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## **POLICY #14**

### **REPORTING SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES**

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#### **NURSING PROGRAM OBLIGATIONS**

It is the responsibility of each nursing education unit to notify the ACEN of major changes in a nursing program to ensure maintenance of accreditation status and protection of students in accordance with Policy #14 Reporting Substantive Changes and, when required, seek approval prior to the initiation of the substantive change. Failure to report a substantive change places the accreditation status of a nursing program in jeopardy and may have consequences related to Title IV certification and eligibility.

The ACEN reserves the right to reconsider the accreditation status of a nursing program at any time. The ACEN Board of Commissioners may also take action to require formal monitoring of a nursing program due to non-compliance with any Accreditation Standard.

A substantive change is a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of a nursing program and/or nursing education unit. Based on federal regulations and ACEN policies, a substantive change includes:

- Changing the ownership, legal status, or form of control of the governing organization
- Changing the mission or objectives of the governing organization (this does not include a revision/update in the mission statement)
- A change in the nurse administrator
- A significant change in the organizational structure of the nursing education unit that would place a nursing program in non-compliance with the ACEN Standards and Criteria
- Offering a nursing program via distance education
- Changing the method of academic measurement (e.g., from clock hours to credit hours)
- Adding courses or nursing programs of study at a degree or credential level different from that which is included in the nursing education unit's current accreditation
- Adding a nursing program option within an accredited nursing program
- Changing the number of credit hours or the number of clock hours from currently accepted/approved courses required for successful completion of a nursing program
- Revising the curriculum by increasing, decreasing, or substituting the number of credit hours or the number of clock hours, either in content or method of delivery, required for successful completion of a nursing program
- Inactivating a nursing program
- Closing a nursing program
- Acquiring from another governing organization an accredited or non-accredited nursing program
- Acquiring from another governing organization an off-campus instructional site where an accredited or non-accredited nursing program is offered
- An increase in enrollment of 25% or greater by headcount, in one academic year, for each nursing program offered
- An increase in enrollment of 50% or greater by headcount, in one academic year, for the governing organization
- Establishing a branch campus where an accredited or non-accredited nursing program is offered
- Establishing a new off-campus instructional site
- Relocating a currently approved off-campus instructional site serving the same geographic region where nursing program is offered

- Adding an off-campus instructional site at which the governing organization is conducting a teach-out for students of another governing organization that has ceased operating before all students enrolled in an accredited or non-accredited nursing program have completed the nursing program of study
- Inactivating an off-campus instructional site where a nursing program or nursing program option is offered
- Closing an approved off-campus instructional site or branch campus where a nursing program is offered
- Entering into a contractual or consortia relationship with an entity to jointly offer all or part of a nursing program
- Entering into a relationship under which an entity not certified to participate in Title IV, HEA offers more than 25% of one (1) or more of the nursing education unit's nursing programs
- A change in the approval status with the state regulatory agency for nursing (see ACEN Policy #17)
- A negative or adverse action by an appropriate institutional accrediting agency (see ACEN Policy #18)
- A decline in the nursing program outcomes, including performance on licensure or certification examinations, nursing program completion rates, and/or employment rates
- A change in Title IV Status (applies only if ACEN is the Title IV gatekeeper for the nursing program)

## **PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING A SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE: AN OVERVIEW**

There are three (3) procedures for addressing the different types of substantive changes.

- Procedure 1: Review of a planned substantive change requiring the approval of the Board of Commissioners prior to implementation or review of an unplanned substantive change requiring the approval of the Board of Commissioners as soon as the change occurs; prospectus required.
- Procedure 2: Review of a substantive change requiring only notification prior to implementation; letter of notification required.
- Procedure 3: Review of the closing of a nursing program or closing of an off-campus instructional site or branch campus where a nursing program is offered; approval prior to implementation, teach-out agreement, and/or teach-out plan required.

## **POLICY STATEMENTS REGARDING SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE**

1. The Standards and Criteria apply to all ACEN-accredited nursing programs wherever the nursing program is located or however the nursing program is delivered. Failure to comply with the Standards and Criteria or with the procedures referred to in this policy could result in the nursing program being placed on warning or being removed from the list of accredited nursing programs.
2. Denial of a substantive change is not appealable. A nursing education unit that fails to gain approval of a substantive change may resubmit a revised prospectus following the guidelines and timeframes described in this document.
3. A nursing program in the appeals process or in litigation with the ACEN is not eligible for consideration of substantive change.
4. Nursing programs that were granted continuing accreditation with warning or continuing accreditation for good cause by the ACEN Board of Commissioners as a result of the last

accreditation review may not implement a substantive change until the warning or for good cause status has been resolved. Exceptions may be made for substantive changes deemed necessary to ensure the nursing program's compliance with the Standards and Criteria with which the program was found to be in non-compliance. For example, a nursing program may implement a curriculum change to address non-compliance with Standard 4 Curriculum. However, a nursing program may not increase student enrollment, add new nursing program options, add new teaching locations, implement distance education, or add new nursing program types until the warning or for good cause status has been resolved.

5. The ACEN substantive change policy applies only to accredited nursing programs. The substantive change policy does not apply to programs in candidacy.
6. Procedures 1, 2, and 3 may not address all substantive changes. The ACEN reserves the right to classify significant changes other than those described above as substantive in nature and to follow-up accordingly. The follow-up procedure may include a focused visit.
7. A nursing program may withdraw/discontinue a substantive change at any time prior to the review by either the ACEN staff or the Board of Commissioners by submitting a formal letter of withdrawal to the ACEN Chief Executive Officer.
8. Once a nursing program submits a substantive change and the document is reviewed by either the ACEN staff or the Board of Commissioners, any information included therein that indicates possible non-compliance with any of the Standards and Criteria may lead ACEN to further review the nursing program, even if the prospectus is withdrawn or approval of the change is denied.
9. ACEN staff review all substantive changes requiring notification prior to implementation.
10. ACEN staff will conduct a preliminary review of all changes requiring approval by the ACEN Board of Commissioners. All substantive changes described in Procedure 1 are referred to the Board of Commissioners for approval, as are the following situations:
  - a. A proposed substantive change requiring prior approval submitted by a nursing program that was granted continuing accreditation with warning or continuing accreditation for good cause.
  - b. A proposed substantive change submitted by an institution placed on reimbursement or cash monitoring status by the U.S. Department of Education for Title IV federal funding when the ACEN is the Title IV gatekeeper for the nursing program.
11. Substantive changes of the types described in Procedure 1 and Procedure 2 will not typically affect a nursing program's cycle of reaccreditation.
12. Following the approval of a degree level change by the ACEN Board of Commissioners, an institution may not initiate additional nursing program options at the new degree level until after the Board takes positive action on the nursing program's accreditation following the site visit authorized at the time of approval.
13. The date of the letter of approval of a substantive change is considered the date on which the change is included as part of the nursing program's accreditation.
14. Extensive substantive changes by a nursing education unit may accelerate the date for the nursing program's next reaccreditation. Examples of triggers for an accelerated reaccreditation include the

following changes: proliferation of branches or off-campus instructional sites where the nursing program is offered, frequent mergers or consolidations with other nursing programs, significant increase in enrollment in the nursing program, or rapid proliferation of new nursing program options.

15. If ACEN is the Title IV gatekeeper for the nursing program and the nursing program fails to follow the ACEN substantive change policy and procedures, the nursing program may lose its Title IV funding or be required by the U.S. Department of Education to reimburse it for money received for nursing programs related to the unreported substantive change. In addition, the nursing program may be referred to the ACEN Board of Commissioners for the imposition of a sanction or removal from the listing of accredited nursing programs.

## **COMMISSION RESPONSIBILITIES**

The ACEN accredits nursing programs wherever a nursing program is located or however a nursing program is delivered. ACEN is responsible for reviewing all substantive changes that occur, determining whether the change has affected the quality of the nursing program, and assuring the public that all aspects of the nursing program continue to meet the Standards and Criteria.

The ACEN is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as an agency whose accreditation enables nursing programs to seek eligibility to participate in Title IV nursing programs. To maintain its recognition with the U.S. Department of Education, the ACEN has incorporated federal requirements into its substantive change policy and procedures. Some of those requirements specify that a nursing education unit seek and receive approval prior to the initiation of a substantive change so that the change can be included in the nursing program's scope of accreditation.

## **NURSING PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES**

It is the responsibility of a nursing program to follow ACEN substantive change procedures and inform the ACEN of substantive changes as specified in this policy and procedures. If a nurse administrator is unclear as to whether a change is substantive in nature, he or she should contact ACEN staff for consultation.

## **TYPES OF COMMISSION ACTIONS**

For substantive changes that require a nursing program to follow Procedure 1, the Board of Commissioners may take the following actions:

1. Approve the substantive change; no focused visit required.
2. Approve the substantive change and authorize a focused visit for review of compliance with specified Accreditation Standard(s); the focused visit must occur within six (6) calendar months after the implementation of the substantive change. The Focused Site Visit Report will be reviewed by the Board of Commissioners in accordance with ACEN Policy #19 Focused Visit.
3. Deny the substantive change. This is not an appealable action.
4. Request additional information regarding area(s) of concern with specified Criteria; the due date for the additional information may not exceed one (1) calendar year from the date of the request.
5. Accept the additional information and affirm the program's accreditation status and date of the next scheduled visit; no further information is requested.
6. Recognize the additional information and authorize a focused visit for review of compliance with specified Accreditation Standard(s); the focused visit must occur within six (6) calendar months. The Focused Site Visit Report will be reviewed by the Board of Commissioners in accordance with ACEN Policy #19 Focused Visit.

For substantive changes that require a nursing program to follow Procedures 2 and 3, the ACEN staff may take the following actions:

1. Accept the required documentation; no further information is requested.
2. Refer the substantive change request to the Board of Commissioners for consideration and possible further action.

## **REPORTING THE VARIOUS TYPES OF SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE**

The different types of substantive change, the specific procedure to be used for each, the respective approval/notification requirement, and the reporting timeline are included in the following table. Please read the full text under the appropriate procedure for details regarding reporting.

Type of Substantive Change	Procedure	Timeframe for Submitting Required Documentation to ACEN	Prior Approval from ACEN Required	Focused Visit	Required Documentation
Changing the ownership, legal status, or form of control of the governing organization	I	Four (4) months prior to implementation of the change	Yes	Possible	Prospectus <sup>1</sup> if ACEN is not the Title IV gatekeeper
	I	Four (4) months prior to implementation of the change	Yes	Required	Prospectus <sup>1</sup> if ACEN is the Title IV gatekeeper; change must go into effect within 30 calendar days of the effective date approved by the Board of Commissioners
Changing the mission or objectives of the governing organization (this does not include a revision/update in the mission statement)	I	Four (4) months prior to implementation of the change	Yes	Possible	Prospectus <sup>1</sup> if ACEN is not Title IV gatekeeper
	I	Four (4) months prior to implementation of the change	Yes	Required	Prospectus <sup>1</sup> if ACEN is the Title IV gatekeeper
A change in the nurse administrator	2	Upon decision being made but no later than one (1) month after permanent or interim nurse administrator assumes duties/responsibilities	No	No	Letter of Notification <sup>2</sup>
Significant change in the organizational structure of the nursing education unit that would place a nursing program in non-compliance with ACEN Standards and Criteria	I	Four (4) months prior to implementation of the change	Yes	Possible	Prospectus <sup>1</sup> documenting the impact on the compliance of the nursing program with the ACEN Standards and Criteria

Type of Substantive Change	Procedure	Timeframe for Submitting Required Documentation to ACEN	Prior Approval from ACEN Required	Focused Visit	Required Documentation
Distance Education					
Offering 50% to 100% of the number of credit hours or the number of clock hours of the nursing courses via distance education; once approved to offer any nursing program via distance education, approval is not required to offer subsequent nursing program(s)	1	Four (4) months prior to implementation of the change	Yes	Possible	Prospectus <sup>1</sup> documenting the impact on the compliance of nursing program with the ACEN Standards and Criteria
Offering 25% to 49% of the number of credit hours or the number of clock hours of the nursing courses via distance education	2	Prior to implementation	No	No	Letter of Notification <sup>2</sup>
Offering 1% to 24% of the number of credit hours or the number of clock hours of the nursing courses via distance education	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Type of Substantive Change	Procedure	Timeframe for Submitting Required Documentation to ACEN	Prior Approval from ACEN Required	Focused Visit	Required Documentation
Changing the method of academic measurement (e.g., from clock hours to credit hours)	1	Four (4) months prior to implementation of the change	Yes	Possible	Prospectus <sup>1</sup> documenting the impact on the compliance of the nursing program with the ACEN Standards and Criteria
Adding courses or nursing programs of study at a degree or credential level different from that which is included in the nursing education unit's current accreditation	2	Prior to implementation	No	No	Letter of Notification <sup>2</sup> documenting the impact on the compliance of the currently accredited nursing program with the ACEN Standards and Criteria  See candidacy process for the nursing program at the new degree or credential level different from that which is currently included in the nursing education unit's current accreditation
Adding a nursing program option within a nursing program by deleting and/or substituting 25% or more of the existing nursing courses to form the new nursing program option	1	Four (4) months prior to implementation of the change	Yes	Possible	Prospectus <sup>1</sup> documenting the impact on the compliance of the nursing program with the ACEN Standards and Criteria



Type of Substantive Change	Procedure	Timeframe for Submitting Required Documentation to ACEN	Prior Approval from ACEN Required	Focused Visit	Required Documentation
<p>Curriculum revisions involving an increase, decrease, or substitution of 25% or greater of the credit hours or clock hours from currently accepted/ approved courses in a nursing program required for completion of a nursing program, including but not limited to:</p> <p>Deleting existing nursing courses and substituting new nursing courses</p> <p>Deleting existing general education courses and substituting new general education courses</p>	1	Four (4) months prior to implementation of the change	Yes	Possible	Prospectus <sup>1</sup> documenting the impact on the compliance of the nursing program with the ACEN Standards and Criteria
Inactivating a nursing program	2	Four (4) months prior to implementation of the change	No	No	Letter of Notification <sup>2</sup>
Reactivating a nursing program	2	Four (4) months prior to implementation of the change	No	No	Letter of Notification <sup>2</sup>
Closing a nursing program	3	Four (4) months prior to implementation of the change	Yes	Possible	Teach-out plan and/or teach-out agreement <sup>3</sup>
Closing an option within a nursing program	3	Four (4) months prior to implementation of the change	Yes	No	Teach-out plan and/or teach-out agreement <sup>3</sup>
Acquiring from another governing	1	Four (4) months prior to	Yes	Possible	Prospectus <sup>1</sup> documenting the

Type of Substantive Change	Procedure	Timeframe for Submitting Required Documentation to ACEN	Prior Approval from ACEN Required	Focused Visit	Required Documentation
organization an accredited or non-accredited nursing program		implementation of the change			impact on the compliance of the nursing program with the ACEN Standards and Criteria
Acquiring from another governing organization an off-campus instructional site where an accredited or non-accredited nursing program is offered	1	Four (4) months prior to implementation of the change	Yes	Possible	Prospectus <sup>1</sup> documenting the impact on the compliance of the nursing program with the ACEN Standards and Criteria
An increase in enrollment of 25% or greater by headcount in one (1) academic year for each nursing program offered	1	Four (4) months prior to implementation of the change	Yes	Possible	Prospectus <sup>1</sup> documenting the impact on the compliance of the nursing program with the ACEN Standards and Criteria
An increase in enrollment of 50% or greater by headcount in one (1) academic year for the governing organization	2	Four (4) months prior to implementation of the change	Yes	Possible	If ACEN is not the Title IV gatekeeper, Letter of Notification <sup>2</sup> documenting the impact on the compliance of nursing program with the ACEN Standards and Criteria
	1	Four (4) months prior to implementation of the change	Yes	Possible	If ACEN is the Title IV gatekeeper, Prospectus <sup>1</sup> documenting the impact on the compliance of the nursing program with ACEN Standards and Criteria

Type of Substantive Change	Procedure	Timeframe for Submitting Required Documentation to ACEN	Prior Approval from ACEN Required	Focused Visit	Required Documentation
Establishing a branch campus at which an accredited or non-accredited nursing program is offered	2	Four (4) months prior to implementation of the change	Yes	Possible	If ACEN is not the Title IV gatekeeper, Letter of Notification <sup>2</sup> documenting the impact on the compliance of nursing program with the ACEN Standards and Criteria
	1	Four (4) months prior to implementation of the change	Yes	Required	If ACEN is the Title IV gatekeeper, Prospectus <sup>1</sup> documenting the impact on the compliance of the nursing program with ACEN Standards and Criteria
Establishing a new off-campus instructional site at which students can obtain...					
... 50% or more of the number of credit hours or the number of clock hours required for completion of a nursing program	1	Four (4) months prior to implementation of the change	Yes	Required for first three (3) new off-campus instructional sites <sup>4</sup>	Prospectus <sup>1</sup> documenting the impact on the compliance of nursing program with the ACEN Standards and Criteria
... 25% to 49% of the number of credit hours or the number of clock hours required for completion of a nursing program	2	Prior to implementation	No	No	Letter of Notification <sup>2</sup>
... 1% to 24% of the number of credit hours or the number of clock hours required for completion of a nursing program	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Type of Substantive Change	Procedure	Timeframe for Submitting Required Documentation to ACEN	Prior Approval from ACEN Required	Focused Visit	Required Documentation
Relocating a currently approved off-campus instructional site serving the same geographic region where nursing program is offered	2	Prior to implementation	No	Possible	Letter of Notification <sup>2</sup>
Adding an off-campus instructional site at which the governing organization is conducting a teach-out for students of another governing organization that has ceased operating before all students enrolled in an accredited or non-accredited nursing program have completed the nursing program of study	2	Four (4) months prior to implementation of the change	Yes	Possible	Letter of Notification <sup>2</sup> documenting the impact on the compliance of the nursing program with the ACEN Standards and Criteria
Inactivating an off-campus instructional site where a nursing program or nursing program option is offered	2	Four (4) months prior to implementation of the change	No	No	Letter of Notification <sup>2</sup>
Reactivating an off-campus instructional site where a nursing program or nursing program option is offered	2	Four (4) months prior to implementation of the change	No	No	Letter of Notification <sup>2</sup>

Type of Substantive Change	Procedure	Timeframe for Submitting Required Documentation to ACEN	Prior Approval from ACEN Required	Focused Visit	Required Documentation
Entering into a contractual or consortia relationship with an entity to jointly offer all or part of a nursing program	I	Four (4) months prior to implementation of the change	Yes	Possible	Prospectus <sup>1</sup> documenting the impact on the compliance of the nursing program with the ACEN Standards and Criteria; may require approval through the candidacy process for the nursing program
Entering into a relationship under which an entity not certified to participate in Title IV, HEA offers 25% or more of the clock hours or credit hours required for completion of a nursing program	I	Four (4) months prior to implementation of the change	Yes	Possible	Prospectus <sup>1</sup> documenting the impact on the compliance of the nursing program with the ACEN Standards and Criteria
A change in approval status with the state regulatory agency for nursing; see ACEN Policy #17	I	N/A	N/A	Possible	Immediate submission of Prospectus <sup>1</sup> within 30 business days when an a negative or adverse action is known documenting the impact on the compliance of the nursing program with the ACEN Standards and Criteria
A negative or adverse action by the appropriate institutional accrediting agency; see ACEN Policy #18	I	N/A	N/A	Possible	Immediate submission of Prospectus <sup>1</sup> documenting the impact on the compliance of the nursing program with the ACEN Standards and Criteria
A decline in licensure examination/certification pass rates that places the program's annual licensure	I	N/A	N/A	Possible	Immediate submission of Prospectus <sup>1</sup> within 30 business days when an a negative or adverse action is known documenting the impact on the

Type of Substantive Change	Procedure	Timeframe for Submitting Required Documentation to ACEN	Prior Approval from ACEN Required	Focused Visit	Required Documentation
examination/certification pass rates below 80% for all first-time test-takers during the same 12-month period					compliance of the nursing program with the ACEN Standards and Criteria
A decline in the annual nursing program completion rate with regards to the expected level of achievement established for the nursing program	I	N/A	N/A	Possible	Immediate submission of Prospectus <sup>1</sup> documenting the impact on the compliance of the nursing program with the ACEN Standards and Criteria
Change in Title IV status <sup>5</sup>	I	N/A	N/A	Possible	Immediate submission of Prospectus <sup>1</sup> documenting the impact on the compliance of nursing program with the ACEN Standards and Criteria

<sup>1</sup> See Procedure 1 – Prospectus (pp. 47-48) for reporting instructions.

<sup>2</sup> See Procedure 2 – Letter of Notification (p. 49) for reporting instructions.

<sup>3</sup> See Procedure 3 – Closings (p. 50) for reporting instructions.

<sup>4</sup> When an institution initiates its fourth, fifth, sixth, etc. off-campus instructional sites where 50% or more of a nursing program’s credits are offered, the ACEN may, at its discretion, choose not to conduct a focused visit to any of these additional sites at the times of their initiation if the institution has previously demonstrated a record of effective oversight of the nursing program at its off-campus instructional sites and has not been placed on warning or continuing accreditation for good cause. However per federal regulation, if ACEN is the Title IV gatekeeper it is required to review and possibly conduct a visit a sample of off-campus instructional sites every five (5) years.

<sup>5</sup> Only applies if ACEN is the Title IV gatekeeper for a nursing program.

## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

Please see the ACEN Glossary for the definition of the following terms:

- **Alternative Methods of Delivery**
- **Branch Campus**
- **Closing Report**
- **Contractual Agreement**
- **Consortia Relationship**
- **Distance Education**
- **Distance Technology**
- **Geographic Region**
- **Geographically Separate**
- **Governing Organization**
- **Inactivation of a Nursing Program**
- **Inactivation of an Off-Campus Instructional Site**
- **Letter of Notification**
- **Nursing Education Unit**
- **Nursing Program**
- **Off-Campus Instructional Site**
- **Nursing Program Length**
- **Nursing Program Locations**
- **Nursing Program Option**
- **Nursing Program Type**
- **Reactivation of a Nursing Program**
- **Reactivation of an Off-Campus Instructional Site**
- **Teach-Out Agreement**

## PROCEDURE I – PROSPECTUS

### Review of Substantive Changes Requiring the Approval of the Board of Commissioners

#### DIRECTIONS

1. One (1) electronic copy of the Prospectus is to be sent to the ACEN via email (maximum attachment size 20 MB) or via postal mail on a USB flash drive **no later than four (4) months prior to the planned implementation date or within 30 business days following an unplanned change.**

Directions for Electronic Copies: The Prospectus must be in a single file/document. This one (1) file document should address all of the required components for the substantive change and any appendices in the sequence that they would appear in a paper copy. The preferred file formats are Portable Document Format (PDF) or Microsoft Word.

2. Nursing programs with questions regarding substantive changes should contact the Coordinator of Substantive Change for guidance.

#### REQUIRED INFORMATION BY TYPE OF SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

1. [Changing the ownership, legal status, and/or form of control of the governing organization](#)
2. [Changing the mission or objectives of the governing organization \(this does not include a revision/update of the mission statement\)](#)
3. [Significant change in the organizational structure of the nursing education unit that would place a nursing program in non-compliance with the ACEN Standards and Criteria](#)
4. [Implementation of distance education – offering 50% to 100% of the credit hours or clock hours of a nursing program via distance education](#)
5. [Changing the method of academic measurement \(e.g., from clock hours to credit hours\)](#)
6. [Adding a nursing program option within a nursing program by deleting and/or substituting 25% or more of existing nursing courses to form the new nursing program option](#)
7. [Curriculum revisions involving an increase, decrease, or substitution of 25% or greater of the credit hours or clock hours required for completion of a nursing program from currently accepted/approved courses in a nursing program](#)
8. [Acquiring from another governing organization an accredited or non-accredited nursing program](#)
9. [Acquiring from another governing organization an off-campus instructional site where an accredited or non-accredited nursing program is offered](#)
10. [An increase in enrollment of 25% or greater by headcount in one \(1\) academic year for each nursing program offered](#)
11. [An increase in enrollment of 50% or greater by headcount in one \(1\) academic year for the governing organization if the ACEN is the Title IV gatekeeper for the nursing program](#)
12. [Establishing a branch campus where an accredited or non-accredited nursing program is offered and if ACEN is the Title IV gatekeeper for the nursing program](#)



13. [Establishing a new off-campus instructional site at which students can obtain 50% or more of the credit hours or clock hours of a nursing program](#)
14. [Entering into a contractual or consortia relationship with an entity to jointly offer all or part of a nursing program](#)
15. [Entering into a relationship under which an entity not certified to participate in Title IV, HEA programs offers 25% of one \(1\) or more of the nursing education's unit's nursing programs](#)
16. [A change in approval status with the state regulatory agency for nursing; see ACEN Policy #17](#)
17. [A negative or adverse action by the appropriate institutional accrediting agency; see ACEN Policy #18](#)
18. [A decline in licensure examination/certification pass rates that places the program's annual licensure examination pass rates below 80% for all first-time test-takers during the same 12-month period](#)
19. [A decline in the nursing program completion rate with regards to the expected level of achievement established by the nursing program](#)
20. [Change in Title IV status \(applies only if ACEN is the Title IV gatekeeper for the nursing program\)](#)

## PROCEDURE 2 – LETTER OF NOTIFICATION

### Review of Substantive Changes Requiring Notification Prior to Implementation

#### DIRECTIONS

1. One (1) electronic copy of the Letter of Notification is to be sent to the ACEN via email (maximum attachment size 20 MB) or via postal mail on a USB flash drive **prior to the implementation date**.

Directions for Electronic Copies: The Letter of Notification must be in a single/file document. This one (1) file document should address all of the required components for the substantive change and any appendices in the order that they would appear in a paper copy. The preferred file formats are Portable Document Format (PDF) or Microsoft Word.

2. Nursing programs with questions regarding substantive changes should contact the Coordinator of Substantive Change for guidance.

#### REQUIRED INFORMATION BY TYPE OF SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

1. [A change in nurse administrator](#)
2. [Implementation of distance education – offering 25% to 49% of the number of credit hours or the number of clock hours of a nursing program via distance education](#)
3. [Inactivating a nursing program](#)
4. [Reactivating a nursing program](#)
5. [An increase in enrollment of 50% or greater by headcount in one \(1\) academic year for the governing organization and if the ACEN is \*\*not\*\* the Title IV gatekeeper for the nursing program](#)
6. [Establishing a branch campus where an accredited or non-accredited nursing program is offered if ACEN is \*\*not\*\* the Title IV gatekeeper for the nursing program](#)
7. [Adding courses or nursing programs of study at a degree or credential level different from that which is included in the nursing education unit's current accreditation](#)
8. [Establishing a new off-campus instructional site where students can obtain 25% to 49% of the credit hours or clock hours of a nursing program](#)
9. [Relocating a currently approved off-campus instructional site serving the same geographic region where a nursing program is offered if the ACEN is \*\*not\*\* the Title IV gatekeeper for nursing program](#)
10. [Adding an off-campus instructional site at which the governing organization is conducting a teach-out for students of another governing organization that has ceased operating before all students enrolled in an accredited or non-accredited nursing program have completed the nursing program of study](#)
11. [Inactivating an off-campus instructional site where a nursing program or nursing program option is offered](#)
12. [Reactivating an off-campus instructional site where a nursing program or nursing program option is offered](#)

## **PROCEDURE 3 - CLOSINGS**

### **Review of Substantive Changes Related to**

#### **Closing a Nursing Program**

#### **Closing an Approved Off-Campus Instructional Site or Branch Campus Where a Nursing Program is Offered**

### **DIRECTIONS**

- A. See ACEN Policy #16 for information and directions related to closing a nursing program or closing an approved off-campus instructional site or branch campus where a nursing program is offered.
- B. Nursing programs with questions regarding substantive changes should contact the Coordinator of Substantive Change for guidance.

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