

**DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE OF THE
COLLEGE OF NURSING OF NEW BRUNSWICK**

B E T W E E N:

COLLEGE OF NURSING OF NEW BRUNSWICK (“the College”)

Complainant

- and -

GABRIELLE DUFFENAIS

(formerly Gabrielle Chiasson-Budaker) Registration Numbers 20-105 and 030783

Respondent

DECISION and REASONS

Date of Hearing: April 13, 2026

Discipline Committee Panel: Luc Drisdelle, RN (Chairperson); Christine Flanagan, RN, (Nurse Member); Ashley Forsythe, RN, (Nurse Member); Dorina St. Onge, (Public Member)

Counsel:

- College of Nursing of New Brunswick (the "College") – Marine Polo
- Gabrielle Duffenais (the Member) – Ellen Thompson

OVERVIEW

On April 13, 2026, a Panel of the Discipline Committee convened by videoconference.

The parties proceeded on the basis of the Notice of Hearing, the Agreed Statement of Facts and Admission of Professional Misconduct with attached exhibits, the Joint Submission on Order and Costs, and the College's written submissions on the merits and on order.

Mrs Duffenais acknowledged in the Agreed Statement of Facts that she understood the nature of the allegations, waived the right to require the College to prove the agreed facts at a hearing, and executed the agreement voluntarily after having the opportunity to receive legal advice. At the hearing, the Panel conducted a plea inquiry of Mrs Duffenais and were satisfied that her admissions were voluntary, informed and unequivocal.

BACKGROUND

The Complaint arose from [the health authority's] report that Mrs Duffenais altered a confirmation of employment letter prepared by [the health authority] and submitted the altered letter to the [Bank] in connection with a mortgage application.

The Notice of Hearing dated March 25, 2026, alleges that this conduct amounted to professional misconduct, conduct unbecoming of a nurse, and dishonesty under the *Nurses Act*.

The parties sought a withdrawal of allegations set out at paragraphs 2(e) and (f) of the Notice of Hearing, as well as a withdrawal of the words, "NANB Standards for Documentation", as found in the preamble of paragraph 2. As a result of the request, the Panel's findings below do not include findings in relation to these paragraphs.

EVIDENCE

The evidentiary record consisted of the Notice of Hearing, the Agreed Statement of Facts with attached exhibits, dated October 30, 2025, and a Joint Submission on Order and Costs. In addition, the Panel was provided with written submissions from the College on both the merits and proposed order.

FACTS AND ADMISSIONS

As set out in the evidentiary record filed by the parties, the Panel accepted the following facts:

1. Mrs Duffenais has been a Registered Nurse in New Brunswick since September 2020, and at the material times she was employed as a Graduate Nurse with [the health authority] at the [hospital] in a temporary part-time position.

2. In May or June 2020, Mrs Duffenais and her then-fiancé applied for a mortgage with the [Bank], and the Bank requested an employment letter confirming her employment information.
3. On June 5, 2020, [the health authority] provided Mrs Duffenais with an original confirmation of employment letter by email in PDF format.
4. The original letter stated, among other things, that Mrs Duffenais' hire date was April 21, 2020, that she was guaranteed 37.5 hours per pay period, that her expected date of return to her casual position was July 18, 2021, and that as a casual employee she was not guaranteed work hours but could pick up shifts when needed.
5. On the same day, Mrs Duffenais logged into Mr Duffenais' email account and sent a letter containing employment information to the Bank.
6. The Bank later contacted [the health authority] to question the validity of the letter it had received.
7. The altered letter removed Mrs Duffenais' hire date and expected return date, changed the guaranteed hours from 37.5 hours per pay period to "currently getting 75 hours per pay period", removed the Human Resources contact information, replaced the [health authority] logo with typed text, misspelled the signatory's name, and duplicated part of the word "Sincerely".
8. On or about June 24, 2020, Mrs Duffenais met with [the health authority] and New Brunswick Nurses Union representatives to discuss the discrepancies between the original letter and the altered letter, and her employment with [the health authority] was terminated effective that day.
9. Mrs Duffenais admitted that since June 2020 she had denied to [the health authority] and to NANB that she altered the original confirmation of employment letter before submitting the altered version to the Bank.

10. Mrs Duffenais further admitted that she was dishonest with [the health authority] and with NANB in her response submitted on August 10, 2020.
11. Mrs Duffenais admitted that she altered the original confirmation of employment letter as described in paragraphs 12(a) to (e) of the Agreed Statement of Facts and submitted the altered letter to the Bank for the purpose of applying for a mortgage.
12. Mrs Duffenais admitted that, by altering the original confirmation of employment letter and submitting the altered letter to the Bank, she falsified a document relating to her nursing practice and engaged in fraudulent, dishonest, and unethical behaviour.
13. Mrs Duffenais admitted that the agreed facts constituted violations of the NANB *Standards of Practice for Registered Nurses* and the Canadian Nurses Association's *Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses*, including the requirements to practice in accordance with the *Code of Ethics*, to exercise reasonable judgment, and to demonstrate professional presence and model professional behaviour.
14. Mrs Duffenais also admitted that the agreed facts constituted professional misconduct as defined in subsection 2(1) of the *Nurses Act* and that she engaged in conduct unbecoming of a member and dishonesty under subparagraphs 28(1)(a)(ii) and 28(1)(a)(iv) of the *Nurses Act*.

SUBMISSIONS OF THE PARTIES

The College submitted that the agreed facts and admissions establish professional misconduct, conduct unbecoming of a nurse, and dishonesty as alleged in the Notice of Hearing.

The College further submitted that the Panel should accept the parties' Joint Submission on Order and Costs as appropriate, proportionate, and in the public interest.

ISSUES

The issues for determination are whether the agreed facts and admissions establish professional misconduct, conduct unbecoming of a nurse, and dishonesty, and whether the parties' Joint Submission on Order and Costs should be accepted.

DECISION

Having considered the Agreed Statement of Facts, the attached exhibits, the Joint Submission on Order and Costs, and the College's written submissions, the Panel finds that the allegations in the Notice of Hearing, save for those that have been withdrawn, have been proven on a balance of probabilities.

The Panel further accepts the parties' Joint Submission on Order and Costs.

REASONS

The Panel's assessment is grounded in the Agreed Statement of Facts and in Mrs Duffenais' admissions. Those admissions establish that she altered a confirmation of employment letter prepared by her employer, submitted the altered letter to the Bank for the purpose of applying for a mortgage, and was thereafter dishonest with [the health authority] and with the College about that conduct.

That conduct constituted a serious departure from the standards of honesty, integrity, reasonable judgment, and professional behaviour expected of a nurse, and adversely affected the standing and good name of the profession.

With respect to sanction, the Panel is satisfied that the proposed disposition is appropriate and proportionate in the public interest. The reprimand, suspension, remedial education, and publication term together address denunciation, specific and general deterrence, remediation, and the maintenance of public confidence in the College's discipline process. The order for costs is also appropriate in all the circumstances.

The Panel is also satisfied that the agreed disposition appropriately reflects the relevant mitigating and aggravating circumstances identified in the College's submissions, including Mrs Duffenais' eventual admissions and lack of prior discipline, as well as her prolonged dishonesty.

ORDER

Having found the allegations proven and having considered the parties' Joint Submission on Order and Costs, the Panel is satisfied that the following Order is appropriate and proportionate.

1. Mrs Duffenais shall appear before a panel of the Discipline Committee for a reprimand on a date to be set by the Registrar.
2. The Registrar is directed to suspend Mrs Duffenais' Certificate of Registration for a period of thirty (30) days, to commence on the date of the Discipline Committee's Decision and Order.
3. The Registrar is directed to impose the following condition on Mrs Duffenais' Certificate of Registration: Mrs Duffenais shall complete, at her own expense, and provide written confirmation to the Registrar of successful completion of the "PROBE: Ethics and Boundaries Program" offered by the Center for Personalized Education for Professionals, or an equivalent program approved by the Registrar, within six (6) months of the date of the Discipline Committee's Decision and Order.
4. For so long as the condition on Mrs Duffenais' Certificate of Registration remains in effect, Mrs Duffenais shall provide each employer with a copy of the Discipline Committee's Decision and Order and shall cause each employer to forward to the Registrar written confirmation of receipt within ten (10) days of commencement of employment, or within ten (10) days of the issuance of the Discipline Committee's Decision and Order in the case of continued employment with any current employer.
5. For so long as the condition on Mrs Duffenais' Certificate of Registration remains in effect, Mrs Duffenais shall notify the Registrar in writing, within ten (10) days, of any change in her address or employer, including new employment, suspension, termination, or resignation from employment.
6. If Mrs Duffenais fails to satisfy any of the conditions set out above on or before the required dates, her Certificate of Registration may be suspended at the discretion of the Registrar until the conditions have been met, and the Registrar may extend the timelines if the circumstances so warrant.
7. Mrs Duffenais shall pay costs to the College in the amount of \$1,000.00 within sixty (60) days of the date of the Discipline Committee's Decision and Order.

8. The Registrar is directed to cause notice of the Discipline Committee’s Decision and Order to be published on the College website, and the notice shall include Mrs Duffenais’ name and registration number.

At the conclusion of the hearing, the Panel delivered its reprimand to Mrs Duffenais. A copy of the reprimand is attached to these reasons for decision as Appendix “A”.

Dated this 11th day of May, 2026.

original signed by _____

Luc Drisdelle, RN, Chairperson

original signed by _____

Christine Flanagan, RN, Nurse Member

original signed by _____

Ashley Forsythe, RN, Nurse Member

original signed by _____

Dorina St. Onge, Public Member

Appendix “A”

Reprimand

Mrs Duffenais, as you know, this Discipline Committee has ordered that you receive an oral reprimand as part of the sanction imposed upon you.

The reprimand should impress upon you the seriousness of your misconduct. The fact that you have received this reprimand will be reflected in the public disposition of this matter, including publication of the Committee’s decision and summary of reasons with reference to your name.

The Committee has found, on the basis of the agreed facts and your admissions, that you committed professional misconduct and dishonesty in connection with altering a confirmation of employment letter prepared by [the health authority] and submitting the altered letter to the [Bank] in support of a mortgage application. The alterations included removing your hire date and expected return to your casual position, changing the statement that you were guaranteed 37.5 hours per pay period to a statement that you were currently getting 75 hours per pay period, removing the Human Resources contact information, replacing the [health authority] logo with typed text, and altering the signatory’s name.

You also admitted that you were dishonest with [the health authority] and with the College in your response after these events. You did not admit your wrongdoing for five years. These findings reflect serious departures from the standards of honesty, integrity, judgment, professional behaviour, and documentation expected of a nurse.

The public is entitled to expect that nurses will act honestly and with integrity in all professional interactions, will exercise reasonable judgment, and will comply with professional and ethical standards. You failed to meet these fundamental obligations. By falsifying a document relating to your nursing practice for a personal purpose, you undermined confidence in your professionalism and in the standards that protect the public and uphold the reputation of the nursing profession.

Accurate documentation is a core professional obligation. Altering someone else's documentation and then using that altered document to advance a mortgage application was dishonest and unethical conduct incompatible with the standards and code of ethics governing the profession. This kind of behaviour risks undermining public confidence not only in the individual nurse involved, but also in the integrity of the profession as a whole.

The sanction imposed in this case, including this reprimand, reflects the seriousness of the misconduct and the need to protect the public and maintain confidence in the profession. We expect that you will use this process as an opportunity to reflect carefully on your professional obligations and to ensure there is no repetition of this conduct.

Thank you for attending today. We will prepare our written reasons in due course.

We are adjourned.