



3343 Peachtree Road NE, Suite 850 | Atlanta, GA 30326 | P. 404.975.5000 | F. 404.975.5020 | www.acenursing.org

---

## **Site Visit Team Guide**

### **Assessment and Commentary Addressing Program Use of Distance Education**

#### **All peer evaluators should review Policy #15 DISTANCE EDUCATION**

*NOTE: Please ensure that all options/tracks and modalities are delineated in the Introduction Section of the Site Visit Report.*

#### **I. Mission and Administrative Capacity**

- Is the distance education program mode of delivery congruent with the mission and philosophy of the governing organization? Of the nursing program?
- Are there opportunities for participation in the governance of the governing organization for the students enrolled and faculty teaching in the distance education sections/tracks? Is there evidence of participation?
- What is the impact of the distance education courses/tracks/program on the nurse administrator in terms of authority? Responsibility?
- What is the impact of the distance education courses/tracks/program on the policies of the governing organization? Nursing unit? Are the policies consistent and accessible?

#### **Evidence**

- The mission for the governing organization explains the role of distance education within the range of the institution's programs and services.
- The governing organization and program statements of vision and values inform how the distance education environment is created and supported.
- As appropriate, the governing organization provides opportunities for faculty and student input into distance education programs and courses.

#### **2. Faculty and Staff**

- Do faculty (full- and part-time) have responsibility and authority for oversight of the distance education courses/track/program?
- Do faculty have adequate time to interact with the distance education students?
- Do faculty initiate regular and substantive interaction with distance education student?
- Do faculty have the technical skills required to teach using distance technology?
- Are the faculty provided with the support and equipment necessary to ensure quality in the distance courses/tracks? What training or professional development has been provided to the faculty?
- What is the impact of the distance options on the faculty workload?

#### **Evidence**

- Evidence of faculty initiating regular and substantive interaction with distance education students.

- The nursing faculty have a designated role in the design and implementation of its distance education offerings.
- Faculty who teach distance education options, programs, and/or courses are carefully selected, appropriately trained, and are evaluated on their use of distance education.
- The governing organization's training program for distance education faculty is periodic, incorporates best practices in distance education pedagogy, and ensures competency with the range of software products used by the governing organization.
- Faculty are proficient and effectively supported in using the use of distance technology.
- The office or persons responsible for distance education training programs are clearly identified and have the competencies to accomplish the tasks, including knowledge of the specialized resources and technical support available to support course development and delivery.
- The governing organization or program has established and enforces a policy on distance education course enrollments to ensure faculty capacity to work appropriately with students.
- Training for faculty members engaged in distance education includes consideration of issues of academic integrity, including ways to reduce cheating.

### **3. Students**

- Do the students enrolled in the distance courses/tracks have access to comparable resources as the on-campus students?
- How do the students access student services?
- Does the governing organization/nursing program have an effective method for verifying student identification for those students enrolled in distance modalities?
- Does the governing organization protect the privacy of students enrolled in distance education courses?
- Does the governing organization inform students of additional fees associated with verification of student identity at the time of registration for or enrollment in a distance education course?
- Are student policies for the distance students comparable to the campus-based students? If not, how do they differ?
- Do the policies related to education and financial records address the needs of the distance learning students?
- Is the information about the program including the distance learning modalities current, accurate, clear, and consistent?
- Is the information related to distance modalities accurate and reflective of the practices and policies associated with distance learning?

### **Evidence**

- The recruitment and admission programs/activities supporting the distance education courses and programs appropriately target the student populations to be served.
  - The students enrolled in the governing organization's distance education courses and programs fit the admissions requirements for the students the governing organization intends to serve.
  - The governing organization regularly evaluates the effectiveness of the academic and support services provided to students in distance education courses and uses the results for improvement.
  - Students express satisfaction with the quality of the instruction provided by distance education faculty members.
- The governing organization's admission program/activities for distance education

- provides accurate web-based information to students about the nature of the distance education environment, and assists them in determining if they possess the skills important to success in distance education.
- The governing organization provides an online learning orientation program.
  - The governing organization provides support services to students in formats appropriate to the delivery of the distance education program.
  - Students in distance education programs have adequate access to student services, including financial aid, course registration, and career and placement counseling.
  - Students in distance education programs have access to technical support, ideally 24 hours per day, seven (7) days per week.
  - Students using distance education have adequate access to learning resources, including library, information resources, laboratories, equipment, and tracking systems. Student complaint processes are clearly defined and can be used electronically;
  - Publications and advertisements for distance education programs are accurate and contain necessary information such as end-of-program student learning outcomes, requirements, academic calendar, fees, and faculty.
  - Issues of academic integrity are discussed during the orientation for distance education students.
  - Students are provided with reasonable and cost-effective ways to participate in the governing organization's system of student authentication.

#### **4. Curriculum**

- Have the course materials been appropriately designed (or re-designed) for a distance learning framework and the method of delivery utilized?
- Are the courses comparable for the distance education and on-campus students?
- Are the experiences comparable for the laboratory and clinical courses for the distance and on-campus students? If not, how do they differ?
- What methods have the faculty employed to ensure that distance students are able to achieve the end-of-program student learning outcomes?
- How do the evaluation methods differ for the distance education students and on-campus students?
- How do the faculty ensure a rigorous and comprehensive review of the distance learning courses/tracks/modalities?

#### **Evidence**

- The governing organization ensures the rigor of the offerings and the quality of the instruction.
- Approval of distance education courses and programs follows standard processes used in the governing organization.
- Distance education courses and programs are evaluated on a periodic basis.
- Curricula delivered through distance education are compared against in-person courses and programs, if provided by the governing organization, or those provided by traditional institutions.
- The distance education curriculum is coherent in its content and sequencing of courses and is effectively defined in easily available documents including course syllabi and program descriptions.
- Scheduling of distance education courses and programs provides students with a dependable pathway to ensure timely completion of degrees.
- Expectations for any required in-person, on-ground work (e.g., internships, specialized laboratory work) are stated clearly.

- Course design and delivery support student-student and faculty-student interactions.
- Distance education curricula designs and the course management system enable active faculty contribution to the learning environment.
- Assessment of student learning follows processes used in in-person courses or programs and/or reflects best practices in assessment methods.
- Evaluation strategies ensure effective communication between faculty members who design distance education curricula, faculty members who interact with students, and faculty members who evaluate student learning.
- The nursing program provides examples of student work and student interactions among themselves and with faculty.

## **5. Resources**

- Is technical support available for students and faculty when needed? Are the hours and level of support sufficient to meet the needs of faculty and students?
- What type of course development support is available to the faculty?
- What evidences are provided to demonstrate adequate financial support for the technology being utilized?
- What access do distance learning students have for resources such as the library/learning center?
- Are the learning resources including the technology being utilized adequate? Current? Comprehensive?
- Do the faculty have input into the technology being utilized? Are there policies in place to ensure that faculty and students have input?
- How are the resources evaluated? Are evidences provided that the review is rigorous and ongoing?

### **Evidence**

- The governing organization prepares a multi-year budget for distance education that includes resources for assessment of program demand, marketing, appropriate levels of faculty and staff, faculty and staff development, library and information resources, and technology infrastructure.
- The governing organization provides technical support for faculty and students.
- Learning resources are compatible for distance education programs and courses.
- Technology for distance education is current and comprehensive.

## **6. Outcomes**

- Are there evidences of evaluation for the courses/tracks/programs offered?
- Does the program effectively evaluate the end-of-program learning outcomes for the students enrolled in distance learning?
- Does the program evaluate end-of-program student learning outcomes and program outcomes by cohort (method of program delivery) before they are aggregated?
- Have strategies been identified for any areas in which levels of achievement/outcomes are not met related to the distance learning?

### **Evidence**

- End-of-program student learning outcomes data are assessed per Criterion 6.1.
- Licensure pass rate, program completion and job placement are assessed per Criterion 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4 respectively.