

Policy on the Performance of Nursing Education and Preparation Programs

I. Purpose: The University of North Carolina shall track passing rates on the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN) and ensure coordination with the North Carolina Board of Nursing for any programs that fall below accepted standards.

II. Definitions

A. The North Carolina Board of Nursing (NCBON). Created through legislation in 1903, NCBON's mission is to protect the public by regulating the practice of nursing. General Statutes, Article 9A, the Nursing Practice Act,¹ outlines the duties of NCBON, and Chapter 90-171.38 states, "The Board shall establish, revise, or repeal standards for nursing programs. These standards shall specify program requirements, curricula, faculty, students, facilities, resources, administration, and describe the approval process. Any institution desiring to establish a nursing program shall apply to the Board and submit satisfactory evidence that it will meet the standards established by the Board. Those standards shall be designed to ensure that graduates of those programs have the education necessary to safely and competently practice nursing."²

B. The National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX). A nationwide examination for the licensing of nurses in the United States, Canada, and Australia. NCLEX for registered nurses (NCLEX-RN) is designed to test the knowledge, skills, and abilities essential for the safe and effective practice of nursing at the entry level.

III. General

A. NCBON has established that nursing programs "shall maintain an NCLEX examination pass rate that meets or exceeds 90 percent of the national pass rate for licensure level on the first writing of licensure examination for calendar years ending December 31."³ If programs fail to meet that standard, the NCBON places the nursing program on Approval with Warning status, and NCBON staff will conduct a focused review of the program.

B. The Board of Governors' standard on NCLEX-RN pass rates is intended to provide earlier warning, interventions, and assistance to the constituent institutions' nursing programs.

IV. Procedures

A. The University of North Carolina System Office shall track the NCLEX-RN pass rates of constituent institutions' nursing programs at least annually.

¹ See North Carolina General Statutes, Chapter 90, Article 9A.

² See North Carolina General Statutes, Chapter 90, Article 9A, section 90-171.38, Standards for nursing programs.

³ See North Carolina Administrative Code, 21 NCAC 36.0320, section (c).

B. To provide early warning of constituent university nursing programs that may be in danger of not meeting NCBON standards, institutions are expected to maintain NCLEX-RN examination pass rates that meet or exceed 95 percent of the national pass rate for licensure level on the first writing of licensure examinations for calendar years ending December 31.

C. Institutions that do not achieve 95 percent of the national pass rate for first-time writers of the NCLEX-RN shall undergo an evaluation of their nursing programs.

1. The institution's chancellor shall provide a report to the president prior to the end of February following the reporting of the previous year's scores.

- a. The report shall include an evaluation of the nursing program's admissions policies, faculty, curriculum, and licensure examination preparation policies and procedures for their nursing students that may have led to the score(s).

- b. The institution shall propose short- and long-term changes to address the issues seen as contributing to not meeting the established pass rate, and the University will coordinate with the institution and its nursing program to address any issues found in the report.

2. The University shall monitor quarterly NCLEX-RN scores and coordinate, as needed, with the institution to make appropriate changes expected to improve student performance on the licensure exam during the calendar year.

3. Institutions that do not achieve 95 percent of the national pass rate for first-time writers of the NCLEX-RN for two consecutive years will undergo additional evaluation measures, as determined by the President. The University may coordinate with the NCBON to assist in a program review.

D. The University shall coordinate with the NCBON to assist and monitor any constituent institution's nursing program placed on Approval with Warning status when that institution fails to meet NCBON standards.

E. In the event a constituent institution's nursing program's approval is removed by the NCBON, after any appeals and due processes of the NCBON, the University shall initiate termination procedures for the institution's pre-licensure nursing programs.

V. Other Matters

A. Effective Date. The requirements of this policy shall be effective on the date of adoption of this policy by the Board of Governors.

B. Relation to Federal and State Laws. The foregoing policy as adopted by the Board of Governors is meant to supplement, and does not purport to supplant or modify, those statutory enactments which may govern or relate to the subject matter of this policy.

C. This policy shall be implemented and applied in accordance with such regulations as may be adopted from time to time by the president.