Accreditation Manual

Section III
Standards and Criteria
Glossary

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.

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 graduate degree with a major in nursing; a minimum of 75% of the full-time faculty hold earned doctorates.

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 75% 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 responsibility.

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 responsibilities.

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.

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.

3.7 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.

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 clinical doctorate 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 practice from an evidence-based perspective in their role through effective use and collaborative production of clinically-based scholarship.

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.

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.

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:

- Performance on certification exams
- Program completion
- Graduate program satisfaction
- Employer program satisfaction
- Professional job placement/role-related positions

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 program coordinators and/or faculty who assist with program administration 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.

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 25% of the full-time faculty also hold an earned doctorate 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.

2.3 Faculty (full- and part-time) credentials meet governing organization and state requirements.

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.

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.

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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 incorporates established professional standards, guidelines, and competencies, 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 includes general education courses that enhance professional nursing knowledge and practice.

4.5 The curriculum includes cultural, ethnic, and socially diverse concepts and may also include experiences from regional, national, or global perspectives.

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 The length of time and the credit hours required for program completion are 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.

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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.

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;
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- 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 exam: 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.

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.

STANDARD 1

Mission and Administrative Capacity

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1.7　When present, nursing program coordinators and/or faculty who assist with program administration 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.

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.

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 baccalaureate degree with a major in nursing; a minimum of 50% of the part-time faculty also hold a graduate degree with a major in nursing.

2.3 Faculty (full- and part-time) credentials meet governing organization and state requirements.

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.

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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.

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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 incorporates established professional standards, guidelines, and competencies, 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 includes general education courses that enhance professional nursing knowledge and practice.

4.5 The curriculum includes cultural, ethnic, and socially diverse concepts and may also include experiences from regional, national, or global perspectives.

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 The length of time and the credit hours required for program completion are 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.

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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.

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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.

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- Role-specific graduate 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 exam: 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.

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.

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.

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 program coordinators and/or faculty who assist with program administration 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.

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.

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 baccalaureate degree with a major in nursing; a minimum of 50% of the part-time faculty also hold a graduate degree with a major in nursing.

2.3 Faculty (full- and part-time) credentials meet governing organization and state requirements.

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.

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.

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 incorporates established professional standards, guidelines, and competencies, 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 includes general education courses that enhance professional nursing knowledge and practice.

4.5 The curriculum includes cultural, ethnic, and socially diverse concepts and may also include experiences from regional, national, or global perspectives.

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 The length of time and the credit hours required for program completion are 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.

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.

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 graduate 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 exam: 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.

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.

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.

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 program coordinators and/or faculty who assist with program administration 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.

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 A minimum of 50% of the full-time faculty hold a graduate degree with a major in nursing; the remaining full-time faculty hold a minimum of a baccalaureate degree with a major in nursing.

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 baccalaureate degree with a major in nursing.

2.3 Faculty (full- and part-time) credentials meet governing organization and state requirements.

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.

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.

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 incorporates established professional standards, guidelines, and competencies, 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 General education courses/competencies enhance professional nursing knowledge and practice if included in the program of study.

4.5 The curriculum includes cultural, ethnic, and socially diverse concepts and may also include experiences from regional, national, or global perspectives.

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 The length of time and the credit hours required for program completion are 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.

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.

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 graduate 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 exam: 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.

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.

GLOSSARY

Additional Location – An alternate site for the delivery of the nursing program other than the original/main location.

Administrative Capacity – Administrative services available to the governing organization and nursing education unit that directly support the functions of the governing organization and the nursing education unit in the achievement of the desired outcomes.

Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) – A clinical nurse specialist, nurse practitioner, certified registered nurse anesthetist, or certified nurse midwife.

Alternative Methods of Delivery – The way in which a nursing course, track, or program is shared with students including non-traditional means of student-faculty interaction, length required for the program of study, and/or varying intervals of class and/or clinical schedules. Examples include but are not limited to: accelerated or condensed formats, ITV, videotape/DVD learning packages, and online delivery.

Chief Executive Officer – The official who has the primary responsibility of carrying out the administrative policies and functions of the governing organization.

Clinical Experiences – Planned instructional activities with patients across the lifespan that are sufficient to achieve the student learning outcomes and graduate competencies and are supervised by qualified faculty who provide feedback in support of learning.

Communities of Interest – Persons, groups, agencies, and/or organizations that influence the mission, services, and outcomes of the nursing education unit. Examples include: students, graduates, healthcare employers, governing organizations, state regulatory agencies, and the public.

Complaints and Grievances – A formal allegation against a party or program usually expressed in a written, signed statement. A grievance is a wrong or hardship suffered which is the grounds for a complaint; the formal expression of a grievance is a complaint. The record of student complaints must include all complaints filed during the time period since the last accreditation review.

Core Values – Those beliefs or ideals which form the foundation for the work of a governing organization and/or nursing program.

Credentialing

   Accreditation – A voluntary, non-governmental process that uses peer review to determine if academic programs meet public confidence. Institutional accreditation evaluates an entire institution as a whole. Specialized accreditation evaluates a particular educational unit or program(s) within a governing organization.

Approval – The term generally referred to by most state boards of nursing to describe authorization of nursing education programs meeting minimal standards as defined in the Nurse Practice Act or State Rules and Regulations.

Certification – The process by which an organization, association, voluntary agency, or state regulatory agency grants recognition that an individual possesses predetermined knowledge and/or skills specified for practice in an area of specialization.

Licensure – The process by which a governmental agency gives affirmation to the public that the individuals engaged in an occupation or profession have minimal education, qualifications, and competence necessary to practice in a safe manner.

Criteria – Statements that identify the variables that need to be examined in evaluation of a standard.

Currently Enrolled – Enrolled as a graduate student in good standing and successfully completing a minimum of six to nine semester credits per year until the graduate degree is earned.

Curriculum Integrity – Demonstration of the soundness of the program of study that progresses from the mission/philosophy in an organized manner across a sequence of courses whose learning outcomes address the concepts derived from the mission/philosophy. The learning outcomes direct instruction and learning activities and lead in a logical progression to the achievement of the graduate competencies.

Default Rate – The rate of student borrowers who fail to remain current on their loans.

Distance Education– An educational process in which the majority of the instruction occurs when a student and instructor are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous.

Distance Technology – Instructional methods that may include one-way or two-way transmissions, audio, video, the Internet, and/or computer technologies.

Diversity Concepts – Knowledge about persons, communities, regions, countries, cultures, and ethnicities other than one's own.

Due Process – A decision-making procedure that is disciplined and analytical in which relevant standards are applied by a properly constituted and authorized body using a method that is based on published rules of procedure and is free of improper influence.

Evidence-Based – Actions, processes, or methodologies that are grounded in and flow from the translation of substantive and current research.

Expected Level of Achievement – A measurable index that reflects a desired outcome.

Faculty, Non-Nursing – Non-nurses who are academically qualified and teach a nursing course such as a dietician, pharmacologist, or physiologist.

Faculty, Nursing – Nurses who teach and evaluate nursing students, are academically qualified, and have experience in the content areas in which they teach.

> **Full-time** – Persons who teach and/or evaluate students and have full-time faculty employment status as defined by the governing organization and the nursing education unit.

> **Part-time** – Persons who teach and/or evaluate students and whose appointment is less than full-time as defined by the governing organization and the nursing education unit.

Faculty Development – Activities that facilitate faculty maintenance or enhancement of expertise including certification, continuing education, formal advanced education, clinical practice, research, publications, and other scholarly activities.

Faculty Workload – Percentages of time that reflect the manner in which the governing organization or nursing education unit characterizes, structures, and documents the nature of faculty responsibilities. Categories frequently used are teaching, advisement, administration, committee activity, research and other scholarship activity, and service/practice.

Gatekeeper – A person or agency that is responsible to monitor compliance with the Higher Education Reauthorization Act Title IV.

Governing Organization – The institution with overall responsibility and authority for the nursing education unit (e.g., college, university, hospital, career center).

Graduate Competencies, Role Specific – Expected measurable levels of graduate performance that integrate knowledge, skills, and abilities. Competencies may include specific knowledge areas, clinical judgments, and behaviors based upon the role and/or scope of practice of the graduate.

Graduate Degree – A master's degree and/or earned doctorate.

Information Literacy – The ability to know what information is needed and to access, evaluate, and use all forms of information for a specific purpose.

Interprofessional – Sharing of information among two or more health professionals working together as a team with a common purpose and mutual respect.

Job Placement Rate – Number of graduates, one year after graduation, employed in a position for which the program prepared them.

Laboratory Personnel – Non-faculty persons with specified expertise who may support and/or facilitate learning experiences in a practice setting typically designed to simulate the clinical environment.

Mission/Philosophy – The governing organization and/or nursing education unit statement that designates fundamental beliefs and characteristics and provides guidance and direction for the program(s) and services offered.

Nurse Administrator – The individual with responsibility and authority for the administrative and instructional activities of the nursing education unit within the governing organization (e.g., dean, chairperson, director).

Nursing Education Unit – A nursing education unit may offer one or more program types; all programs within the nursing education unit must be administered by a single individual with the responsibility and authority for all programs.

Nursing Program – A nursing program is identified as a single entity (program) when it can be demonstrated that all of the following criteria are met:
1. The program is within one governing organization that holds an appropriate institutional accreditation from an agency recognized by the ACEN.
2. The program is within the jurisdiction of one State Board of Nursing and/or other identified regulatory body exclusive of clinical learning experiences.
3. There is one set of student learning outcomes for the program offered.
4. There is one nurse administrator who has responsibility and authority for the program which may include: the hiring and evaluation of faculty; the development or revision of the curriculum; the assignment/approval of faculty responsibilities; the establishment of program specific admission/progression criteria; and development and administration of the program budget.
5. The faculty can demonstrate that they function as a faculty of the whole within a set of established faculty policies through their organization and decision-making processes, and methods of input into the curriculum development, delivery, and evaluation.
6. There is a systematic evaluation plan that addresses the student learning outcomes, program outcomes, and the ACEN Standards.
7. A single degree, certificate, or diploma is offered to students successfully completing the program.
8. All students are governed by a single set of policies.

Outcome – A statement that reflects the achievement of identified goals.

Program Outcomes – Indicators that reflect the extent to which the purposes of the nursing education unit are achieved and by which program effectiveness is documented. Program outcomes are measurable, consumer-oriented indexes designed to evaluate the degree to which the program is achieving its mission and goals. Examples include but are not limited to: program completion rates, job placement rates, licensure/certification exam pass rates, graduate satisfaction, and employer satisfaction.

Student Learning Outcomes – Statements of expectations written in measurable terms that express what a student will know, do, or think at the end of a learning experience; characteristics of the student at the completion of a course and/or program. Learning outcomes are measurable, learner-oriented abilities that are consistent with standards of professional practice.

Partnership – An agreement (formal relationship) between a nursing education unit/governing organization and an outside agent/agency to accomplish specific objectives and goals over a period of time. This does not include clinical agreements for student learning experiences required by the nursing program.

Pass Rates

    Certification Exam Pass Rates – Performance on the certification examination for first-time writers.

    Licensure Exam Pass Rates – Performance on the licensure examination for first-time writers.

Post-Master's Certificate (PMC) – A select series of courses that are specific to one area of practice (e.g., certificates in nursing administration, certificates in nursing education).

Preceptor – An academically and experientially qualified nurse who has received formal training to function as a resource and role model for nursing students.

Prerequisite Course – A course that is required prior to the taking of another course. The first course provides a foundation for the subsequent course(s). A prerequisite course is included in the total credits of the program of study if the majority of the students take the course.

Professional Standards/Guidelines for Nursing Practice – A set of guidelines* approved by a nationally recognized nursing organization for use in the development and evaluation of a nursing curriculum including, but not limited to:
  – Consensus Model for APRN Regulation (APRN Consensus Work Group & the National Council of State Boards of Nursing APRN Advisory Group)
  – Core Competencies for Interprofessional Collaborative Practice (Interprofessional Education Collaborative)
  – Criteria for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs (National Task Force on Quality Nurse Practitioner Education)
  – Essentials of Baccalaureate, Master's, and Doctoral Education (American Association of Colleges of Nursing)
  – Health Professions Education: A Bridge to Quality (Institute of Medicine)
  – NLN Competencies for Graduates of Nursing Education Programs (National League for Nursing)
  – Nurse Practice Standards for the Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse (National Federation of Licensed Practical Nurses)
  – Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice (American Nurses Association)

- Standards of Practice and Educational Competencies of Graduates of Practical/Vocational Nursing Programs (National Association for Practical Nurse Education and Services)
- Statement on Clinical Nurse Specialist Practice and Education (National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists)
- Quality and Safety Education for Nurses (QSEN)

* The most recent version/edition of the Standards and/or Guidelines must be used.

Program Completion Rate – Number of students who graduate within a defined period of time. Definition used by the ACEN for the program completion rate is the number of students who complete the program within 150% of the stated program length beginning with enrollment in the first nursing course.

Program Length – Total time required to complete the defined program of study stated in academic semesters/terms inclusive of all prerequisites and the total number of credits required.

Program Locations – Sites where the program is delivered, including the original/main location.

Program Option – Format used for program delivery including, but not limited to, generic, traditional, pre-licensure, post-licensure/mobility, accelerated programs, and specialized tracks.

Program Satisfaction – Perceptions of the graduates and employers as to the graduates' achievement of the learning outcomes/competencies and the adequacy and effectiveness of the program.

Program Type – A nursing education program that offers a recognized degree, diploma, or certificate. The ACEN accredits a variety of nursing program types including: clinical doctorate, post-master's certificate, master's, baccalaureate, associate, diploma, and practical.

Public – Any individual or group with an interest in but not directly responsible for the development or delivery of the nursing program (e.g., clients/patients, non-nursing students, non-nursing faculty, healthcare providers, and community residents).

Published Document(s) – All forms of communication including paper and electronic sources intended to inform the public about the program or governing organization.

Qualified, Academically – Documented, current, or recent direct engagement in a significant manner in teaching and/or research in nursing; faculty members must hold the required educational credentials.

Qualified, Experientially – Documented, current, or recent direct engagement in a significant manner in clinical nursing experiences for those whose role includes teaching; for those engaged in administration, documented, current, or recent direct engagement in a significant manner in administrative functions in nursing education.

Resources, Fiscal – The financial support required for securing the personnel, supplies, materials, equipment, and services necessary to ensure the achievement of the program outcomes.

Resources, Learning – The materials, activities, and technologies that facilitate the development of student knowledge and skills.

Resources, Physical – Classrooms, laboratories, offices, and other common spaces that are used by the program.

Scholarship – Activities that facilitate the enhancement of expertise and achievement of the goals and outcomes of the nursing education unit. This may include, but are not limited to: application of knowledge, teaching, service, practice, and research.

Staff – Non-faculty personnel who facilitate the attainment of the goals and outcomes of the nursing education unit including clerical and other support persons.

Standard – Agreed-upon rules to measure quantity, extent, value, and quality.

Sustainability of Resources – The financial capacity to support, maintain, or continue resources at their current level.

Systematic Plan for Evaluation – A written document emphasizing the ongoing, comprehensive assessment of the student learning outcomes, program outcomes, role-specific graduate competencies, and the ACEN Standards. This includes specific, measurable expected levels of achievement; frequency of assessment; appropriate assessment methods; and a minimum of three (3) years of data for each component within the plan. Newly established programs are required to have data from the time of the program's inception.

Welfare of Faculty and Staff – Policies affecting faculty and staff promulgated by the governing organization and nursing education unit including, but not limited to: non-discrimination, appointment, rank, grievance, promotion, rights and responsibilities, salaries/benefits, and workload.