

Guideline: Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its use in the Nursing BN Programs

PURPOSE:

The profession of registered nursing is a highly trusted and valued profession that requires consistent application of critical thinking and clinical reasoning in complex and dynamic care environments. The development of these competencies is foundational to safe, ethical, and effective nursing practice and must be intentionally cultivated throughout the BN program. Accordingly, AI must support, rather than replace, the development of students' independent clinical reasoning and professional judgment.

This guideline provides direction for the ethical, responsible, sustainable, and equitable use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools within the Nursing BN Programs.

The intent is to:

- Promote academic integrity
- Clarify acceptable and unacceptable uses of AI
- Support student learning and faculty practice
- Safeguard patient, student, and institutional data
- Address environmental and sustainability considerations
- Ensure AI practices align with Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) principles

This document is intended as a guideline to support evolving practice rather than a fixed rule-based policy, recognizing that AI technologies are rapidly changing.

DEFINITIONS:

Artificial Intelligence (AI):

Computer systems capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence, including learning, reasoning, language generation, and pattern recognition (OECD, 2019; Russell & Norvig, 2021).

Generative AI:

AI systems that generate new content such as text, images, audio, or code in response to user prompts (e.g., ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, Claude, Grammarly, DALL-E)

Algorithmic Bias:

Systematic errors in AI outputs that result in unfair or inequitable outcomes (Buolamwini & Gebru, 2018; UNESCO, 2021).

AI Hallucination:

When AI systems generate false or misleading information presented as factual. (Ji et al., 2023).

Sustainable AI:

The development and use of AI systems that minimize environmental impact, including energy, water, and carbon use (OECD, 2019; Strubell et al., 2019).

GUIDELINE SCOPE:

This guideline applies to:

- Faculty (full-time, part-time, sessional)
- Clinical instructors
- Staff involved in curriculum, assessment, and simulation
- Undergraduate nursing students in the NESA BN Program

It applies to AI use in:

- Teaching and learning activities
- Assessment development and completion
- Simulation and case development
- Research and scholarly activities
- Administrative and content development tasks

This guideline applies to program-based courses and does NOT apply to praxis documentation (EPIC/Connect Care) where separate professional and clinical policies govern practice expectations.

SPECIFICS OF THE GUIDELINE:

Guiding Principles

Academic Integrity

- AI must not replace the student's independent critical thinking, clinical reasoning, or professional judgment.
- Unauthorized AI use in graded assessments constitutes academic misconduct.
- AI use must be transparent and acknowledged when permitted.
- Faculty will clearly state expectations for AI use in course syllabi and assignments.

Professional and Clinical Responsibility

- AI tools are not clinical decision-makers.
- AI-generated information may contain inaccuracies ("hallucinations"), outdated content, or fabricated citations.
- AI must never be used to generate or process identifiable patient information.

- Clinical documentation and decision-making must remain human-driven and aligned with professional standards and organizational policies/procedures/guidelines.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

AI systems may reflect systemic inequities present in their training data. An EDI-informed approach includes:

- Critically examining whose perspectives are represented or excluded
- Avoiding overreliance on Western-centric frameworks
- Recognizing accessibility benefits (e.g., language support, idea organization)
- Acknowledging inequities in digital access and literacy
- AI should enhance inclusion rather than reinforce bias (Buolamwini & Gebru, 2018; UNESCO, 2021).

Environmental Sustainability

AI systems require significant computational resources and contribute to environmental impact (Strubell et al., 2019). Consistent with nursing's commitment to planetary health, the Nursing BN Programs encourage:

- Purposeful rather than excessive AI use
- Avoiding unnecessary repetitive prompting
- Selecting AI tools only when they add meaningful educational value
- Integrating sustainability discussions into professional ethics conversations

Acceptable and Unacceptable Uses

Acceptable Uses (When Permitted by Instructor)

Examples may include (but are not limited to) the following:

For Students:

- Brainstorming ideas
- Clarifying complex concepts
- Grammar and language refinement
- Practice NCLEX-style questions (for self-study)
- Generating study outlines
- Comparing perspectives for critical analysis

For Faculty:

- Drafting case studies (with verification)
- Generating simulation scenarios
- Developing rubric language
- Brainstorming teaching strategies
- Editing documents for clarity

All AI-supported work must be:

- Verified for accuracy
- Reviewed critically
- Aligned with course objectives
- Acknowledged/disclosed when AI use is permitted

Unacceptable Uses

- Submitting AI-generated work as original without disclosure
- Using AI to fabricate references or clinical evidence
- Entering confidential or identifiable patient/student data
- Using AI during exams or restricted assessments
- Replacing required clinical reasoning or reflective practice

Transparency and Attribution

When AI use is permitted, students may be required to include a statement such as:

“This assignment was developed with the assistance of [AI tool name] for brainstorming and language refinement. All content has been critically reviewed and revised by the author.” Please refer to institutional policies/guidelines required for specifics. Faculty should model transparency in their own AI use.

Faculty Responsibilities

Faculty members are expected to:

- Clearly state AI expectations in course outlines or as expected by institutional expectations
- Design assessments that prioritize critical thinking and application
- Provide examples of appropriate and inappropriate AI use
- Engage in ongoing professional development
- Apply AI-related academic integrity processes consistently

Student Responsibilities

Students are expected to:

- Follow course-specific AI guidance
- Use AI tools ethically and transparently
- Critically evaluate AI-generated information
- Protect privacy and confidentiality
- Uphold professional nursing standards

APPENDIX A

NESA BN PROGRAMS STUDENT AI DECISION TREE

Step 1

Is the assignment specifically marked as “no AI permitted”

Yes: Do NOT use AI

No: Proceed to Step 2

Step 2

Does the course outline or instructor provide guidance about AI use?

Yes: Follow those specific instructions

No: Proceed to Step 3

Step 3

What are you using AI for?

- A. Brainstorming ideas
- B. Clarifying concepts
- C. Grammar/language refinement
- D. Generating full written responses
- E. Creating references or citations
- F. Clinical decision-making support

If A–C: Likely acceptable *if disclosed and critically reviewed*

If D–F: Likely NOT acceptable unless explicitly permitted

Step 4

Does your AI use replace your own thinking?

Yes: Revise, AI must support not replace your own thinking

No: Proceed to Step 5

Step 5

Have you:

- Verified factual accuracy?
- Checked for fabricated citations?
- Considered bias or missing perspectives?
- Ensured no confidential data was entered?
- Disclosed AI use if required?

Yes: AI use likely acceptable

No: Revise before submission

RELATED POLICIES/ASSOCIATED GUIDELINES:

This guideline is informed by:

- University of Lethbridge Student Code of Conduct Policies, Artificial Intelligence Literacy Resources
- Lethbridge Polytechnic Student Rights and Code of Conduct Policies, Artificial Intelligence Strategies
- Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) Code of Ethics
- Principles of Responsible AI (OECD, UNESCO)
- Emerging scholarship on AI bias, sustainability, and digital ethics
- Faculty survey feedback (NESA BN AI Survey, 2025)

REFERENCES:

Buolamwini, J., & Gebru, T. (2018). Gender shades: Intersectional accuracy disparities in commercial gender classification. *Proceedings of Machine Learning Research*, 81, 1–15.

Canadian Nurses Association. (2025). *Code of ethics for nurses*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Nurses Association. <https://www.cna-aiic.ca/en/nursing/regulated-nursing-in-canada/nursing-ethics/2025-coe>

Ji, Z., Lee, N., Frieske, R., et al. (2023). Survey of hallucination in natural language generation. *ACM Computing Surveys*. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3571730>

OECD. (2019). *OECD principles on artificial intelligence*. OECD Publishing. <https://www.oecd.org/going-digital/ai/principles/>

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Strubell, E., Ganesh, A., & McCallum, A. (2019). Energy and policy considerations for deep learning in NLP. *Proceedings of the 57th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics*, 3645–3650.

UNESCO. (2021). *Recommendation on the ethics of artificial intelligence*. UNESCO Publishing.

For the most current policy information, always refer to the official NESA BN Program Guidelines and Forms Website: <https://www.ulethbridge.ca/healthsciences/policies>

Approved by/date: NESA Joint Faculty Council; May 11, 2026