GLOSSARY

Additional Location – See Branch Campus/Off-Campus Instructional Site.

Administrative Capacity – Administrative services available to the governing organization and nursing education unit that directly support the functions of the governing organization and the nursing education unit in the achievement of the student learning outcomes and program outcomes.

Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) – A clinical nurse specialist, nurse practitioner, certified registered nurse anesthetist, or certified nurse midwife.

Alternative Methods of Delivery – Methods of delivering a nursing course, program option, or nursing program that differ from traditional instructional methods, including non-traditional means of student-faculty interaction, length required for the nursing program of study, and/or varying intervals of class and/or clinical schedules. Examples include, but are not limited to, accelerated or condensed formats, instructional television (ITV), videotape/DVD learning packages, and online delivery.

Branch Campus – A location of an institution that is geographically separate and independent of the main campus of the institution. A location is independent of the main campus if the location:
  • is permanent in nature;
  • offers courses in educational nursing programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential;
  • has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization; and
  • has its own budgetary and hiring authority.

Chief Executive Officer – The official who has the primary responsibility of carrying out the administrative policies and functions of the governing organization.

Clinical Learning Experiences – Planned instructional activities with patients across the lifespan that are sufficient to achieve the student learning outcomes and role-specific graduate competencies and are supervised by qualified faculty who provide feedback in support of learning.

Closing Report – A written plan developed by a governing organization/nursing education unit that provides for the equitable treatment of students if a governing organization/nursing education unit, or a nursing program location that provides 50% or more of a nursing program ceases to operate before all students have completed their nursing program of study. The Closing Report may include, if required by the governing organization’s accrediting agency, a teach-out agreement between governing organizations/nursing education units. This applies to the closure of a governing organization, an off-campus instructional site, a branch campus, or a nursing program. The Closing Report requires ACEN approval in advance of implementation. See ACEN Policy #16 Program Closing.

Communities of Interest – Persons, groups, agencies, and/or organizations that influence the mission, services, and outcomes of the nursing education unit. Examples include students,
graduates, healthcare employers, governing organizations, state regulatory agencies, and the public.

Complaints and Grievances – A formal allegation against a party or program typically expressed in a written, signed statement. A grievance is a wrong or hardship suffered that is the grounds for a complaint; the formal expression of a grievance is a complaint. A nursing education unit’s record of student complaints must include all complaints filed during the time period since the last accreditation site visit.

Contractual Agreement – Typically one in which a nursing program enters an agreement for receipt of courses or portions of courses (e.g., clinical training internships) delivered by another institution or service provider.

Consortia Relationship – Typically one in which two (2) or more governing organizations/nursing education units share the responsibility of developing and delivering nursing courses or a nursing program, in whole or part.

Core Values – Those beliefs or ideals that form the foundation for the work of a governing organization and/or nursing program.

Credentialing

Accreditation – A voluntary, non-governmental process that uses peer review to determine if academic programs meet public confidence. Institutional accreditation evaluates an entire institution as a whole. Specialized accreditation evaluates a particular educational unit or program(s) within a governing organization.

Approval – The term generally referred to by most state regulatory agencies for nursing to describe authorization of nursing education programs meeting minimal standards as defined in the state nurse practice act or rules and regulations.

Certification – The process by which an organization, association, voluntary agency, or state regulatory agency grants recognition that an individual possesses predetermined knowledge and/or skills specified for practice in an area of specialization.

Licensure – The process by which a governmental agency gives affirmation to the public that the individuals engaged in an occupation or profession have minimal education, qualifications, and competence necessary to practice in a safe manner.

Criteria – Statements that identify the variables that need to be examined in evaluation of a standard.

Currently Enrolled – In reference to a nurse administrator or nursing faculty member, enrolled as a graduate student in good standing and successfully completing a minimum of six (6) to nine (9) semester credits per year until the graduate degree is earned.

Curriculum Integrity – Demonstration of the soundness of the program of study that progresses from the mission/philosophy in an organized manner across a sequence of courses. The mission/philosophy and selected professional standards, guidelines, and competencies result in the faculty identifying overall student learning outcomes that are specific, measureable, and
progress throughout the curriculum to facilitate the achievement of the role-specific graduate competencies. The student learning outcomes should guide the delivery of instruction and direct learning activities.

**Default Rate** – The rate of student borrowers who fail to remain current on their loans.

**Distance Education**

- **Asynchronous Learning** – Learning and instruction that do not occur in the same place or at the same time.

- **Distance Education** – An educational process in which the majority of the instruction occurs when a student and instructor are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. Distance education may employ audio, video, and/or computer technologies and includes technology that is used to support regular and substantive interactions between the instructor and the students.

- **Distance Technology** – Instructional methods that may include one-way or two-way transmissions, audio, video, the Internet, and/or computer technologies.

- **Hybrid/Blended Nursing Course** – The nursing course content is delivered both in person/in a classroom and via distance education; 1% to 49% of the traditional in-person/in-a-classroom time is replaced with work via distance education, typically delivered asynchronously. The component delivered via distance education includes learning activities that reduce the time traditionally spent in the in-person/in-a-classroom component.

- **Hybrid/Blended Nursing Program** – The nursing program is delivered both in person/in a classroom and via distance education; 1% to 49% of the credit hours or 1% to 49% of the clock hours of the nursing courses is delivered in person/in a classroom, and the remaining credit hours or clock hours are delivered via distance education, typically delivered asynchronously. The distance education delivered component includes learning activities that reduce the time traditionally spent in the in-person/in-a-classroom component.

- **Online/Internet Nursing Course** – A form of distance education whereby 50% to 100% of the nursing course content is delivered primarily online and asynchronously.

- **Online Nursing Program** – A form of distance education whereby 50% to 100% of the credit hours or 50% to 100% of the clock hours of the nursing courses are delivered primarily online and asynchronously.

- **Synchronous Learning** – Learning and instruction that occur at the same time and in the same place.

**Diversity Concepts** – Knowledge about persons, communities, regions, countries, cultures, and ethnicities other than one's own.
Due Process – A disciplined, analytical decision-making procedure in which relevant standards are applied by a properly constituted and authorized body using a method that is based on published rules of procedure and is free of improper influence.

Evidence-Based – Actions, processes, or methodologies that are grounded in and flow from the translation of substantive and current research.

Expected Level of Achievement – A measurable index that reflects a desired outcome.

Faculty, Non-Nursing – Non-nurses who are academically qualified and teach a nursing course such as a dietician, pharmacologist, or physiologist.

Faculty, Nursing – Nurses who teach and evaluate nursing students, are academically qualified, and have experience in the content areas in which they teach.

  Full-time – Persons who teach and/or evaluate students and have full-time faculty employment status as defined by the governing organization.

  Part-time – Persons who teach and/or evaluate students and whose appointment is less than full-time as defined by the governing organization.

  Shared – Persons who teach and/or evaluate students in more than one (1) program within a nursing education unit, whether defined as full-time or part-time within the governing organization.

Faculty Development – Activities that facilitate faculty maintenance or enhancement of expertise, including certification, continuing education, formal advanced education, clinical practice, research, publications, and other scholarly activities.

Faculty Workload – Percentages of time that reflect the manner in which the governing organization or nursing education unit characterizes, structures, and documents the nature of faculty responsibilities. Workload duties typically include teaching, advisement, administration, committee activity, research and other scholarship activity, and service/practice.

Gatekeeper – A person or agency that is responsible for monitoring an institution’s compliance with the Higher Education Reauthorization Act Title IV.

Geographic Region – In reference to the substantive change process, an area serving the same/similar population of students and communities as the original/main location of the nursing program.

Geographically Separate – An off-campus instructional site or branch campus that is located physically apart from the main campus of the institution.

Good Cause – Sufficient grounds to extend the accreditation at the conclusion of the nursing program’s maximum monitoring period, which results in continuing accreditation with warning for good cause. A nursing program’s accreditation can be extended for good cause if the program satisfies all of the following principles:
• The nursing program has demonstrated significant recent accomplishments in addressing non-compliance;

• The nursing program has documented that it has the potential to remedy all deficiencies within the extended period as defined by the Commission; that is, that the program provides evidence which makes it reasonable for the Commission to determine it will remedy all deficiencies within the extended time defined by the Commission;

• The nursing program provides assurance to the Commission that it is not aware of any other reasons, other than those identified by the Commission, why the nursing program could not be continued for Good Cause.

**Governing Organization** – The institution with overall responsibility and authority for the nursing education unit and the nursing program (e.g., university, college, hospital/medical center, career center).

**Graduate Degree** – A master’s degree or doctoral degree.

**Inactivation of a Nursing Program** – A period of time wherein no new students are admitted into a nursing program; therefore, there will be no graduates from the nursing program for an intervening period of time.

**Inactivation of an Off-Campus Instructional Site** – A period of time during which a nursing education unit does not offer 1) a nursing program and the nursing courses for the program or 2) a nursing program option and the nursing courses for the program option at an approved off-campus instructional site for five (5) academic years. After five (5) academic years wherein no students have enrolled and no nursing courses have been offered at the off-campus instructional site, the nursing program must follow the substantive change process to reinstate the off-campus instructional site.

**Information Literacy** – The ability to identify what information is needed for a specific purpose and to access, evaluate, and use all forms of information in achieving that goal.

**Inter-professional** – Sharing of information among two (2) or more healthcare professionals working together as a team with a common purpose and mutual respect.

**Job Placement Rate** – Percentage of graduates, six (6) to twelve (12) months after graduation, employed in a position for which the program prepared them.

**Laboratory Personnel** – Non-faculty persons with specified expertise who may support and/or facilitate learning experiences in a practice setting typically designed to simulate the clinical environment; laboratory personnel do not have teaching or evaluating responsibilities.

**Letter of Notification** – A letter from the nurse administrator of a nursing program, or his/her designee, to the ACEN Chief Executive Officer summarizing a substantive change and pertinent information therein.

**Mission/Philosophy** – The governing organization and/or nursing education unit statement that designates fundamental beliefs and characteristics and provides guidance and direction for the program(s) and services offered.
Nurse Administrator – The individual with responsibility and authority for the administrative and instructional activities of the nursing education unit within the governing organization (e.g., dean, chairperson, director).

Nursing Education Unit – A unit within a governing organization that offers one (1) or more nursing program types; all nursing programs within the nursing education unit must be administered by a single individual with the responsibility and authority for all nursing programs.

Nursing Program – Identified as a single entity when it can be demonstrated that all of the following criteria are met:

- The nursing program is within a single governing organization that is accredited through an appropriate institutional accrediting agency recognized by the ACEN.
- The nursing program is within the jurisdiction of one (1) state regulatory agency for nursing exclusive of clinical learning experiences.
- One (1) set of student learning outcomes is utilized for the nursing program offered.
- One (1) nurse administrator has responsibility and authority for the nursing program, which may include the hiring and evaluation of faculty, the development or revision of the curriculum, the assignment/approval of faculty responsibilities, the establishment of nursing-program-specific admission/progression criteria, and development and administration of the nursing program budget.
- The faculty function as a faculty of the whole within a set of established faculty policies through their organization and decision-making processes and have input into the curriculum development, delivery, and evaluation.
- A systematic evaluation plan is in place that addresses the student learning outcomes, nursing program outcomes, and the ACEN Standards and Criteria.
- A single degree, certificate, or diploma is offered to students who successfully complete the nursing program.
- All students are governed by a single set of policies.

Nursing Program Length – Total time required to complete the defined nursing program of study stated in academic semesters/terms inclusive of all prerequisites and the total number of credits required.

Nursing Program Locations – Sites where a nursing program is delivered, in whole or part, including the main location, off-campus instructional site(s), and branch campus(es).

Nursing Program Option – Model of delivery designed for a subset of students within a nursing program. Program options include, but are not limited to, pre-licensure options, post-licensure completion options, bridge options, traditional options, accelerated options, evening/weekend options, and specialized concentrations/tracks.

Nursing Program Type – Recognized degree, diploma, or certificate offered by a nursing program, including clinical doctorate, master’s and post-master’s certificate, baccalaureate, associate, diploma, and practical.

Off-Campus Instructional Site – Any location that is physically apart from the main campus of the institution where a nursing program is offered, in whole or part.
**Outcome** – A statement that reflects the achievement of identified goals.

**Program Outcomes** – Indicators that reflect the extent to which the purposes of the nursing education unit are achieved and by which program effectiveness is documented. Program outcomes are measurable, consumer-oriented indexes designed to evaluate the degree to which the program is achieving its mission and goals. Examples include, but are not limited to, licensure/certification examination pass rates, program completion rates, graduate satisfaction, employer satisfaction, and job placement rates.

**Student Learning Outcomes** – Statements of expectations written in measurable terms that express what a student will know, do, or think at the end of a learning experience; characteristics of the student at the completion of a course and/or program. Learning outcomes are measurable, learner-oriented abilities that are consistent with standards of professional practice.

**Partnership** – An agreement (formal relationship) between a nursing education unit/governing organization and an outside agent/agency to accomplish specific objectives and goals over a period of time. This does not include clinical agreements for student learning experiences required by the nursing program.

**Pass Rates**

**Certification Examination Pass Rates** – Performance on the certification examination for first-time test-takers.

**Licensure Examination Pass Rates** – Performance on the licensure examination for first-time test-takers.

**Post-Master’s Certificate (PMC)** – A select series of courses that are specific to one (1) area of practice (e.g., certificates in nursing administration, certificates in nursing education, certificates in family nurse practitioner).

**Preceptor** – An academically and experientially qualified nurse who has received formal training to function as a resource and role model for nursing students.

**Prerequisite Course** – A course that is required prior to the taking of another course. The first course provides a foundation for the subsequent course(s). A prerequisite course is included in the total credits of the program of study if the majority of the students enrolled in the nursing program are required to take the course.

**Professional Standards/Guidelines for Nursing Practice** – A set of guidelines approved by a nationally recognized nursing organization for use in the development and evaluation of a nursing curriculum. The most recent version/edition of the standards/guidelines must be used. The standards/guidelines include but are not limited to:

- Consensus Model for APRN Regulation (APRN Consensus Work Group & the National Council of State Boards of Nursing APRN Advisory Group)
- Core Competencies for Interprofessional Collaborative Practice (Interprofessional Education Collaborative)
- Criteria for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs (National Task Force on Quality Nurse Practitioner Education)
• Essentials of Baccalaureate, Master's, and Doctoral Education (American Association of Colleges of Nursing)
• Health Professions Education: A Bridge to Quality (Institute of Medicine)
• NLN Competencies for Graduates of Nursing Education Programs (National League for Nursing)
• Nurse Practice Standards for the Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse (National Federation of Licensed Practical Nurses)
• Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice (American Nurses Association)
• Standards of Practice and Educational Competencies of Graduates of Practical/Vocational Nursing Programs (National Association for Practical Nurse Education and Services)
• Statement on Clinical Nurse Specialist Practice and Education (National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists)
• Quality and Safety Education for Nurses (QSEN)

**Program Completion Rate** – Percentage of students who graduate within a defined period of time. The definition used by the ACEN for the program completion rate is the number of students who complete the program in no more than 150% of the stated program length beginning with enrollment in the first nursing course.

**Program Satisfaction** – Perceptions of graduates and their employers regarding the graduates’ achievement of the learning outcomes/competencies and the adequacy and effectiveness of the program.

**Public** – Any individual or group with an interest in but no direct responsibility for the development or delivery of the nursing program (e.g., clients/patients, non-nursing students, non-nursing faculty, healthcare providers, and community residents).

**Published Document(s)** – All written forms of communication distributed by the nursing program or governing organization, including paper and electronic sources intended to inform the public.

**Qualified, Academically** – Documented current or recent direct engagement in a significant manner in teaching and/or research in nursing; faculty members must hold the required educational credentials.

**Qualified, Experientially** – Documented current or recent direct engagement in a significant manner in clinical nursing experiences for those whose role includes teaching; for those engaged in administration, documented current or recent direct engagement in a significant manner in administrative functions in nursing education.

**Reactivation of a Nursing Program** – After a period of inactivity, the process of admitting new students into a nursing program. If a nursing education unit does not reactivate a nursing program within the period of time specified by the ACEN, the nursing program is considered closed and removed from the list of accredited programs. To restart the nursing program, the nursing education unit must reapply for accreditation with the ACEN. See ACEN Policy #14 Reporting Substantive Changes.

**Reactivation of an Off-Campus Instructional Site** – After a period of inactivity, the process of offering 1) a nursing program and the nursing courses for the program or 2) a
nursing program option and the nursing courses for the program option at an approved off-campus instructional site. If a nursing education unit does not reactivate the off-campus instruction site within five (5) academic years of no students enrolled and no nursing courses offered at the off-campus instructional site, then the program must follow the substantive change process to reinstate the off-campus instructional site. See ACEN Policy #14 Reporting Substantive Changes.

**Resources, Fiscal** – The financial support required for securing the personnel, supplies, materials, equipment, and services necessary to ensure the achievement of the student learning outcomes and program outcomes.

**Resources, Learning** – The materials, activities, and technologies that facilitate the development of student knowledge and skills and the achievement of the student learning outcomes.

**Resources, Physical** – Classrooms, laboratories, offices, and other common spaces that are used by the nursing program.

**Role-Specific Graduate Competencies** – Expected, measurable levels of graduate performance that integrate knowledge, skills, and abilities. Competencies may include specific knowledge areas, clinical judgments, and behaviors based upon the role and/or scope of practice of the graduate.

**Scholarship** – Activities that facilitate the enhancement of expertise and achievement of the goals and outcomes of the nursing education unit. These include, but are not limited to, application of knowledge, teaching, service, practice, and research.

**Staff** – Non-faculty personnel who facilitate the attainment of the goals and outcomes of the nursing education unit, including clerical and other support persons.

**Standard** – Agreed-upon rules to measure quantity, extent, value, and quality.

**Sustainability of Resources** – The financial capacity of the governing organization to support, maintain, or continue resources at their current level.

**Systematic Plan for Evaluation** – A written document emphasizing the ongoing, comprehensive assessment of the student learning outcomes, program outcomes, role-specific graduate competencies, and the ACEN Standards. This includes specific, measurable expected levels of achievement; frequency of assessment; appropriate assessment methods; and a minimum of three (3) years of data for each component within the plan. Newly established programs are required to have data from the time of the program’s inception.

**Teach-Out Agreement** – A written agreement between governing organizations/ nursing education units that provides for the equitable treatment of students and a reasonable opportunity for students to complete their nursing program of study if a governing organization/nursing education unit, or a nursing program location that provides 50% or more of a nursing program offered, ceases to operate before all enrolled students have completed their nursing program of study. This applies to the closure of a governing organization, an off-campus instructional site, a branch campus, or a nursing program. A teach-out agreement requires ACEN approval in advance of implementation. See ACEN Policy #16 Program Closing.
Welfare of Faculty and Staff – Policies affecting faculty and staff promulgated by the governing organization and nursing education unit including, but not limited to, non-discrimination, appointment, rank, grievance, promotion, rights and responsibilities, salaries/benefits, and workload.