

# Faculty of Human and Health Sciences

**Northern Collaborative Baccalaureate Degree Program (NCBNP);  
BScN Completion Program (inclusive of Rural Nursing Certificate  
Program)**

School of Nursing

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## PART 1 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT:

Faculty of Human & Health Sciences, School of Nursing

### DEGREE PROGRAM(S) UNDER REVIEW:

Northern Collaborative Baccalaureate Nursing Program (NCBNP)- BScN Degree program; BScN Completion Program (inclusive of the Rural Nursing Certificate Program)

### CHAIR/DIRECTOR:

Dr. Catharine Schiller

### DATE OF DEGREE PROGRAM(S) REVIEW:

October 10, 11, 2024

### DATE OF THE PREVIOUS DEGREE PROGRAM(S) REVIEW:

N/A

### INTERNAL RESOURCE PERSON:

Dr. Susan Burke (Internal Reviewer) – Associate Professor, School of Health Sciences, UNBC

### REVIEWERS

Reviewer 1 - Dr. Nicole Harder

Position: Associate Professor & Associate Dean Undergraduate Programs, College of Nursing

University Name: University of Manitoba

University Address: 281 Helen Glass Centre for Nursing, Winnipeg, MN R3T 2N2

Reviewer 2 - Dr. Kristen Jones-Bonofiglio

Position: Director & Associate Professor, School of Nursing

University Name: Lakehead University

University Address: 955 Oliver Road Thunder Bay, ON P7B5E1

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## I. SUMMARY OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW OF DEGREE PROGRAM(S) PROCESS

The in-person review occurred over two days (i.e., Oct 10-11, 2024) on the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC)- Prince George campus. We began the first day with meetings with the Chair of the School of Nursing, Dr. Catharine Schiller; Vice-Provost of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, Dr. Katerina Standish; and, the Interim Dean of the Faculty of Human & Health Sciences, Dr. Margot Parkes. This was followed by discussions with the Campus Development Liaison and Operations Manager, the Manager and Assistant Manager of the Faculty of Human & Health Sciences, Nursing Programs Advisors, BScN students, members

of the Clinical Placement Team, Lab Coordinators and Instructors, Office of Research & Innovation, Learning Management Systems, Administrative Coordinators, Administrative Assistants, and Faculty/Sessional Instructors. The second day we met with Prince George Teaching Members, Student Support Services (i.e., Librarian, Academic Success, Access Resource, and First Nations centres), Collaborative partners from Coast Mountain College and College of New Caledonia, local Health Authority partners, and Program Coordinators, Faculty (i.e., Prince George, Terrace, Quesnel), Office of Indigenous Initiatives, and closed with a tour of the newly renovated Nursing lab and sim spaces. The second day also held opportunities to meet with Dr. Catharine Schiller and Dr. Margot Parkes.

Over 400 supporting documents were provided to the review team via a shared e-folder and email. Offers were made during the Review to make additional information available upon request.

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## **II. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The Northern Collaborative Baccalaureate Nursing Program (NCBNP) and the BScN Completion Program are delivered collaboratively through a partnership between the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), the College of New Caledonia (CNC), and Coast Mountain College (CMTN). These programs are designed to meet the unique needs of northern, rural, and remote communities in British Columbia, with a strong focus on delivering culturally safe, practice-based, and experiential learning opportunities. The programs align with UNBC's mission, vision, and values and demonstrate a commitment to sustainability, inclusivity, and academic excellence.

### **Key Attributes**

- **Alignment with Institutional Goals:** The programs are congruent with UNBC's strategic objectives, promoting leadership, sustainability, and community engagement.
- **Unique Focus:** Emphasis on serving northern and Indigenous communities sets the programs apart, fostering graduates who are well-equipped for the unique challenges of rural nursing.
- **Collaborative Model:** The partnership between UNBC, CNC, and CMTN supports a distributed delivery model, enabling students to access education close to home while benefiting from shared resources and expertise.

### **Program Highlights**

1. Curriculum Innovations

- a. The NCBNP 2.0 curriculum renewal focuses on modernizing course offerings, integrating culturally safe practices, and addressing the needs of northern health systems.
  - b. Enhanced curriculum mapping and the introduction of intra- and interprofessional education opportunities.
2. Student Supports
- a. Programs prioritize flexibility to accommodate the diverse needs of learners, including those in remote locations.
  - b. Regular feedback from students through surveys, town halls, and meetings with the Chair fosters a responsive learning environment.
3. Clinical Education and Placements
- a. Partnerships with Northern Health and First Nations Health Authority enhance access to quality clinical placements.
  - b. The introduction of Employed Student Nurse (ESN) opportunities bridges education and practice, particularly in rural settings.
4. Infrastructure Development
- a. Renovation of the Prince George campus simulation and lab spaces provides students with state-of-the-art facilities for experiential learning.

### **Quality Indicators**

- Faculty and Teaching Excellence: Dedicated teaching members contribute to high-quality education, despite challenges such as instructor shortages.
- Student Success: Strong NCLEX-RN pass rates and graduate employment in local health authorities underscore the program's impact.
- Research and Scholarship: Integration of research activities enriches the academic environment and enhances the relevance of program offerings.

### **Challenges**

- Instructor Recruitment and Retention: Recruiting qualified faculty, particularly for rural sites, remains a persistent issue, leading to workload concerns and potential for burnout.
- Change Fatigue: The rapid pace of curriculum renewal, leadership turnover, and external demands have contributed to operational strain across the partnerships.

- **Communication and Coordination:** The complexity of managing collaborative programs across multiple campuses has highlighted the need for improved governance structures and clearer communication pathways.
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## Major Strengths of the Degree Program

**Alignment with Institutional Mission and Values:** The program supports UNBC's commitment to serving rural, remote, and Indigenous communities, fostering inclusivity, and promoting high-quality nursing education.

**Collaboration Across Institutions:** The partnerships between UNBC, College of New Caledonia (CNC), and Coast Mountain College (CMTN) provide diverse educational opportunities while addressing the unique healthcare needs of Northern British Columbia.

**Program Structure and Accessibility:** The program's distributed delivery model allows students to remain in their home communities, increasing access to nursing education in rural areas.

**Commitment to Curriculum Renewal:** The NCBNP 2.0 initiative demonstrates a strong commitment to updating and modernizing curriculum, emphasizing decolonization, cultural safety, and scaffolding of key nursing concepts.

**Strong Partnerships with Health Authorities:** Collaborative relationships with Northern Health and other healthcare providers have strengthened clinical placement opportunities and support for students.

**Resilience and Adaptability:** The program has demonstrated resilience in navigating challenges such as leadership turnover, staffing shortages, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Areas of Challenge or In Need of Further Development

**Operational Challenges:** High turnover in leadership and administrative positions has led to some disruptions in program continuity, loss of institutional knowledge, and strained communication.

**Instructor Recruitment and Retention:** Persistent challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified instructors, particularly in clinical roles, may threaten the sustainability and continuity of program delivery.

**Inconsistent Student and Instructor Support:** Limited proactive communication, late clinical schedule dissemination, and insufficient orientation for new hires have caused frustration as expressed by students and faculty.

**Disparities Across Sites:** Variability in resources and experiences between campuses may affect the consistency and equity of education delivery.

**Need for Strategic Planning:** A revised strategic plan for the School of Nursing is critical to addressing areas with operational inefficiencies and ensuring long-term program success.

### Comments on Future Direction of the Degree Program(s)

The Northern Collaborative Baccalaureate Nursing Program (NCBNP) and associated programs, including the BScN Completion Program, play a critical role in preparing nurses to meet the unique healthcare needs of northern, rural, and Indigenous communities in British Columbia. The following points outline strategic directions and considerations for the program's continued development and success:

#### 1. Strengthening Collaborative Governance and Partnerships

- The NCBNP's collaborative structure, involving UNBC, CNC, and CMTN, is both a strength and a challenge. Efforts to enhance communication and coordination between institutions should continue, particularly through mechanisms like the Collaborative Management Committee (CMC) and joint faculty meetings. Improved transparency and streamlined decision-making processes will support more cohesive program delivery.
- Partnerships with clinical practice sites, including Northern Health and the First Nations Health Authority, remain essential. Further engagement with these partners may enhance clinical placement opportunities, interprofessional education, and recruitment pipelines for graduates.

#### 2. Curriculum Renewal and Modernization

- The ongoing curriculum renewal project (NCBNP 2.0) offers an opportunity to align educational content with current and emerging healthcare needs, including culturally safe care for Indigenous populations and evidence-based practices. Expedited completion of this initiative will position the program to maximize the preparation of graduates for practice in diverse settings.
- Incorporating simulation and innovative technologies further into the curriculum may address clinical placement shortages and improve student readiness for practice and overall educational experiences.

### **3. Addressing Resource and Faculty Challenges**

- High faculty turnover and reliance on sessional instructors create challenges for maximizing opportunities for program consistency and positive student experiences. Strategies to recruit and retain qualified teaching members, including those with clinical expertise and advanced academic qualifications, must remain a priority.
- Exploring new faculty roles and/or joint appointments with healthcare partners may alleviate staffing shortages and enhance program delivery.
- Additional administrative support and clear role definitions are needed to reduce workload burden on faculty and staff and may improve overall program operations.

### **4. Enhancing Student Experiences and Support**

- Expanding initiatives like "Chat with the Chair" sessions and including student representation on program committees can ensure student voices and concerns are heard and more fully incorporated into decision-making.
- Addressing logistical concerns, such as delayed clinical schedules and inconsistent communication, will support a more trauma-informed and student-centered approach.
- Increased access to scholarships, funding, and student awards will reduce financial barriers and attract a diverse student body.

### **5. Strategic Enrollment and Diversity**

- The program must balance its capacity with the availability of quality clinical placements. Strategic enrollment management, informed by workforce needs and program resources, will help ensure that graduates are well-prepared and positioned to meet the demands of northern and rural healthcare systems.
- Efforts to recruit and retain Indigenous students and support their success through tailored pathways and mentorship opportunities should remain central to the program's mission.

### **6. Emphasizing Interprofessional Education (IPE)**

- Creating meaningful IPE opportunities with students from other health sciences and social services disciplines may foster collaboration and prepare graduates for integrated team-based care. Initiatives in this area should be prioritized across all campuses.

### **7. Sustainability and Resilience**

- The program should establish mechanisms for continuous quality improvement, informed by feedback from students, faculty, and external partners. A renewed strategic plan with clear priorities and timelines will guide these efforts.



- Resilience to external pressures, such as funding fluctuations and healthcare system demands, will require innovative approaches to resource allocation and program delivery.

### III. SUMMARY OF THE REVIEWERS' RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS	DESCRIPTION OF THE RECOMMENDATION
<b>#1-Enhanced Program Coordination and Governance</b>	Review and revise School of Nursing instructors and staff roles and responsibilities. Support and enhance capacity through professional development and training for the roles of the Regional Student Success Coordinators and reinstate Regional Site Coordinators. Establish formal orientation processes and job descriptions for clarity of roles and responsibilities.in current staffing complement (e.g., 6 staff in Nursing).
<b>#2- Faculty Development and Retention</b>	Address faculty turnover by creating structured onboarding programs for new faculty hires and mentorship opportunities for sessional and full-time faculty. Investigate opportunities for joint appointments with existing healthcare partners to attract and retain clinically experienced and PhD-prepared nursing educators (if available).  Explore strategies such as competitive compensation and streamlined hiring processes to attract and retain qualified instructors.
<b>#3- Enhanced Communication and Coordination</b>	Enhance communication, including cross campus communication and transparency of college course content. Create an FAQ sheet for common issues and indicate who the go-to person should be. Hope to build a stronger sense of community of “one school”. Establish formal pathways for all voices to be heard to allow for shared ownership of both the short and the long term strategies for success.
<b>#4- Student Engagement</b>	Establish a nursing student-led group for mentoring, peer-tutoring, sharing experiences, and celebrating successes. May assist with ‘culture shock’ as students transition between college and university learning environments.
<b>#5- Develop a Self-Study Report Template</b>	Require each partner institution to complete a concise self-study report summarizing key indicators, including admissions, curriculum, and resources. This would ensure all necessary data are available without overburdening external reviewers in future program review/approval/accreditation processes.

<b>#6- Clinical Placement Stability</b>	Strengthen partnerships with Northern Health and other clinical providers to secure and maintain sustainable and high-quality clinical placements. Explore opportunities for joint appointments to address instructor shortages. Consider alternative clinical placements models, including simulation, to provide experiential learning opportunities.
<b>#7- Expand Interprofessional and Intraprofessional Opportunities</b>	Foster collaborations with other health programs at UNBC and partnering institutions to provide unique learning environments rich in interprofessional and intraprofessional opportunities and to reduce isolation in remote sites.

## **School of Nursing**

### **Northern Collaborative Baccalaureate Nursing Program (NCBNP) – BScN**

### **BScN Completion Program and Rural Nursing Certificate Program**

Faculty of Human and Health Sciences (FHHS)

Chair, School of Nursing:

Dr. Catharine Schiller

Interim Dean, FHHS:

Dr. Margot Parkes

Interim Provost and Vice President, Academic:

Dr. Bill Owen

External Review of Degree Programs Report Received: January 6, 2025

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## **PART 1 – ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT’S RESPONSE TO THE EXTERNAL REVIEW OF DEGREE PROGRAM(S) REPORT**

March 8, 2025

### **I. Overall Impression of the Summary of Findings and Recommendations from the External Review of Degree Program Report**

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The School of Nursing (SoN) endeavoured to provide an introspective, comprehensive, and candid self-study report for the Northern Collaborative Baccalaureate Nursing Program (NCBNP) and the BScN Completion Program inclusive of the embedded Rural Nursing Certificate Program (RNCP). The strengths and vulnerabilities that were identified within the external reviewers’ report had clear alignment with the self-study report, providing welcome confirmation that the SoN has accurately assessed its own current state and priorities. The reviewers focused their report primarily on the NCBNP degree program and the SoN more broadly, including only a few references to the BScN Completion/RNCP program. This is likely due to the size difference between those programs, as well as the overall complexity of the NCBNP.

The reviewers identified six major strengths of the SoN and the programs under review, including: alignment with the institutional mission and values of UNBC; collaboration across institutions, namely the College of New Caledonia (CNC) and Coast Mountain College (CMTN); program structure that allows access to nursing education in Prince George, Quesnel, and Terrace; commitment to NCBNP curriculum renewal, emphasizing decolonization, cultural safety, and scaffolding of critical nursing concepts; strong partnerships with health authorities; and resilience and adaptability in the face of significant challenges such as leadership turnover, a severe national nursing shortage, and the Covid pandemic.

The reviewers identified five areas of vulnerability within the SoN and the programs under review, including: instructor recruitment and retention; inconsistent student and instructor support; disparities of program delivery across sites; the need for strategic planning; and operational challenges due to high rate of turnover in key positions.

Finally, the reviewers identified seven areas of improvement opportunity, which are addressed in the Action Plan section of this response report.

### **II. Correction of Factual Errors or Areas of Misunderstanding in the Report**

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While the SoN did not identify any factual areas in the external reviewers’ report, it should be noted that several of the recommendations made by the reviewers are not within the authority of the SoN to change. As just two examples:

- A portion of Recommendation #2 states, “Explore strategies such as competitive compensation and streamlined hiring processes” to attract and retain qualified instructors. The hiring processes

used by the SoN are those outlined in the UNBC Faculty Association Collective Agreement, and the SoN cannot unilaterally change either the steps involved in those processes or the time periods associated with those steps. It should be noted that the Administrative Manager, FHHS is actively working with UNBC's Faculty Relations team on enhancing the part-time instructor (sessional) hiring process in alignment with the UNBC Faculty Association Collective Agreement.

In terms of compensation, an individual faculty member does have opportunity to negotiate their salary with the Dean, and SoN faculty are eligible to receive a market differential. However, it is not within the authority of the SoN to simply decide to increase faculty salaries to be more competitive with clinical nursing practice compensation.

- Recommendation #5 states, "Require each partner institution to complete a concise self-study report summarizing key indicators, including admissions, curriculum, and resources". The Memorandum of Understanding between UNBC, CNC, and CMTN to offer the NCBNP as a collaborative program provides the key responsibilities and roles of each partner institution. The SoN cannot simply "require" CNC and CMTN to undertake additional roles and responsibilities related to the program. The MOU is negotiated at the university and college levels, not at the school level. While the SoN can provide input into those negotiations, it is not vested with the authority to require that certain tasks be included in the MOU nor to determine the final content of the executed MOU. That being said, the NCBNP Collaborative Management Committee is not unaware of the need to improve information-sharing processes and this is an area of focus for this committee.

The focus of the Action Plan that is outlined in the next section will therefore be on those reviewer recommendations that are within the authority of the SoN to change and improve.

## PART 2 - ACTION PLAN

What steps does the Academic Administrative Unit intend or propose to take in response to the recommendations from the *External Review of Degree Program(s) Report*?

UNBC Responses to the External Review of Degree Program(s) Report			
1	Report Recommendation	Review and revise School of Nursing instructors and staff roles and responsibilities. Support and enhance capacity through professional development and training for the roles of the Regional Student Success Coordinators and reinstate Regional Site Coordinators. Establish formal orientation processes and job descriptions for clarity of roles and responsibilities in current staffing complement (e.g. 6 staff in Nursing).	
	Recommendation not taken at this time	The current Year 3 and Year 4 NCBNP Coordinator model was introduced for the 2024-2025 academic year as a response to the identification of gaps in support across all three NCBNP sites, in part due to shifting regional capacity to take up Regional Site Coordinator roles. The SoN believes it would be pre-emptive to revert back to the Regional Site Coordinator model without allowing sufficient time under the new model to evaluate if it is successfully addressing gaps in support at regional sites.	
	Action #1(a)	Revise existing roles and responsibilities documents that exist for clinical instructors, clinical leads, and school leads to ensure clarity of expectations. Create a roles and responsibilities document for theory course instructors, lab coordinators, and the other key faculty roles within the SoN. This work will be supported by engaging an external consultant to support development of an onboarding process and related material, such as updated roles and responsibilities documents (see further details under Recommendation #2 below).	
	Person(s) Responsible	NCBNP Coordinators	
	Target Implementation Date	Pilot in September 2025; refine and finalize for January 2026	
	Implementation Details	12 month Action Plan Progress Report	
		24 month Action Plan Progress Report	
		36 month Action Plan Progress Report	

	<b>Action #1(b)</b>	Request that the UNBC Campus Development Liaison and Operations Manager collaborate with the Administrative Manager, FHHS to create a formal onboarding and professional development plan for the Regional Student Success Coordinators who provide support to the SoN in addition to other schools in the regional campuses.	
	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>	SoN Chair to make request	
	<b>Target Implementation Date</b>	December 2025	
	<b>Implementation Details</b>	<b>12 month Action Plan Progress Report</b>	
		<b>24 month Action Plan Progress Report</b>	
		<b>36 month Action Plan Progress Report</b>	



2	<b>Report Recommendation</b>	<b>Address faculty turnover by creating structured onboarding programs for new faculty hires and mentorship opportunities for sessional and full-time faculty. Investigate opportunities for joint appointments with existing healthcare partners to attract and retain clinically experienced and PhD-prepared nursing educators (if available).</b>	
	<b>Recommendation not taken at this time</b>	The relatively new 'Warm Welcome' program, established in 2024 by the SoN Chair, provides new continuing and full-time term teaching members and staff with an assigned mentor, who connects with them at several pre-determined points; continued mentorship after that time is up to the individuals involved. Due to the very high continuing to part-time teaching member ratios in the SoN (over 100 part-time instructors are hired each year), there is not sufficient capacity to provide mentorship in this way to all part-time instructors. It is the SoN's intention that the development of a robust onboarding process (see Action #2(a) below), alongside clear roles and responsibilities documents, will provide support for new part-time instructors in the absence of our ability to provide a 1:1 mentor relationship.	
	<b>Action #2(a)</b>	The NCBNP Coordinators have already begun the process of developing onboarding resources that will be easily accessible to all new and existing faculty. However, given the overload contracts that the NCBNP Coordinators currently hold, the SoN will engage an external consultant with expertise in staff development to develop a comprehensive onboarding program. The SoN recognizes that onboarding is an area of priority need given our reliance on sessional faculty to deliver the NCBNP and the BScN Completion/RNCP. We anticipate that this program will also benefit non-academic staff who work with or for the SoN.	
	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>	SoN Chair (with assistance from Administrative Manager, FHHS)	
	<b>Target Implementation Date</b>	December 2025	
	<b>Implementation Details</b>	<b>12 month Action Plan Progress Report</b>	
		<b>24 month Action Plan Progress Report</b>	
		<b>36 month Action Plan Progress Report</b>	

	<b>Action #2(b)</b>	The SoN has been exploring the possibility of joint clinical educator appointments with Northern Health for well over a year, and interest in this option continues to be strong on both sides. However, there are numerous considerations that must be taken into account by both UNBC and NH (collective agreement issues, as just one example) and these need to be addressed before joint appointments can become a reality. The possibility of developing these joint appointments continues to be under discussion but it is possible that this may ultimately not be a viable option if either party decides not to proceed. Another potential means to address better recruitment and retention of clinical educators is by introducing a new appointment type to the UNBC Faculty Association Collective Agreement, and conversations are underway with the Faculty Relations team on possibilities in this area.
	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>	At UNBC: SoN Chair, FHHS Dean, Administrative Manager, FHHS, HR Faculty Relations
	<b>Target Implementation Date</b>	Indeterminate

3	<b>Report Recommendation</b>	<b>Enhance communication, including cross campus communication and transparency of college course content. Create an FAQ sheet for common issues and indicate who the go-to person should be. Hope to build a stronger sense of community of “one school”. Establish formal pathways for all voices to be heard to allow for shared ownership of both the short- and the long- term strategies for success.</b>	
	<b>Action #3(a)</b>	The SoN continues to engage fully with our college partners in the intensive “NCBNP 2.0” curriculum review initiative. This initiative has opened increasingly transparent discussions about course content throughout the full 4 years of the program, including equivalencies between CNC and CMTN for required NCBNP courses. The three collaborative NCBNP standing committees, in addition to the NCBNP 2.0 Collaborative Working Group, continue to focus on building relationships in which open and honest discussion can take place. However, it must be recognized that there are limits to what the UNBC SoN alone can require of its college partners in terms of “transparency of college course content” and this goal must be supported by senior leadership of the university (particularly in regard to the MOU).	
	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>	SoN Chair and NCBNP Coordinators	
	<b>Target Implementation Date</b>	NCBNP 2.0 target implementation date is Fall 2027	
	<b>Implementation Details</b>	<b>12 month Action Plan Progress Report</b>	
		<b>24 month Action Plan Progress Report</b>	
		<b>36 month Action Plan Progress Report</b>	
	<b>Action #3(b)</b>	The annual NCBNP Collaborative Spring Retreat will be held on April 16 and 17, 2025 and there is a specific agenda item to discuss potential collaborative student support initiatives. The purpose of such initiatives would be to demonstrate to students that the NCBNP is a single program offered collaboratively by three educational institution partners, and to encourage a stronger feeling of community amongst the NCBNP faculty, staff, and leadership who deliver that program.	
	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>	NCBNP Coordinators and relative non-academic staff positions	
	<b>Target Implementation Date</b>	April 16 and 17, 2025 for the initial discussion of potential initiatives	
	<b>Implementation Details</b>	<b>12 month Action Plan Progress Report</b>	
		<b>24 month Action Plan Progress Report</b>	
		<b>36 month Action Plan Progress Report</b>	

	<b>Action #3(c)</b>	As a collaborative, create an FAQ sheet that identifies common issues and identify the person at each educational institution partner who will be the “go-to” person for that issue. Propose inclusion of the FAQ as an appendix in the next iteration of the NCBNP MOU.	
	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>	SoN Chair to bring to NCBNP Collaborative Management Committee	
	<b>Target Implementation Date</b>	September 2025	
	<b>Implementation Details</b>	<b>12 month Action Plan Progress Report</b>	
		<b>24 month Action Plan Progress Report</b>	
		<b>36 month Action Plan Progress Report</b>	
	<b>Action #3(d)</b>	As a collaborative: (a) identify the existing formal pathways for communication and decision-making between members of the collaborative; and (b) consider the creation of additional pathways to help support program consistency and clarity of decision-making. Propose inclusion of an appendix outlining these pathways in the next iteration of the NCBNP MOU.	
	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>	SoN Chair to bring to NCBNP Collaborative Management Committee	
	<b>Target Implementation Date</b>	December 2025	
	<b>Implementation Details</b>	<b>12 month Action Plan Progress Report</b>	
		<b>24 month Action Plan Progress Report</b>	
		<b>36 month Action Plan Progress Report</b>	

4	<b>Report Recommendation</b>	<b>Establish a nursing student-led group for mentoring, peer tutoring, sharing experiences, and celebrating successes. May assist with ‘culture shock’ as students transition between college and university learning environments.</b>	
	<b>Action #4</b>	A very active nursing student-led group already exists, the UNBC Nursing Club. It is currently only open to Prince George students in Years 3 and 4 – a restriction that is in place because the sole purpose of the UNBC Nursing Club has traditionally been the organization of the Prince George Pinning Ceremony (a campus-specific ceremony for graduating nursing students). Graduating students at the other campuses organize the Pinning Ceremony for their campus but, because of their smaller size, they have not done so as a formal “club”. This year, the UNBC Nursing Club expressed a desire to expand their membership group as well as their mandate. Specifically, the Nursing Club is hoping to develop initiatives that would allow for peer mentoring and peer support opportunities to students in Years 1 and 2 of the program, and ease the transition from college to university at the beginning of Year 3. The NCBNP Collaborative Spring Retreat will be held on April 16 and 17, 2025 and there is a specific agenda item to discuss ways in which the collaborative can ease the transitions and challenging experiences of NCBNP students. As part of this agenda item, the Nursing Club has been invited to discuss their experiences across all four years of the program, identify specific challenges they faced, and share their ideas for peer mentoring and peer support opportunities that UNBC, CNC, and CMTN could support.	
	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>	SoN Chair, NCBNP faculty and staff	
	<b>Target Implementation Date</b>	April 16 and 17, 2025 for the initial discussion of potential initiatives and student support opportunities	
	<b>Implementation Details</b>	<b>12 month Action Plan Progress Report</b>	
		<b>24 month Action Plan Progress Report</b>	
		<b>36 month Action Plan Progress Report</b>	

5	<b>Report Recommendation</b>	<b>Require each partner institution to complete a concise self-study report summarizing key indicators, including admissions, curriculum, and resources. This would ensure all necessary data are available without overburdening external reviewers in future program review/approval/accreditation processes.</b>	
	<b>Action #5</b>	Given the complexity and number of programs in the SoN, and the number of program recognition and accreditation reports and interim reports that are currently required of the SoN in any given year, it is not possible at this time to add the creation of another self-study report to the workload of SoN leaders and faculty members. However, the SoN is currently in discussion with FHHS leadership about developing a role that would have responsibility for tracking and writing such reports across the full SoN as well as collecting the data required for those reports. Across the collaborative, improving information-sharing processes is a critical need already identified by the NCBNP Collaborative Management Committee, and the need for a self-study template may be resolved as information-sharing processes improve.	
	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>	FHHS Dean, SoN Chair, Administrative Manager, FHHS	
	<b>Target Implementation Date</b>	December 2025	
	<b>Implementation Details</b>	<b>12 month Action Plan Progress Report</b>	
		<b>24 month Action Plan Progress Report</b>	
		<b>36 month Action Plan Progress Report</b>	

6	<b>Report Recommendation</b>	<b>Strengthen partnerships with Northern Health and other clinical providers to secure and maintain sustainable and high-quality clinical placements. Explore opportunities for joint appointments to address instructor shortages. Consider alternative clinical placements models, including simulation, to provide experiential learning opportunities.</b>	
	<b>Action #6(a)</b>	This recommendation has already been actioned in part by the introduction of a Clinical Placement Liaison position to the SoN in mid-2024, with specific functions of the position focused on building stronger relationships with health authorities and other clinical placement sites. This role will continue to work to strengthen existing relationships and make new connections across Northern B.C. in support of improved and sustainable clinical placement opportunities. Currently, a critical gap is ensuring sufficient placement opportunities in a variety of practice areas for the January 2026 semester, and the Clinical Placement Liaison is working to identify new potential placement sites and establish relationships to secure a variety of placements.	
	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>	Year 4 NCBNP Coordinator, Clinical Placement Liaison	
	<b>Target Implementation Date</b>	Ongoing, with increased focus on <i>new</i> placement sites for January 2026	
	<b>Implementation Details</b>	<b>12 month Action Plan Progress Report</b>	
		<b>24 month Action Plan Progress Report</b>	
		<b>36 month Action Plan Progress Report</b>	
	<b>Action #6b</b>	A faculty member with expertise in clinical simulation has been given course release to lead the development of a SoN simulation program that focuses on those clinical practice areas in which there is a particularly severe shortage of registered nurses in northern BC, and a resulting challenge in obtaining sufficient student clinical placements (such as pediatrics).	
	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>	SoN Chair, SoN Simulation Program Lead, NCBNP Coordinators	
	<b>Target Implementation Date</b>	September 2025 for commencement of program	
	<b>Implementation Details</b>	<b>12 month Action Plan Progress Report</b>	
		<b>24 month Action Plan Progress Report</b>	
		<b>36 month Action Plan Progress Report</b>	

7	<b>Report Recommendation</b>	<b>Foster collaborations with other health programs at UNBC to provide unique learning environments rich in interprofessional and intraprofessional opportunities and to reduce isolation in remote sites.</b>	
	<b>Action #7</b>	Other health programs at UNBC will be consulted to identify and discuss potential opportunities for interprofessional collaboration to benefit student recruitment, student retention, and student understanding of team-based healthcare. Within the SoN, an exploration of potential opportunities for meaningful intraprofessional collaboration will also be undertaken. Many members of the SoN are participating in the Northern Interprofessional Education Committee and as IPE Scholars – Northern Cohort 2024-2026; both opportunities are in partnership with UBC Health and the Division of Medical Sciences.	
	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>	SoN Chair, SoN Coordinators	
	<b>Target Implementation Date</b>	December 2025	
	<b>Implementation Details</b>	<b>12 month Action Plan Progress Report</b>	
		<b>24 month Action Plan Progress Report</b>	
		<b>36 month Action Plan Progress Report</b>	



## FOLLOW UP DATES

As per the *External Review of Degree Program(s) Procedures*, the Academic Administrative Units are responsible for submitting Action Plan Progress Reports to the Dean on the following dates:

- 12 month Action Plan Progress Report: \_\_\_\_30 June 2026\_\_\_\_
- 24 month Action Plan Progress Report: \_\_\_\_30 June 2027\_\_\_\_
- 36 month Action Plan Progress Report: \_\_\_\_30 June 2028\_\_\_\_

## PART 3 – DEAN’S AND PROVOST AND VICE PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC’S RESPONSES

### I. Summary of the Degree Program Review Process

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An external review of two of the UNBC School of Nursing Programs took place in 2024, focused on the Nursing Collaborative Baccalaureate Nursing Program (NCBNP) – BScN, and the BScN Completion Program, inclusive of the embedded Rural Nursing Certificate Program. Dr. Nicole Harder, Associate Professor and Associate Dean Undergraduate Programs, College of Nursing (University of Manitoba) and Dr. Kristen Jones-Bonofiglio (Lakehead University) accepted to serve as external reviewers and Dr. Susan Burke, School of Social Work, served as the internal UNBC resource person. Reviewers received the self-study document prepared by the School of Nursing in September 2024 and all three reviewers participated in the review in October 2024. The external reviewers provided their report in December 2024. The School of Nursing (SoN) Response to the External Review of Degree Programs was submitted to the Interim Dean FHHS in March 2025. The Interims Dean’s response to Recommendations and Action Plan was finalised in June 2025.

### II. Dean’s Response to the Recommendations and Action Plan (June 30, 2025)

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The external reviewers provided a summary of their findings in relation to Key Attributes, Program Highlights, Quality Indicators and Challenges, along with a summary of Major Strengths of the Program, Areas of Challenge and Comments on Future Directions of the Degree Program(s). This was followed by seven (7) recommendations in relation to the degree programs they reviewed, addressing #1. Enhanced Program Coordination and Governance, #2. Faculty Development and Retention, #3. Enhanced Communication and Coordination, #4. Student Engagement, #5. Develop a Self-Study Report Template, #6. Clinical Placement Stability and #7. Expand Interprofessional and Intraprofessional Opportunities.

Overall, the external reviewer recommendations underscore the importance of the NCBNP as a program that is closely aligned with the UNBC’s Mission and Values, reflected in the inter-institutional collaboration that is foundational to the NCBNP, and to the demonstrable commitment to serving regional programming, to curriculum renewal, to diverse institutional partnerships (especially with Northern Health), and to adapting to ongoing challenges. The reviewers’ recommendations also align with areas for future development that were identified in the self-study report, and underscore the need for ongoing attention and action by both the SoN and the Faculty of Human & Health Sciences to attend to known challenges associated with leadership and staff turnover, recruitment and retention, Instructor and student support, regional site development, and strategic planning.

The response to the reviewers described in this report noted the SoN appreciation for feedback that aligns with priority areas already identified by the School and for actionable recommendations that underscore areas already a

focus for attention. The School of Nursing did identify areas where suggestions by the reviewers relate to areas that are not within the authority of the School of Nursing to change, especially in relation to hiring processes that are determined by UNBC's Collective Agreement, and matters relating to NCBNP collaboration that are determined by the MoU between UNBC and the two Partner Colleges (College of New Caledonia and Coast Mountain College). These are matters that will need to receive ongoing attention at the Faculty and University level, especially in the context of the need for review and renewal of the current NCBNP MoU.

In response to the recommendations from the External Reviewers the School of Nursing has developed a thoughtful, specific and clear Action Plan that addressed each of the seven recommendations from the External Reviewers. The Action plan identifies specific actions and steps with person(s) responsible, and defined target implementation dates, many of which have initial targets within the 12-month reporting period. Some of these initial actions may warrant further attention and review over the 24- and 36-month reporting periods, especially given that the outcomes of the Faculty of Human & Health Sciences 'Organisational Framework Assessment' (initiated in January 2025) will have implications for the School of Nursing that could both impact and enhance the proposals described in the Action Plan. This includes shifts in titles, roles, tasks and duties that are being implemented as of June 2025 in conjunction with the Director, FHHS Administration and the incoming Dean of FHHS. These shifts will influence the person(s) responsible for the School of Nursing proposed actions, and can be updated accordingly in progress reports. Some of these considerations may warrant discussion at the forthcoming meeting with the Chair of the School of Nursing, Incoming Dean FHHS, and Provost.

Two actions are proposed in relation to **#1. Enhanced Program Coordination and Governance**, both of which relate to roles and responsibilities of Nursing instructor and staff roles. The response proposes alternatives to the suggestions by the External reviewers to revert back to a Regional Site coordinator role. I support the alternative suggestions proposed in #1(a) and #1(b) both of which align with broader strategies and planning underway as part of the FHHS 'Organisational Framework Assessment'.

The two actions proposed for **#2 Faculty Development and Retention**, focus specifically on on-boarding in #2(a), and alternative hiring processes #2(b). Both responses underscore actions that are already being explored with the FHHS Dean, and the Director, FHHS Administration. The four actions identified in relation to **#3. Enhanced Communication and Coordination**, relate to an important range of activities that are being progressed already and are also under active consideration as part of the renewal of the NCBNP MoU in conjunction with CNC and CMTN, which will result in progress at the 12-month reporting period, and will also require close attention not only by the SoN, but also by the FHHS, Provost's Office and UNBC at the 24- and 36-month reporting periods.

The actions identified in relation to Action **#4. Student Engagement** identify proposed actions that have already been initiated in April 2025, and will warrant further attention to assess ongoing progress during the 12-, 24- and 36-month reporting periods. The actions described in **#5. Develop a Self-Study Report Template** identify actions that have been identified as warranting further attention in the FHHS 'Organisational Framework Assessment', and will receive ongoing attention in conjunction with changes in FHHS processes and roles, as well as the MoU considerations, involving UNBC, CNC and CMTN.

The two actions identified **#6. Clinical Placement Stability** reflect prompt action that has already been initiated in relation to clinical placements, and simulation, and will warrant ongoing attention as early actions can inform related priorities that have later implementation dates. Actions in relation to Recommendation **#7. Expand Interprofessional and Intraprofessional Opportunities** identified actions that can be progressed with the School of Nursing, and which will also be supported by new initiatives at the Faculty level, for example through the

interprofessional aspects of the FHHS Committees (Teaching and Learning, and Scholarship and Research) established in May 2025, as well as potential for ongoing opportunities for links with the Interprofessional dialogue series established in 2024.

**In sum:** This response confirms the FHHS Interim Dean's review of the External Reviewer feedback and recommendations as well as my review and endorsement of the Action Plan prepared by the School of Nursing in response to the external review. I commend both the reviewers for their appraisal and the School of Nursing for their thoughtful and systematic approach to responding this feedback. The proposed Action Plan charts a positive and achievable path forward that will support the far-reaching potential and contributions of the School of Nursing relation to students and colleagues within the School, the Faculty of Human and Health Sciences, UNBC and beyond.

### III. Provost and Vice President, Academic's Response to the Recommendations and Action Plan 13 August 2025

In October 2024, the School of Nursing (SoN) completed the external review for two academic programs – the Northern Collaborative Baccalaureate Nursing Degree Program (NCBNP) and the BScN Completion Program. The BScN Completion Program includes the Rural Nursing Certificate Program (RNCP). In May 2025, the SoN completed the external review of its Northern Baccalaureate Nursing Program (NBNP); the SoN recently received the External Reviewers' Report and is in the process of preparing an Action Plan in response.

All of the above programs are also subject to regular reviews by the British Columbia College of Nurses and Midwives (BCCNM). The NCBNP is also subject to regular accreditation reviews by the Canadian Association of School of Nursing (CASN), which includes detailed reports at the time of accreditation renewal as well as multiple interim reports per year. It is anticipated that the NBNP program will, in the future, also be reviewed for CASN accreditation and will require a similar schedule of report submissions.

Regular and comprehensive degree program reviews support the commitment of the university and its faculty and staff to the quality, accountability, sustainability, and continuous improvement of UNBC's degree programs and academic service units.

Thank you to the review committee, the department faculty, staff, and students, central administration, and the Faculty Dean for their participation in the focused program review for the School of Nursing [NCNP, PDBNP, RNCP].

I have carefully read the reviewers' report, the departmental response, and the decanal response. A meeting with the dean and chair on 13 August 2025 provided important additional context. I want to underscore the authority and responsibility of the dean and department for a large majority of the recommendations.

I broadly agree with the recommendations of the external review committee and how these recommendations have been incorporated into the departmental action plan. I also appreciate that the Department has already taken steps that align with the key recommendations.

**In the future, to optimize the use of resources towards and benefits of the SoN's degree program external reviews, it would be advisable for UNBC to conduct a single review that includes all of the SoN undergraduate academic programs.**

The scale and complexity of academic programming within the SoN is notable, spanning all UNBC campuses and collaborations with two College partners, and the number of both seats and programs continues to increase in response to community need and Ministry priorities. In order to support and sustain this unit, there will be a need for institution-level solutions that are specific to this unique context.

**At this time it is not advisable for the School of Nursing to develop any new programs, for a minimum of a 2-3 yr window.**

As is usually the case, the external review committee has made recommendations that have some degree of resource implications. Whereas I broadly support suggestions to enhance administrative support, develop academic appointments, and further academic initiatives for example, recommendations and actions that necessitate acquiring new resources or reallocation of resources will take some time to achieve and must align with the strategic direction and goals of the department and faculty.

I look forward to seeing the department's work on the action plan and to hearing about the positive impact on the program.

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