

STANDARD 1

Mission and Administrative Capacity

The mission of the nursing education unit reflects the governing organization's core values and is congruent with its mission/goals. The governing organization and program have administrative capacity resulting in effective delivery of the nursing program and achievement of identified program outcomes.

- 1.1** The mission/philosophy and program outcomes of the nursing education unit are congruent with the core values and mission/goals of the governing organization.
- 1.2** The governing organization and nursing education unit ensure representation of the nurse administrator and nursing faculty in governance activities; opportunities exist for student representation in governance activities.
- 1.3** Communities of interest have input into program processes and decision-making.
- 1.4** Partnerships that exist promote excellence in nursing education, enhance the profession, and benefit the community.
- 1.5** The nursing education unit is administered by a nurse who holds a graduate degree with a major in nursing and is doctorally prepared.
- 1.6** The nurse administrator is experientially qualified, meets governing organization and state requirements, and is oriented and mentored to the role.
- 1.7** When present, nursing faculty who coordinate or lead program options/tracks are academically and experientially qualified.
- 1.8** The nurse administrator has authority and responsibility for the development and administration of the program and has adequate time and resources to fulfill the role responsibilities.
- 1.9** The nurse administrator has the authority to prepare and administer the program budget with faculty input.
- 1.10** Policies for nursing faculty and staff are comprehensive, provide for the welfare of faculty and staff, and are consistent with those of the governing organization; differences are justified by the goals and outcomes of the nursing education unit.
- 1.11** Distance education, when utilized, is congruent with the mission of the governing organization and the mission/philosophy of the nursing education unit.

All programs with APRN options are also expected to adhere to the current National Task Force Guidelines for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs as well as other requirements of the specialty organizations as they apply to the current ACEN Standards and Criteria. [See crosswalk between ACEN Standards and Criteria and 2016 National Task Force Guidelines for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs.](#)

STANDARD 2

Faculty and Staff

Qualified and credentialed faculty are sufficient in number to ensure the achievement of the student learning outcomes and program outcomes. Sufficient qualified staff are available to support the nursing education unit.

- 2.1** Full-time faculty hold a minimum of a graduate degree with a major in nursing; a minimum of 50% of the full-time faculty hold earned doctorates or are currently enrolled in doctoral study.

Full- and part-time faculty include those individuals teaching and/or evaluating students in classroom, clinical, or laboratory settings.

- 2.2** Part-time faculty hold a minimum of a graduate degree with a major in nursing; a minimum of 50% of the part-time faculty hold earned doctorates or are currently enrolled in doctoral study.
- 2.3** Faculty (full- and part-time) credentials reflect expertise in their area(s) of teaching and advanced practice certifications when required.
- 2.4** Preceptors, when utilized, are academically and experientially qualified, oriented, mentored, and monitored, and have clearly documented roles and responsibilities.
- 2.5** The number of full-time faculty is sufficient to ensure that the student learning outcomes and program outcomes are achieved.
- 2.6** Faculty (full- and part-time) maintain expertise in their areas of responsibility, and their performance reflects scholarship and evidence-based teaching and clinical practices.
- 2.7** The number, utilization, and credentials of staff and non-nurse faculty within the nursing education unit are sufficient to achieve the program goals and outcomes.
- 2.8** Faculty (full- and part-time) are oriented and mentored in their areas of responsibility.
- 2.9** Systematic assessment of faculty (full- and part-time) performance demonstrates competencies that are consistent with program goals and outcomes.
- 2.10** Faculty (full- and part-time) engage in ongoing development and receive support for instructional and distance technologies.

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STANDARD 3

Students

Student policies and services support the achievement of the student learning outcomes and program outcomes of the nursing education unit.

- 3.1** Policies for nursing students are congruent with those of the governing organization, publicly accessible, non-discriminatory, and consistently applied; differences are justified by the student learning outcomes and program outcomes.
- 3.2** Public information is accurate, clear, consistent, and accessible, including the program's accreditation status and the ACEN contact information.
- 3.3** Changes in policies, procedures, and program information are clearly and consistently communicated to students in a timely manner.
- 3.4** Student services are commensurate with the needs of nursing students, including those receiving instruction using alternative methods of delivery.
- 3.5** Student educational records are in compliance with the policies of the governing organization and state and federal guidelines.
- 3.6** Compliance with the Higher Education Reauthorization Act Title IV eligibility and certification requirements is maintained, including default rates and the results of financial or compliance audits.
 - 3.6.1** A written, comprehensive student loan repayment program addressing student loan information, counseling, monitoring, and cooperation with lenders is available.
 - 3.6.2** Students are informed of their ethical responsibilities regarding financial assistance.
 - 3.6.3** Financial aid records are maintained in compliance with the policies of the governing organization, state, and federal guidelines.
- 3.7** Records reflect that program complaints and grievances receive due process and include evidence of resolution.
- 3.8** Orientation to technology is provided, and technological support is available to students.
- 3.9** Information related to technology requirements and policies specific to distance education are accurate, clear, consistent, and accessible.

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STANDARD 4*

Curriculum

The curriculum supports the achievement of the identified student learning outcomes and program outcomes of the nursing education unit consistent with safe practice in contemporary healthcare environments.

- 4.1** The curriculum is congruent with established standards for master's/post-master's programs, including appropriate advanced nursing practice competencies, role-specific professional standards and guidelines, and certification requirements, and has clearly articulated student learning outcomes and program outcomes consistent with contemporary practice.
- 4.2** The student learning outcomes are used to organize the curriculum, guide the delivery of instruction, direct learning activities, and evaluate student progress.
- 4.3** The curriculum is developed by the faculty and regularly reviewed to ensure integrity, rigor, and currency.
- 4.4** The curriculum is designed to prepare graduates to be information literate and to practice from an evidence-based approach in their direct and indirect advanced nursing roles.
- 4.5** The curriculum is designed so that graduates of the program are able to practice in a culturally and ethnically diverse global society.
- 4.6** The curriculum and instructional processes reflect educational theory, interprofessional collaboration, research, and current standards of practice.
- 4.7** Evaluation methodologies are varied, reflect established professional and practice competencies, and measure the achievement of the student learning outcomes.
- 4.8** Program length is congruent with the attainment of identified student learning outcomes and program outcomes and consistent with the policies of the governing organization, state and national standards, and best practices.
- 4.9** Practice learning environments support the achievement of student learning outcomes and program outcomes.
- 4.10** Students participate in clinical experiences that are evidence-based and reflect contemporary practice and nationally established patient health and safety goals.
- 4.11** Written agreements for clinical practice agencies are current, specify expectations for all parties, and ensure the protection of students.
- 4.12** Learning activities, instructional materials, and evaluation methods are appropriate for all delivery formats and consistent with the student learning outcomes.

*For nursing education units offering the post-master's certificate, all criteria apply.

All programs with APRN options are also expected to adhere to the current National Task Force Guidelines for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs as well as other requirements of the specialty organizations as they apply to the current ACEN Standards and Criteria. [See crosswalk between ACEN Standards and Criteria and 2016 National Task Force Guidelines for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs.](#)

STANDARD 5

Resources

Fiscal, physical, and learning resources are sustainable and sufficient to ensure the achievement of the student learning outcomes and program outcomes of the nursing education unit.

- 5.1** Fiscal resources are sustainable, sufficient to ensure the achievement of the student learning outcomes and program outcomes, and commensurate with the resources of the governing organization.
- 5.2** Physical resources are sufficient to ensure the achievement of the nursing education unit outcomes, and meet the needs of the faculty, staff, and students.
- 5.3** Learning resources and technology are selected with faculty input and are comprehensive, current, and accessible to faculty and students.
- 5.4** Fiscal, physical, technological, and learning resources are sufficient to meet the needs of the faculty and students engaged in alternative methods of delivery.

All programs with APRN options are also expected to adhere to the current National Task Force Guidelines for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs as well as other requirements of the specialty organizations as they apply to the current ACEN Standards and Criteria. [See crosswalk between ACEN Standards and Criteria and 2016 National Task Force Guidelines for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs.](#)

STANDARD 6

Outcomes

Program evaluation demonstrates that students and graduates have achieved the student learning outcomes, program outcomes, and role-specific graduate competencies of the nursing education unit.

6.1 The systematic plan for evaluation of the nursing education unit emphasizes the ongoing assessment and evaluation of each of the following:

- Student learning outcomes;
- Program outcomes;
- Role-specific professional competencies; and
- The ACEN Standards.

The systematic plan of evaluation contains specific, measurable expected levels of achievement; frequency of assessment; appropriate assessment methods; and a minimum of three years of data for each component within the plan.**

6.2 Evaluation findings are aggregated and trended by program option, location, and date of completion and are sufficient to inform program decision-making for the maintenance and improvement of the student learning outcomes and the program outcomes.

6.3 Evaluation findings are shared with communities of interest.

6.4 The program demonstrates evidence of achievement in meeting the program outcomes.

6.4.1 Performance on licensure and/or certification exams:

- For entry-level master's programs, the program's three-year mean for the licensure exam pass rate will be at or above the national mean for the same three-year period.
- The certification exam pass rates for first-time candidates will be at or above the national mean.

6.4.2 Program completion: Expected levels of achievement for program completion are determined by the faculty and reflect student demographics and program options.

6.4.3 Graduate program satisfaction: Qualitative and quantitative measures address graduates six to twelve months post-graduation.

6.4.4 Employer program satisfaction: Qualitative and quantitative measures address employer satisfaction with graduate preparation for entry-level positions six to twelve months post-graduation.

6.4.5 Job placement rates: Expected levels of achievement are determined by the faculty and are addressed through quantified measures six to twelve months post-graduation.

**Newly-established programs are required to have data from the time of the program's inception.

All programs with APRN options are also expected to adhere to the current National Task Force Guidelines for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs as well as other requirements of the specialty organizations as they apply to the current ACEN Standards and Criteria. [See crosswalk between ACEN Standards and Criteria and 2016 National Task Force Guidelines for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs.](#)