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## ***Congratulations on achieving Candidacy! Now that the program is a Candidate for ACEN accreditation...***

*Publicly disclose that the nursing program is an ACEN Candidate program:*

Effective [insert date of ACEN notification letter], this nursing program is a Candidate for initial accreditation by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN). This Candidacy status expires on [insert date of ACEN notification letter].

Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN)  
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Atlanta, GA 30326 404-975-5000  
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## ***Initiate the Self-Study Report review:***

Any program seeking initial accreditation must undergo a thorough self-review to determine the extent to which the program meets the ACEN Accreditation Standards and Criteria. Programs should engage the nursing faculty and administrators, the administrators for the governing organization, students, staff, and other members of the program's communities of interest in the self-study review and in preparing the Self-Study Report. The amount of time needed for the self-review and writing the Self-Study Report varies for each program.

## ***Participate in the ACEN Self-Study Forum:***

The nurse administrator and as many faculty members as possible from the nursing program should plan to attend an ACEN Self-Study Forum. Forums are scheduled in the spring and fall. Faculty members do not have to attend the same Forum. Information about upcoming Forums is available at all times on the ACEN website.

## ***Participate in the ACEN Workshop for Program Administrators:***

The nurse administrator as well as any additional personnel with program administration responsibilities (e.g., coordinators, faculty, etc.) should plan to attend the ACEN Workshop for [Effectively Leading an ACEN-Accredited Program: A Workshop for the Program Administrator](#). Workshops are scheduled in the spring and fall, often the day before a Self-Study Forum. Information about the upcoming workshops is available on the ACEN website.

## ***Address any and all areas of non-compliance and areas needing development identified during the Candidacy process:***

A nursing program seeking initial accreditation must meet all ACEN Standards and Criteria at the time of its review by the ACEN Board of Commissioners. Therefore, the faculty must be sure to address and correct any and all areas of non-compliance brought to light during the Candidacy process. The faculty

should also ensure that any areas needing development that were identified during the Candidacy process are also considered in preparing the Self-Study Report and for the initial accreditation visit.

***Ensure compliance with all Standards and Criteria:***

Remember that the Candidacy Presentation only considers selected Criteria of four (4) Standards; a program must demonstrate compliance with all six (6) of the Standards and their respective Criteria at the time of its review by the ACEN Board of Commissioners.

***Determine the timing of the site visit:***

The ACEN encourages all new nursing programs to seek initial accreditation BEFORE any students graduate from the program. For established nursing programs, the ACEN encourages programs to seek initial accreditation as soon as possible. The program faculty should schedule an initial accreditation site visit when the program will be in compliance with all Standards and Criteria, preferably at the time of the visit, but no later than at the time of the ACEN Board of Commissioners' decision. The program faculty should postpone scheduling the visit if the program will not be in compliance with all Standards and Criteria at the time of the ACEN Board of Commissioners decision. The professional staff can help the program faculty determine the best timing of the site visit.

**Note:** Upon granting of initial accreditation by the ACEN Board of Commissioners, the effective date of initial accreditation is the date on which the nursing program was approved by the ACEN as a Candidate program that concluded in the Board of Commissioners granting initial accreditation.

***Schedule a site visit:***

To schedule a site visit, submit an Information Form for the cycle in which the faculty plan to have the initial accreditation site visit. This form is available on the ACEN website approximately 18 months in advance. The Information Form deadline for scheduling an initial accreditation visit is **March 1<sup>st</sup>** for a fall accreditation cycle and **July 1<sup>st</sup>** for a spring accreditation cycle.

The ACEN staff will use the information you provide on the Information Form to schedule your visit and assign your peer evaluator team.

***Prepare and submit the Self-Study Report:***

The Self-Study Report is the primary document used by the peer evaluators who visit the program, and is also used by the peer evaluators on the Evaluation Review Panel and the Board of Commissioners to review the nursing program. The completed Self-Study Report is due to the peer evaluators who visit the program and to the ACEN office no later than six (6) weeks prior to the date of the initial accreditation site visit.

As a component of the Candidacy process, a program may elect to submit one (1) Standard of its choice for the professional staff to provide feedback on. If the faculty elect to do this, then the draft of that Standard must be submitted no later than **June 1<sup>st</sup>** for a fall accreditation visit or **October 1<sup>st</sup>** for a spring accreditation visit.

**Prepare for the initial accreditation site visit:**

Resources for nurse administrators to use when planning a site visit are available on the ACEN website. In addition, the assigned team chair for the visit will help the nurse administrator plan the agenda and guide the nurse administrator in the preparations for the initial accreditation site visit. Colleagues in nearby ACEN-accredited nursing programs who have recently undergone accreditation reviews can be an outstanding resource to the program as it prepares for the visit.

**Address special considerations as necessary:**

Please note that all program documents must be submitted in English. Programs for which all or part of the curriculum is delivered in a language other than English should make provisions for professional interpreter/translator(s) to be present throughout the initial accreditation site visit and to make certain that all program documents are available in English for review by the peer evaluators. These arrangements are necessary to facilitate the work of the peer evaluators and ensure a comprehensive and accurate review of the program.

**NOTE:**

In order for the ACEN to properly discharge its responsibilities to the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) pursuant to 34 CFR Section 602.28 and per [Policy #3 Eligibility for Initial or Continuing Accreditation](#), an applicant for Candidacy must disclose and certify that neither the governing organization nor the nursing program is the subject of certain circumstances.

The program will be required to disclose and certify this information at the time that *Official Authorization for Candidacy Process Form* is signed and again when the program applies for the initial accreditation visit. Information submitted by the program will be kept confidential and will only be utilized by the ACEN in its report to the USDE as required. The information provided by the governing organization/nursing program will not be utilized in determining the program's Candidacy or its initial accreditation with the ACEN. The achievement of a Candidate status as well as achieving initial accreditation will be based upon the program's ability to demonstrate compliance with the current ACEN Standards and Criteria.

**Contact the ACEN staff with any questions:**

The ACEN staff will gladly assist you and are available to answer questions about your program's compliance with the Standards and Criteria or your visit. The staff can be reached as follows:

**Questions about compliance:**

Nell Ard, PhD, RN, CNE, ANEF  
Director  
[nard@acenursing.org](mailto:nard@acenursing.org)  
(404) 975-5004

**Questions about your site visit dates or team:**

Sharon F. Beasley, PhD, RN, CNE  
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