

**REQUEST FOR CHARGES FROM THE BOARD PERTAINING TO THE  
USE OF THE HESI EXAM; RULES 214.6(f) and 214.7(c); AND  
REVISION OF EDUCATION GUIDELINE 3.4.1.c.**

**SUMMARY OF REQUEST:**

Consider board staff's request to the Board to issue charges to ACE related to (1) developing a position statement to be posted on the Board of Nursing web page related to the effective use of the HESI Exam as an evaluation method in the progression of students in nursing educational programs, (2) reviewing Rules 214.6(f) and 214.7(c) related to director and faculty qualifications for vocational nursing educational programs and develop rule revisions as needed, (3) revising Education Guideline 3.4.1.c. to clarify program director qualifications which may not be waived for professional nursing educational programs.

- (1) **Develop a position statement to be posted on the Board of Nursing web page related to the effective use of the HESI examination or other standardized test as an evaluation method in the progression of students in nursing educational programs.**

**HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:**

- Board staff receive numerous calls from students who have not been allowed to graduate due to a low score on the HESI exam as a graduation requirement at the end of their program.
- Some students with low scores on the HESI exam are allowed to graduate from a program, but the program director refuses to sign the affidavit of completion until students attain a designated score on the HESI exam.
- Students may be delayed in taking the NCLEX examination because their score on the HESI examination is lower than program requirements.

**PROS AND CONS:**

Pros:

- Providing some guidance to programs about the effective use of the HESI exam may discourage them from using standardized examinations as gatekeepers to program completion.
- Use of a position statement may reduce the incidence of students being delayed in taking the NCLEX examination.

Cons:

- Regulation about the use of standardized testing is not included in the education rules and has not been under the purview of the Board.

- (2) **Review Rules 214.6(f) and 214.7(c) related to director and faculty qualifications for vocational nursing educational programs and develop rule revisions as needed.**

**HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

- The adequacy of the qualifications noted in Rules 214.6(f) and 214.7(c) for vocational nursing educational program director and faculty has been questioned recently as new proposals are being considered by the Board.
- A need for further specificity and clarity in the required qualifications has been identified.

**PROS AND CONS:**

Pros:

- Clarity in director and faculty qualifications for vocational nursing educational programs will provide guidance to new programs as proposals are being developed.
- Raising the level of qualifications may lead to better nursing leadership and education.

Cons:

- Changing director and faculty qualifications may impose serious problems to programs because of the shortage of qualified candidates.

**(3) Revise Education Guideline 3.4.1.c. to clarify program director qualifications which may not be waived for professional nursing educational programs.**

**HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:**

- Each year, the turnover rate of program directors ranges from 18% to 25% (between 35 and 50 newly appointed directors) in nursing educational programs.
- Directors leave their positions due to retirements, resignations related to job stress, and resignations related to other job opportunities.
- Criteria for director qualifications from the national nursing accreditation organizations require a minimum of a Master's Degree in Nursing.
- Rule 215 Professional Nursing Education requires that directors of professional nursing educational programs hold a Master's Degree in Nursing and at least 3 years teaching experience in a professional nursing program.
- Because of the option for a waiver for all qualifications, several programs every year petition to the Board to waive at least one qualification.

**PROS AND CONS:**

Pros:

- Clearly identifying qualifications that will NOT be considered by the Board for waivers will assist programs to narrow their pool of candidates.
- Maintaining a core set of required qualifications will maintain high quality programs.

Cons:

- Programs may experience more difficulty recruiting qualified directors due to the shortage of nurses with the appropriate educational preparation and experience.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Move to issue charges to ACE related to:

- (1) Develop a position statement to be posted on the Board of Nursing web page related to the effective use of the HESI exam or other standardized tests as an evaluation method in the progression of students in nursing educational programs.
- (2) Review Rules 214.6(f) and 214.7(c) related to director and faculty qualifications for vocational nursing educational programs and develop rule revisions as needed.
- (3) Revise Education Guideline 3.4.1.c. to clarify program director qualifications which may not be waived for professional nursing educational programs.