

Professional Nursing Education Programs

Florida Department of Education
Commission for Independent Education



Challenges Ahead for Professional Nursing Programs

- Obtaining programmatic accreditation by the required date
- Maintaining acceptable NCLEX pass rates
- Attracting and retaining quality nursing students
 - entrance and exit exams
- If necessary, closing institutions and programs properly

Accreditation

- Chapter 2014-92, Laws of Florida, became effective on July 1, 2014
- A nursing education program that prepares students for the practice of professional nursing, that was approved under this section before July 1, 2014, and that enrolled students before July 1, 2014, must become an accredited program by July 1, 2019
- A nursing education program that prepares students for the practice of professional nursing and that was approved under this section before July 1, 2014, but did not enroll students before that date, must become an accredited program within 5 years after the date of enrolling the program's first students
- A nursing education program that prepares students for the practice of professional nursing and that is approved under this section after June 30, 2014, must become an accredited program within 5 years after the date of enrolling the program's first students

Accreditation

- Current statutorily recognized programmatic accrediting agencies
 - Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN)
 - AS and above
 - Collegiate Commission on Nursing Education (CCNE)
 - BS and above

ACEN Process

- Accreditation process takes on average 1.5 to 2 years
- ACEN accreditation process contains 4 parts
 - Self study
 - Site visit
 - Evaluation Review Panel
 - Commission accreditation decision
- ACEN requires institutional accreditation
- Institutions can apply for both institutional and programmatic accreditation simultaneously
 - Cannot schedule site visit until institutional accreditation is in place
- Accreditation must be in place by date established in statute

ACEN Standard 6

- Institution must maintain a 3-year mean licensure exam pass rate at or above the national mean for the same 3-year period
- Can initiate accreditation process while on probation but must correct prior to the site visit
- ACEN will take into consideration the following when evaluating an applicant on probation:
 - Progress leading to acceptable pass rates
 - Numbers of test takers as well as pass rate percentage

Plan of Action/Accreditation Requirement

- CIE is considering its options on how to best protect students where institutions are failing to make adequate progress toward achieving the required accreditation
 - Presenting a detailed plan with time lines to indicate how the institution plans to acquire programmatic accreditation by the required date
 - Providing regular updates to the commission
 - Commission will review the institution's remediation plan and NCLEX passage rates as part of this process



Accreditation Questions

Requirements for Professional Nursing Programs

– NCLEX Passage Rates (s.464.019, F.S.)

- Programs must achieve a graduate pass rate for first-time test takers who take the licensure examination within six months of graduation from the program that is not more than 10 percentage points lower than the national average of first time test takers of American educated students at comparable institutions
 - The average is a moving target
 - Failure to meet the standard for two consecutive years places a program on probation
 - Failure to achieve required pass rate during the two years following probation will lead to program termination
 - The Board of Nursing can extend probation for one additional year based on demonstration of adequate progress/benchmarks

Commission Actions

- CIE monitors NCLEX passage rates and focuses on institutions with scores that do not meet minimum requirements
- Summary reports are provided to Commissioners each time an institution is on the agenda
- Reports include:
 - Disclosure of current status (e.g. probation, termination)
 - Passage rates for previous two years
 - Current years' quarterly passage rates
 - Attachments such as clinical agreements, documentation regarding programmatic accreditation and any documents related to probationary status
 - Note: Actions taken by the Board of Nursing will be taken into consideration by the Commissioners

Commission Actions

- CIE takes action when programs or institutions fail to maintain acceptable passage rates
 - Programs on probation by the Board of Nursing will result in CIE reviewing for substantive change and issuance of provisional license
 - *Substantive change fee is \$1,000*
 - *Institutions cannot add new programs while holding a provisional license*
- Programs on probation by the Board of Nursing will result in CIE reviewing for placement on probation by CIE for failure to maintain licensure standards with conditions, including limiting or ceasing enrollments
- Programs terminated by the Board of Nursing result in CIE termination

Commission Actions

- CIE takes action when passage rates are low and before an institution is on probation with the Board of Nursing
 - Require a remediation plan to address low rates
 - Be specific and include details
 - Identify benchmarks and maintain proper tracking
 - Include evaluation dates and who is accountable for each measure
 - Utilize a matrix or chart
 - Submission of an update regarding programmatic accreditation with a timeline
 - Quarterly reporting to Commission on effectiveness of the plan (report backs)
- Efforts to address poor passage rates must be handled carefully by the institution so as not to harm students
 - Do not intentionally withhold eligible students names to the Board of Nursing
 - Do not make exit exams a graduation requirement without the appropriate disclosure

Future Commission Actions

- The Commission will continue to take the following actions:
 - Consider a substantive change and issue a provisional license
 - Terminate programs where appropriate
 - Monitor passage rates and require remediation plans when pass rates are low
 - Track progress towards obtaining programmatic accreditation
 - The Commission will consider the following action:
 - Placing an institution on probation and restricting or ceasing enrollment where institution has history of low passage rate and failure to improve or imposing other conditions designed to protect students

Entrance Exams

- CIE does not require entrance exams or set minimal entrance exam requirements for nursing programs
- Attestations
 - High School Diploma Verification
- Nursing specific evaluation tools are recommended
 - HESI
 - TEAS
- Goal-track student ability to succeed in nursing programs
- Assess the students you are enrolling-key to program success

Exit Exam

- CIE does not require exit exams or set minimal exit exam requirements for nursing programs
- Nursing specific evaluation tools are recommended
 - HESI
 - TEAS
- Goal-track student readiness to take NCLEX
- Make sure you have made the necessary disclosure to students

Institutional Closure

- Proper Closures
 - Notify CIE in writing 30 days prior to closure
 - Arrange for teach-out or train-out with other institutions
 - CIE monitors teach-outs
 - Forward student records to CIE
 - Transparency to students and faculty is key

Institutional Closure

- Improper Closure
 - Closing an institution without adequate notice to students and CIE can result in prosecution for a second degree misdemeanor
 - Inability to open an institution in the future

Program Closure

- Voluntary closure of a nursing program with a teach out
 - Cease enrollments
 - Submit teach-out plan to Board of Nursing/CIE
 - Provide in plan details about assisting current students in program completion
 - Make arrangements for records storage
 - Provide date of the last graduating class and projected teach-out completion date
 - Focus of teach-out plan is to ensure that all students in current programs are given the training tutoring and encouragement to pass the NCLEX exam

Train-Out Plans

- A Train-out is a contract with your institution and other institutions to complete student training
 - Not a contract with CIE
 - Can involve more than one institution
- The Commission will need to approve train-out agreements
 - Must be agreed to and signed by both parties
 - Must contain details and specify duties and responsibilities of all parties
- Work with accreditors and USDOE
- Coordinate with CIE

Program Terminations/Board of Nursing

- Approved programs that are terminated and that have students with at least 12 credits who transfer to other nursing programs licensed by CIE will not have the exam scores of the transferred students counted in their program passage rates
 - Designed to help students who have not completed program at institution closure and to minimize risk to transferring institutions
 - Only applicable if the Board of Nursing has terminated the program for failure to maintain NCLEX passage rates under s.464.019, F.S.

New Programs

- Adding new programs to your institution does not necessarily generate more revenue
- Consider eliminating programs that:
 - Are not meeting standards
 - Are not producing graduates
 - Are not generating enrollment numbers
 - Continue to generate poor NCLEX passage rates
- Consider lowering enrollments
- Institutions always have option of adding programs at a later date
 - Consider programs in other health related fields
 - Medical Assisting
 - Phlebotomy
 - Medical Billing/Coding
 - Certified Nursing Assistant

Requirements for Professional Nursing Programs – Clinical Training

- 50% of the curriculum must be clinical training
 - Competencies – medical, surgical, obstetric, pediatric, geriatric
 - Settings – include acute care, long-term care and community settings
- No more than 50% of the clinical training may be done through clinical simulation
 - Board of Nursing interpretation-50% limited to content area
- The institution must have signed agreements with clinical sites
 - A clinical matrix is filed with CIE
 - Matrix must include detailed information on each clinical site
 - If clinical is over 50 miles from institution attach an explanation of how students will be accommodated for travel
 - Note: CIE is contacting clinical sites to verify that agreements are current
 - Let your licensure specialist know about any changes

CIE Tips & Strategies to Ensure Success

- Watch the Commission's webcasts if you are not in attendance at the bi-monthly meetings
 - Nursing programs are discussed frequently
 - Commissioners provide advice on operating nursing programs
 - Webcast available at www.fl DOE.org/cie
- If you are required to report back, BE THERE IN PERSON
 - Commissioners want to hear from you
 - Be prepared to provide update on passage rates and graduates
 - Have an analysis of your remediation plan and “tell your story”
 - Know your institutional statistics
 - Current population
 - Number of Testers
 - Number of Graduates

CIE Tips & Strategies to Ensure Success

- Be realistic about the costs of running a nursing program and be prepared to demonstrate to the Commissioners sufficient financial resources for operation
 - Financial stability is tied to an institution's ability to continue to enroll students and operate a successful program
- Take advantage of outside resources and professional organizations
- Keep the Commission/Executive Director informed
- Establish a good working relationship with your licensure specialist
- Communicate immediately any major changes or issues

Available Assistance to Meet Requirements

- Commission for Independent Education
 - Website - www.fl DOE.org/policy/cie
- Florida Board of Nursing
 - Website - www.floridanursing.gov
- Accreditation Agencies
 - Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing
 - Website - www.acenursing.org
 - Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education
 - Website - <http://www.aacn.nche.edu/ccne-accreditation>

Commission Review



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