



Provincial Chemotherapy & Biotherapy

COURSE SYLLABUS (PSCB)

2026

Course Educators:

Komal Patel Saini, RN(EC), MN, CON(C), CHPCN(C),
GNC(C)

Allison Loucks, RN, MN, CON(C)

Inara Karrei, RN, MN, CON(C)

Course Authors:

Donalda MacDonald, RN, CON(C),

Komal Patel Saini, RN(EC), MN, CON(C), CHPCN(C),
GNC(C)

Course Format: eLearning

Contact Information and Technical Support: support@desouzainstitute.com

Eligibility: Registered nurses (RNs) competent in peripheral and central vascular access device care and maintenance, with organizational support and a manager or nurse educator available to invigilate the final exam. RPNs/LPNs may be eligible. Managers or educators can contact de Souza Institute for further information.

Prerequisite: [Foundations in Oncology Nursing Practice \(FONP\)](#) or [Cancer Care Basics \(CANB\)](#) is strongly recommended for nurses new to oncology, prior to taking this course.

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A. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This 35-hour course is designed to support nurses building their knowledge and skills in Chemotherapy and Biotherapy administration and care. The program reflects standards identified by a number of national and international bodies, including the Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology. This course also meets Cancer Care Ontario's Regional Models of Care for Systemic Treatment (2019) recommendations, which specify that nurses who administer parenteral chemotherapy are required to achieve certification in chemotherapy administration and to engage in continuing competence education every 2 years.

John Miller's (2008) Holistic Curriculum model provides the philosophical framework for the course, interweaving a whole person approach with best evidence and knowledge in safe, standardized chemotherapy and biotherapy administration and care. The course curriculum was developed with feedback and guidance from oncology nursing experts from across Ontario. Participants will receive a certificate upon successful course completion. Following course completion, a chemotherapy preceptorship is required in the participant's local organization, enabling competency development in that system.

The de Souza Standardized Chemotherapy and Biotherapy Course is one component of many in a comprehensive chemotherapy and biotherapy education program. The de Souza chemotherapy and biotherapy program goals are as follows:

- To provide nurses with comprehensive holistic standardized chemotherapy and biotherapy education
- To support patient safety efforts by integrating safety theory within all levels of the curriculum
- To support knowledge translation and application of evidence-based practice in systemic therapy
- To integrate Cancer Care Ontario (CCO) practice recommendations into a comprehensive curriculum

B. de Souza DESIGNATION CREDITS

Domain of Practice	Treatment and Delivery of Evidence Based Care
Learning Hours	35 hours
de Souza Credit	1 credit

C. COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Demonstrate a holistic, person-centered approach to chemotherapy and biotherapy nursing care.
- Identify various treatment modalities used in cancer treatment, with emphasis on chemotherapy and biotherapy.
- Describe the different phases of drug development and clinical trials and the oncology nurses' role in clinical trials.
- Summarize the factors that influence a person's response to chemotherapy and biotherapy.
- Identify commonly used chemotherapy and biotherapy agents, their mechanisms of action, administration recommendations, infusion related issues and side effects.
- Review and analyze chemotherapy orders and calculations.
- Discuss safe handling issues for chemotherapy and biotherapy, including safe administration practices, management of bodily wastes and spill management. Demonstrate principles of safe handling and safe management in selected cases.
- Consider and apply safety issues and theoretical principles in common chemotherapy and biotherapy scenarios, which include: human factors theories, pump safety literature, cognitive checking principles and guidelines for independent double checks.
- Identify nursing procedures and interventions for administration of cytotoxic and biologic agents by the following routes: PO, IM, SC, and IV. Greater time will be focused on oral and intravenous administration, the most common forms of administration.
- Identify the immediate adverse events and long-term side effects of common chemotherapy and biotherapy agents and their appropriate management.
- Discuss symptom management and related teaching points for patients and families, as guided by evidence-based education principles.
- Identify internal and external resources to support patients and families in your community.
- Articulate the ethical and legal considerations frequently encountered in practice and apply a framework to resolve ethical dilemmas.
- Demonstrate documentation that is consistent with Cancer Care Ontario's recommendations for practice.

D. MODE OF LEARNING: eLearning

The eLearning environment fosters a self-directed approach. You can progress through the modules and exercises at a convenient time, at home or work. The course timetable, in Section G of the course syllabus, outlines weekly expectations for participants.

- **eLearning Modules:** Sections and modules were developed by the de Souza education team to reflect the latest knowledge in chemotherapy and biotherapy administration and care. The content is up-to-date and includes interactive learning exercises and references to the latest clinical guidelines.
- **Readings:** These are intended to enhance the eLearning content surrounding key topic areas. Required readings further explain important concepts and are marked as required. All other readings are optional and intended to enhance your understanding of course content and expand your learning.
- **Assignment:** This two-part assignment has been developed with the intent of engaging your critical thinking and knowledge application skills and will evaluate your ability to apply essential competencies related to cancer chemotherapy care and assessment of practice issues. Part one focuses on infusion reactions and part two focuses on immunotherapy adverse effects. The assignment will be marked by either the educator or a co-facilitator and feedback will be provided.
- **Case Studies for Review:** Three case studies have been developed to enable you to review and apply the course content to real life clinical scenarios. You are required to complete only one case study, but can choose to do all three. You should select the case that most closely relates to your practice setting.
- **Study Guides:** Printable study guides are provided for all course sections except for Section 2 – Cancer Care System and Person Centered Approach. You can print and fill in the guides as you progress through the interactive course modules. Completion of the study guides is not mandatory, but can be a resource to support you in the online open-book exam.

E. MODES OF EVALUATION

As part of the evaluation process, you are required to complete the following:

- **Baseline Participant Survey:** This survey assesses your knowledge, attitude, and confidence before you begin the eLearning modules for the course.

- **Foundations Modules and Quiz:** You will be required to pass a Foundation's Quiz in Section 3, with a mark of 70% or greater (2 attempts only). Completion of the modules is not mandatory. However, individuals that have not completed the de Souza Foundations in Oncology Nursing Practice (FONP) course or who are new to oncology practice, are strongly advised to review the modules prior to attempting the quiz. **Access to sections 4 to 16 will not be available until this quiz is passed.**
- **eLearning Modules:** You must complete all course sections by the course end date.
 - You are required to complete all eLearning module content in each section and complete all quizzes that correspond with the module content.
 - The **Section 16 – Two-Part Assignment** must be completed by the due date. Detailed assignment information can be found in Section 16 of the course.
 - One case study for review from **Section 17** must be completed, as a review activity after completing the course modules. You can choose to complete all three if you choose.
 - You must receive a pass mark of 70% or greater on all course content before the course exam becomes available to you.
- **Workshops (In-person or Virtual)**
 - **In-person Workshop:** If an in-person workshop is being offered at your organization or hospital, you must register to attend that in-person workshop. Active participation is required. A workshop evaluation must also be completed. ***You must download and complete the Jean Louis case study and bring it with you to the workshop. In-person workshops are only offered in January, April and September of each year. Additional dates may be added but are dependent on local organization's availability.***
 - **Virtual Workshop:** This option was added during the COVID-19 pandemic to accommodate policies and restrictions related to public health. For those not able to attend an in-person workshop because it is not offered at their organization or hospital or due to public health policies and restrictions, you must register to attend the virtual workshop on one of the specified dates. Active participation is required. **Virtual workshops are offered in each cohort.** The virtual workshop covers the core content presented at the in-person workshop but does not include the hands-on components. ***You must download and complete the Jean Louis case study and bring it with you to the workshop.***

- **Workshop Attendance:** Whether you attend an in-person or a virtual workshop, attendance will be taken and recorded in the eLearning course. The workshop is a key component of this course, therefore we ask that you work with your workplace *at the time of enrollment and at the start of the course*, to ensure that your schedule will allow you attend and actively participate.
- **Exam:** You must write the final exam by the course end date. There are 44 multiple choice questions and you will be given 2 hours to write it. To successfully pass the exam, you must obtain a **minimum of 36 out of 44 (>81%)**. The exam is open book. No talking is permitted during the exam. The invigilator must be present for the full 120 minutes.
 - We recommend that you attempt the exam at least 1 week before the course ends.
 - You are allowed a **maximum of two attempts for this exam**. If you are not successful after two attempts, we recommend that you retake this course at a later time. Please note, if you are unsuccessful on your first attempt and in order to have your second attempt enabled in eLearning, you must reach out to the course educator to receive feedback and address your learning gaps.
- **Participant Post Survey:** At the end of the course, you will be required to complete a post course evaluation survey where you will have the opportunity to provide feedback. The survey is located within the eLearning course.

When you have met all of the above requirements, you will receive **35 learning hours, 1 de Souza credit** towards obtaining your de Souza designation, and an email containing instructions on how to download your certificate of completion via your “My Account” two weeks after the course ends.

F. COMPETENCIES

A number of competencies will be evident within each module and encompass the Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology Competencies and the College of Nurses of Ontario Standards of Practice.

College of Nurses of Ontario Standards

- Accountability
- Continuing competence
- Knowledge
- Knowledge application

- Leadership
- Relationships
- Professional relationships

Standards & guidelines link:

<https://www.cno.org/en/learn-about-standards-guidelines/standards-and-guidelines/>

Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology: Competencies associated with cancer chemotherapy nursing practice:

- Comprehensive health assessment
- Supportive and therapeutic relationships
- Management of cancer symptoms and treatment side effects
- Teaching and coaching
- Facilitating continuity of care/ navigating the system
- Decision-making and advocacy
- Professional practice and leadership

CANO Standard Link:

[CONEP September 28th REVISED- For Website.doc](#)

G. EXPECTATIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS

To be successful in completing this course, you are encouraged to set aside 4 to 6 hours each week to complete each section, as learning is primarily self-directed. Time spent to complete course activities will vary from learner to learner and will depend on preferred learning style, needs and previous oncology experience. Despite variance in learner time to complete the modules and course activities, successful course completion provides 35 learning hours, which can be used for continuing education.

Sections and modules are to be completed sequentially; you can choose to go ahead and complete learning activities in multiple sections and modules at once but must submit the assignments in the assigned weeks (refer to timeline in Section G).

Your course completion will be reflected in your **grade book**. Evidence of engagement through active participation will result in a positive learning experience. You will be expected to complete all 15 sections (Sections 2-16) of the eLearning course.

H. COURSE EDUCATORS

[Komal Patel Saini, RN\(EC\), MN, CON\(C\), CHPCN\(C\), GNC\(C\)](#)

[Allison Loucks, RN, MN, CON\(C\)](#)

[Inara Karrei, RN, MN, CON\(C\)](#)

I. EDUCATOR AVAILABILITY

This course is **self-directed**. If you have questions about the course or are having difficulty with the course content, contact support@desouzainstitute.com and include the course name "PSCB" in the subject line. You can expect the Educator to respond to your questions within 24 hours during the week and within 48 hours (about 2 days) on the weekend.

J. SUGGESTED COURSE TIMELINE

You must complete the sections/modules below in **sequential order**. Please note that the timeline below is a guide. It is your responsibility to ensure that all course requirements are completed by the course end date.

	Suggested Weekly eLearning Activities
Week 1	✓ eLearning Center Orientation – <i>Optional but highly recommended</i> ✓ Learner Agreement ✓ Baseline Survey ✓ Pre-knowledge Test ✓ Section 1 – Resources to be Used Throughout the Course - Section 2 (<i>Optional</i>) – Cancer Center System and Person Centered Approach ✓ Section 3 – Foundations Introductory Units to Cancer – <i>Only required to pass quiz with grade of 70% or higher (max. 2 attempts)</i> ✓ Section 4 – Diagnosis, Staging and Treatment
Week 2	✓ Section 5 – Clinical Trials ✓ Section 6 – Patient Education ✓ Section 7 – Psychological and Emotional Distress ✓ Section 8 – Safe Handling
Week 3	✓ Section 9 – Safety Theory ✓ Section 10 – Assessment and Administration
Week 4	✓ Section 11 – Chemotherapeutic Agents
Week 5	✓ Section 12 – Biotherapy

Week 6	✓ Section 13 – Oral Systemic Therapies ✓ Section 14 – Adverse Effects ✓ Section 15 – Immediate Complications
Week 7	✓ Section 16: Immunotherapy Assignment
Week 8	✓ Section 16: Infusion Assignment
In-Person or Virtual Workshop	✓ Occurs within weeks 6 to 8 – full participation required ✓ <i>Workshop details will be posted in the News Forum of the course by Week 3.</i> ✓ If your organization does not offer an in-person workshop for you to attend, you must attend <i>one</i> of the virtual workshops. ✓ You must complete and bring with you the <u>Jean Louis case study</u>, which will be marked at the workshop.
Week 10	✓ Section 17 – Case Studies for Review: Complete <u>one</u> case study as review and prep for the exam ✓ Must be done before writing the exam ✓ Arrange a date, time and location to write the exam with your invigilator – We recommend that you attempt the final exam by Week 10 ✓ Study for final exam; review content that you found more challenging ✓ Participant Post Survey – complete <u>before</u> writing the final exam
Week 11 Exam	✓ The last day to write the exam (including re-write) is at the end of Week 11 Maximum 2 attempts – 2 hours open book exam – must obtain 36/44 (>81%) to pass

K. SOCIAL FORUM

The social forum is provided for you to post news, items of general interest, share information about yourselves and to raise topics of interest beyond the specific questions being discussed in the module-specific forums. All messages of a social nature can be posted in this forum. This forum is open to all participants, including the educator.

L. VIRTUAL LIBRARY

de Souza Institute has a virtual library that can be accessed to those registered in this course or any other de Souza Institute continuing education program. This resource enables you to access over 1500 e-Journals, 200 e-books and 8 on-line databases such as CINAHL or Ovid-Medline. You can use the virtual library to access the required reading materials for your course. The virtual library can be accessed 24 hours a day at any location that has internet access using a login and password.

The direct link is <https://library.desouzainstitute.com/login>.

M. TECHNICAL SUPPORT

eLearning Centre Orientation

The [de Souza Institute eLearning Centre Orientation Course](#) is a free, and brief module designed to help you navigate your online courses successfully. If this is your first time accessing the platform, completing this orientation will teach you how the learning management system works and how to track your progress.

de Souza Institute Support

If you need assistance accessing or navigating the eLearning Centre, please refer to the eLearning Orientation course. If you experience any technical difficulties, please contact support@desouzainstitute.com.

N. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Click the links below to review de Souza's Policies.

[Academic Honesty and Copyright Policy](#)

[Cancellations, Incomplete and No Show Policy](#)

[Request for Accommodation Policy](#)

Course content and resources are based on provincial and national best practice guidelines. Please consult educators within your organization if you have specific questions related to local protocols and policies.

If you are experiencing difficulty completing this course in a timely way, please review the above policies and contact support@desouzainstitute.com.