired judgment or functioning and/or,
    - reflect a lack of adherence to professional boundaries or conduct standards.
  - b. A student may be considered unprepared if they:
    - fail to complete required pre-learning activities and/or,
    - are unable to articulate or demonstrate essential knowledge or skills required for safe participation and/or,
    - do not bring required materials or equipment and/or,
    - arrive late or miss key orientation content for the learning experience, compromising understanding or continuity of care.

**Note:** The examples listed above are **not exhaustive**. Other behaviours or situations may also be deemed unsafe or unprepared based on the instructor's professional judgment and the context of the learning environment.

6. Students in the NESA BN Programs will ensure their own fitness to participate in praxis. This is consistent with CRNA Practice Standards for Regulated Members (College of Registered Nurses of Alberta, 2023).
  - a. Attending theory classes, labs, or praxis (clinical placement) while unwell compromises personal well-being, professional integrity, and the health and safety of peers, faculty, patients, and the healthcare team. Choosing not to attend when ill reflects professionalism,

- accountability, and a respect for infection prevention and control practices, which are foundational to nursing practice.
- b. Students who are ill should follow appropriate reporting procedures, seek medical advice as needed, and collaborate with faculty to support safe and timely return to learning activities **(See NESA BN Programs Policy: Fitness to Practice)**.
7. To ensure fitness to practice and avoid learner fatigue, learning is spread over the duration of the term praxis courses:
- a. No student will be required or permitted to work greater than 12 hours in a 24-hour period.
  - b. No student will be required or permitted to work overtime.
  - c. Students will not be required or permitted to work practice shifts totaling more than 84 hours in any two-week period.
  - d. Students will not be required or permitted to work during statutory holidays or for institutional reading breaks.
  - e. Short shifts will not be required or permitted.

#### **SPECIFICS OF THE POLICY:**

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1. Attendance at all scheduled components (e.g., required, structure learning activities) associated with nursing theory/lab/praxis-courses is required. Students who miss praxis days are at an increased risk of not successfully completing a nursing praxis course.
2. Due to unforeseen circumstances, scheduled praxis experiences may be changed or rescheduled (e.g. due to unit closure, weather and road conditions, instructor illness). Praxis instructors will notify students as soon as possible of any change in scheduled praxis hours/shifts **(See NESA BN Programs Guideline: Practice Day Cancellation)**.
3. When an absence occurs (e.g. due to illness) students are responsible for notifying their instructor and/or Program Coordinator (Lethbridge Polytechnic) and/or Assistant Dean (University of Lethbridge):
  - a. in a **praxis setting**, it is the student's professional responsibility to notify their instructor via phone call at least 30 minutes before their nursing praxis is scheduled to begin, as well as notify the Program Coordinator (Lethbridge Polytechnic) and/or Assistant Dean (University of Lethbridge) via email
  - b. during a **scheduled theory or lab course**, it is the student's professional responsibility to notify their instructor via email before the start of class the day of absence
  - c. when an absence occurs during **NURS 4922 Professional Preceptorship**, it is the student's professional responsibility to notify their preceptor via phone at least 30 minutes before their praxis is scheduled to begin, as well as notify their Faculty Advisor via email.
4. Unexcused absences are considered unprofessional conduct.
5. Students engaged in team-based collaborative learning activities are responsible and accountable to their peers for both attendance and active participation. their participation and attendance. Where applicable, peer evaluations are used to support individual accountability for contributions to collaborative learning team assignments and shared to

participatory learning. Students are expected to demonstrate professionalism, integrity and accountability and integrity when completing peer evaluations.

6. When a nursing student becomes aware of conditions or changes in health status that may compromise their fitness to practice, they must notify their instructor and/or Program Coordinator (Lethbridge Polytechnic) and/or Assistant Dean (University of Lethbridge). A Fitness-to-Practice Assessment may be initiated to ensure safety to practice (**See NESA BN Programs Policy: Fitness to Practice**).
7. Neither professional nor personal pursuits will be accepted as an unavoidable absence from scheduled nursing praxis.
8. It is each student's responsibility to plan any scheduled commitments outside of the "term dates" listed in the academic calendars of both Lethbridge Polytechnic and the University of Lethbridge.
9. Cumulative practice hours will be tracked via HSPnet for each praxis course as a record of attendance.
10. The Student Progress report will be completed at the end of every semester and submitted via institutional learning management systems (LMS) (**See NESA BN Programs Guideline: Student Progress Report**).
11. Absences due to bereavement will be addressed on an individual basis by the instructor in consultation with the Practice Coordinator (Lethbridge Polytechnic) /Assistant Dean (University of Lethbridge).
12. Requests for absences may be subject to review and approval by the Dean or designate (University of Lethbridge) as outlined in the Absence from Clinical Practice Time Algorithm (**See NESA BN Programs Policy: Leave of Absence**).
13. An Enhancement Plan will be used when patterns of absence exist and will be designed to support student success in meeting course requirements and outcomes. The instructor and students will co-create the enhancement plan collaboratively to address the causes of the absences and set in place strategies to prevent further absences which could have a negative impact on the student's ability to achieve course outcomes (**See NESA BN Programs: Guideline: Enhancement Plan**).

## **APPENDIX:**

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### **RELATED POLICIES/ASSOCIATED GUIDELINES:**

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NESA BN Programs Policy: Fitness to Practice

NESA BN Programs Policy: Leave of Absence

NESA BN Programs Guideline: Student Participation in NESA Governance Committees

NESA BN Programs Policy: Professional Conduct

NESA BN Programs Guideline: Enhancement Plan

NESA BN Programs Guideline: Student Progress Report

## REFERENCES:

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<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/careers/cp-stu-spa.pdf>
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- Barkley, E. F., Cross, K. P., & Major, C. H. (2014). *Collaborative Learning Techniques: A Handbook for College Faculty (2nd ed.)*. Jossey-Bass.
- Canadian Nurses Association. (2017). *Code of ethics for registered nurses*.  
<https://cdn1.nscn.ca/sites/default/files/documents/resources/code-of-ethics-for-registered-nurses.pdf>
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- Laal, M., & Ghodsi, S. M. (2012). Benefits of collaborative learning. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 31, 486–490.
- University of Calgary, Faculty of Nursing (2010). *Nursing Practice Attendance Policy*.
- University of Saskatchewan (2023). *Attendance Policy*.  
<https://nursing.usask.ca/policies/undergraduate.php>

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

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Revised By/Date	Approved by/date
Policy Review Committee: March 2012	NESA Joint Faculty Council: April 18, 2012
Policy Review Committee: February 2013	NESA Joint Faculty Council: February 27, 2013
Policy Review Committee: February 2014	NESA Joint Faculty Council: May 14, 2014
Policy Review Committee: February 2015	Not Required: no change
Policy Review Committee: December 2015	Not Required: no change
Policy Review Committee: March 2017	NESA Joint Faculty Council: May 2017
Policy Review Committee: May 2018	Not Required: editorial changes
Policy Review Committee: April 2019	Not Required: editorial changes
Policy Review Committee: May 2022	NESA Joint Faculty: Table changes for FALL 2022
Policy Review Committee: April 2023	NESA Joint Faculty: May 2023
Policy Review Committee: April 2024	NESA Joint Faculty: April 2024
Policy Review Committee: April 2025	Approved NESA Joint Faculty: May 2025