



Accreditation Manual Supplement for International Programs

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ACENTM

POSITION STATEMENT ON ACCREDITATION OF INTERNATIONAL NURSING EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The ACEN is committed to quality in all types of nursing education programs and encourages self-evaluation, peer review, and the promotion of educational equity, access, and mobility through the functions of accreditation. Recognizing that educational institutions are expanding their programs to foster access and that such expansion initiatives increasingly involve global outreach efforts, the ACEN welcomes nursing programs outside the United States and U.S. Territories to pursue international nursing accreditation.

The ACEN asserts that accreditation is a voluntary, self-regulatory process by which non-governmental entities recognize educational institutions or programs that have been found to meet or exceed standards and criteria for educational quality. The ACEN acknowledges that nursing education programs located outside of the United States and its territories can benefit from adherence to best practices and generally-accepted guidelines for nursing education incorporated in the ACEN Standards and Criteria. In order to fulfill its mission to support the interests of nursing education, nursing practice, and the public, ACEN seeks to broaden the impact of accreditation to encompass nursing education programs across the globe.

Therefore, in a spirit of cooperation, openness, and mutual respect consistent with its organizational values, the ACEN extends accreditation and related services to international nursing education programs.

Original Statement: February 2010; Revised August 2018

ELIGIBILITY

Nursing education programs in any location must meet the following eligibility requirements as listed below:

- Placement within a governing organization that is accredited by an approved accrediting agency or holds unconditional approval by the appropriate regulatory agency that has legal authority for education programs within the country.
- Placement within a governing organization that is authorized to grant the credential awarded at the completion of the program.

Nursing education programs located outside the United States must meet the following additional eligibility requirements.

- Program faculty and students must speak and understand English. The program must produce all documents and written materials required for the accreditation processes in English. All fiscal documents must be in English with currency equivalents in U.S. dollars.
- The region in which the program is located must not be identified as hazardous for travel by the U.S. State Department at the time of the travel for the ACEN peer evaluators and/or staff.
- Program must agree to host a minimum of two (2) onsite visits, including a mandatory onsite consultation visit and the onsite accreditation visit. (Note: Nursing education units that already

have an ACEN-accredited program and are seeking accreditation for a second nursing program have the option of deferring the consulting visit as a component of the candidacy process.)

- Program has financial resources adequate to meet all fiscal responsibilities related to the ACEN accreditation processes including *International Candidacy Eligibility Application*, *Candidacy*, and two (2) onsite visits.
- The nursing program must establish and provide documentation that it has obtained requisite governmental and regulatory approval to seek ACEN accreditation, if required.

INTERNATIONAL PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

Nursing education units that are located outside the U.S. considering accreditation by ACEN should contact ACEN to begin the process. International programs must complete and submit the *International Candidacy Eligibility Application* to determine their eligibility for International Candidacy. The *International Candidacy Eligibility Application* must be accompanied by an *International Candidacy Eligibility Application Fee*. See fee schedule at <http://www.acenursing.org/resources-for-international-programs/>. Half of the *International Candidacy Eligibility Application Fee* will be refunded if the program is determined not to be eligible for accreditation by ACEN.

ACEN professional staff determine a program's eligibility and suitability for ACEN accreditation by reviewing the *International Candidacy Eligibility Application*. Possible results of the review include the following:

- a) The program is deemed eligible to pursue International Candidacy.
- b) The program is asked to submit additional information/clarification.
- c) The program is deemed ineligible to pursue International Candidacy and will be withdrawn from the process.

International nursing education programs determined to be eligible for International Candidacy will be scheduled for a mandatory onsite consultation visit. In preparation for the onsite consultation visit, programs will submit an International Candidacy Presentation, which will be provided to site visitors a minimum of six (6) weeks prior to the onsite visit.

The International Candidacy Presentation will address the following:

- Standard 2 – Criteria 2.1, 2.2, and 2.5
- Standard 4 – Criteria 4.1, 4.2, 4.8, 4.9, and 4.11 (Graduate programs must also address Criterion 4.4)
- Standard 5 – Criteria 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3
- Standards 6 – Criterion 6.1 as well as the systematic plan for evaluation (SPE)

See Candidacy Guide for Presentation:

http://www.acenursing.net/resources/Guidelines_CandidacyPresentation_Sep2017.pdf

The onsite consultation visit will be conducted by at least two (2) ACEN representatives. The purpose of the onsite consultation visit is to determine whether a program may proceed with the candidacy process. Following the onsite consultation visit, a Consultation Visit Report (CVR) is submitted by the peer evaluators.

Based on the recommendations of the peer evaluators in the CVR, the ACEN will take one (1) of the following actions:

- 1) Approval of International Candidacy: The nursing program (a) demonstrated it is currently compliant with the selected ACEN Standards and Criteria reviewed or demonstrated the potential to be compliant with the ACEN Standards and Criteria reviewed within the Candidacy timeframe, and (b) demonstrated the potential to achieve ACEN accreditation based upon the ACEN Standards and Criteria reviewed. The *Information Form for Initial Accreditation Visit* should be received ideally one (1) year in advance but no less than six (6) months prior to the beginning of the accreditation cycle (e.g., July 1 for spring or March 1 for fall). Approval of International Candidacy does not guarantee that the program will achieve initial accreditation.
- 2) Extension of Time to Achieve Candidacy (Deferral): The nursing program (a) made an inconsistent presentation to demonstrate it is currently compliant with the selected ACEN Standards and Criteria reviewed or made an inconsistent presentation to demonstrate the potential to be compliant with the ACEN Standards and Criteria reviewed during the Candidacy timeframe, and (b) made an inconsistent presentation to demonstrate the potential to achieve ACEN accreditation based upon the ACEN Standards and Criteria reviewed. The program is advised to complete specified actions/implement specific changes or modifications; the program will need to resubmit the Candidacy Presentation within one (1) year of notification (deferral). To proceed, the program must submit an International Candidacy Presentation Addendum within one (1) year of notification describing how the recommended actions/concerns have been addressed. If the Addendum is approved by the ACEN professional staff, International Candidacy is approved with the onsite accreditation visit to be scheduled within the Candidacy timeframe as noted above. If Addendum is not approved then the program is disapproved and the ACEN will withdraw the program from the International Candidacy process.
- 3) Disapproval of International Candidacy: The nursing program (a) did not demonstrate it is currently compliant with the selected ACEN Standards and Criteria reviewed or did not demonstrate the potential to be compliant with the ACEN Standards and Criteria the Candidacy timeframe, and (b) did not demonstrate the potential to achieve ACEN accreditation based upon the ACEN Standards and Criteria reviewed. ACEN withdraws the program from the candidacy process. No fees will be refunded if a program is withdrawn.
- 4) Program is not eligible: ACEN withdraws the program from the International Candidacy process. No fees will be refunded if a program is withdrawn.

SELF-REVIEW AND SELF-STUDY REPORT

The sections of the ACEN Accreditation Manual available online at www.acenursing.org related to the self-review and Self-Study Report apply to all programs, including those located outside the United States and its territories. All programs electing to participate in accreditation activities are required to abide by the policies and procedures as outlined in the ACEN Accreditation Manual.

THE ACCREDITATION SITE VISIT, INCLUDING CONSULTATIVE VISIT

The section of the ACEN Accreditation Manual related to the Site Visit applies to all programs located outside the United States and its territories.

Length of Visit

Accreditation visits for nursing programs located outside the United States and its territories will be determined by the ACEN staff.

Assignment of Site Visit Team

International peer evaluators will be selected from a pool of peer evaluators. The number of peer evaluators will be determined by the ACEN and will be based on the program type(s), length of travel, geographic location, and the complexity of the program(s) (e.g., number of students and faculty, use of distance education, locations, on-ground transportation logistics, etc.).

Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the Team Chair, Team Members, and Nursing Education Unit as listed in the ACEN Accreditation Manual apply to all nursing programs, including those located outside the United States and its Territories. The following additional responsibilities apply in reference to visit arrangements:

Area	Responsibility	
	Nursing Education Unit	Peer Evaluator
Travel	Responsible for all travel costs incurred for each peer evaluator; travel will be at business class or higher for each evaluator; Consulting Visit/Accreditation Visit fees and airline travel expenses will be submitted prior to the Consulting Visit/Accreditation Visit; additional fees incurred during the Consulting Visit/Accreditation Visit will be submitted upon receipt of the invoice	Responsible for working with the ACEN staff to book airfare in accordance with ACEN travel policy (ACEN books international travel in business class for the peer evaluator but works with the peer evaluator to determine the itinerary)
Hotel Accommodations	Responsible for arranging hotel accommodations for peer evaluators; accommodations must include a separate, private room for each evaluator at a hotel pre-approved by ACEN Responsible for directly paying the costs for hotel accommodations; accommodations are subject to ACEN approval	

Area	Responsibility	
	Nursing Education Unit	Peer Evaluator
Food/Beverages	Provide customary food/beverages during the hours peer evaluators are on-campus or visiting clinical settings (e.g., lunch and bottled water); may make arrangements for restaurant(s) at hotel to be included in room arrangements (e.g., breakfast, dinner)	Food not provided by the program during the site visit will be invoiced to the program; peer evaluators will be reimbursed for their expenses
Interpreter and Translator Services	Responsible for providing and arranging professional interpreter services during the visit; interpreter and translator services are subject to ACEN approval	
Cultural Sensitivity	Provide information in advance of each visit related to customs, traditions, and expectations related to but not limited to dress and food	Familiarization with local customs and traditions Abide by customs and traditions to the fullest extent possible during the onsite visit
Agenda for Site Visits	Proposed detailed agenda for each visit due to ACEN a minimum of six (6) weeks in advance of the visit Responsible for arranging interviews between ACEN peer evaluators and the nurse administrator, administrators of the governing organization, faculty, clinical agency representatives, current students, graduates, public, general education faculty, and student services personnel Agenda to include time for evaluators to review program materials/documents as well as to/from hotel to college/clinical sites, etc.	Team Chair drafts agenda in collaboration with the nurse administrator
Security	Assessment will be made at the time of the visit to determine security needs for peer evaluators. Arrangements and associated costs are the responsibility of the nursing program. All security arrangements are subject to ACEN approval.	

Information related to the Candidacy Presentation, Site Visit Report, Evaluation Review Panel, Board of Commissioners, Policies and Procedures, Standards and Criteria, and the glossary apply to all programs

seeking accreditation including those located outside the US or its territories. Please see the ACEN Accreditation Manual for information on each of these. The ACEN Accreditation Manual is available on the ACEN website: <http://www.acenursing.org/resources-acen-accreditation-manual/>