

**Consideration of Summary and Analysis of Self-Study Reports 2014
 Vocational Nursing Education Programs**

Background:

Seven (7) vocational nursing (VN) education programs were required to submit Self-Study Reports to Texas Board of Nursing (Board) Staff in 2014 after their 2013 NCLEX examination pass rates fell below 80%. The group includes four (4) VN programs in community colleges and three (3) VN programs in career schools and colleges. Rule 214.4(c)(2)(B) *Ongoing Approval Procedures* requires that “When the passing score of first-time NCLEX-PN® candidates is less than 80% on the examination during the examination year, the nursing program shall submit a Self-Study Report that evaluates factors that may have contributed to the graduates’ performance on the examination and a description of the corrective measures to be implemented. . . .”

Board Staff invited individual program directors and their respective nursing faculty to participate in one-hour long conference calls to discuss program issues and to provide guidance for developing the Self-Study Reports. All of the Education Consultants participated in most of the calls to all of the programs. This was an unexpectedly valuable experience for Board Staff since it provided an opportunity to talk with administrators, program directors, and many faculty members throughout the state. Every effort was made by the Consultants to extend assistance to the programs.

This report captures information from all of the Self-Study Reports and focuses on common factors that may have contributed to the lowered pass rates for 2013. Pass rates among the seven (7) programs ranged from 18.75% to 78.26%, with four (4) programs experiencing pass rates between 72% and 78.26%. The largest candidate pool from a single nursing education program was sixty-eight (68) first-time test-takers while the smallest candidate group was thirteen (13) first-time test-takers.

Of the ninety-eight (98) Board approved vocational nursing education programs, ninety-one (91) programs had acceptable pass rates during the 2013 NCLEX-PN® examination year, January 1 through December 31. Further, twenty-two (22) of the ninety-eight (98) programs achieved an NCLEX-PN® pass rate of 100% for the 2013 examination year.

Data presented in the Self-Study Reports were catalogued into sections following the format in the Education Guideline 3.2.1.a. *Writing a Self-Study Report on Evaluation of Factors that Contributed to the Graduates’ Performance on the NCLEX-PN® or NCLEX-RN® Examination.* Factors have been categorized under headings in the Self-Study Report and are arranged from high to low frequency as described in the reports.

Factors That May Have Contributed to NCLEX Examination Pass Rates – Students	Suggested Corrective Measures to Improve Success – Students
Admission Criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria lacked rigor • Weak applicant pool • Issues with entrance examination • Lack of standardized testing for admission • Low ACCUPLACER entrance test scores 	Admission Criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and revise admission criteria • Update recruiting process and institute candidate orientation • Implement standardized assessment testing for applicants

Factors That May Have Contributed to NCLEX Examination Pass Rates – Students	Suggested Corrective Measures to Improve Success – Students
<p>Remediation Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No systematic intervention for below-passing exam grades Need for remediation Non-operational remediation plan Need for early recognition of weak students <p>Readmission Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Readmission policies allowed students to repeat courses Weak readmission policies <p>At-Risk Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large number of high-risk students <p>Progression Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible grade inflation Low passing standard 	<p>Remediation Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate current remediation strategies and add or strengthen remediation plan Implement remediation program Utilize standardized remediation program Require comprehensive remediation plan following standardized exit examination Require evidence of student completion of mandated remediation <p>Readmission Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review, revise, and strengthen readmission policies <p>At-Risk Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop criteria to timely identify at-risk students. Provide immediate remediation to at-risk students <p>Progression Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review, revise, and strengthen progression policies Increase passing standard
Factors That May Have Contributed to NCLEX Examination Pass Rates – Policies	Suggested Corrective Measures to Improve Success – Policies
<p>Inadequate admission and selection, readmission, and progression policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admission policies allowed students to enroll with low score on pre-admission test Progression policy weak – 2.0 GPA too low <p>Inconsistent use of student policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate policies Lack of consistency in following established policies <p>Lack of Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outdated program policies Lack of consistent teaching plans 	<p>Inadequate admission and selection, readmission, and progression policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and revise admission and selection, readmission, and progression policies based upon student data <p>Inconsistent use of student policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a process to ensure that policies are appropriate and are followed <p>Lack of Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate nursing program policies to determine currency; update as needed
Factors That May Have Contributed to NCLEX Examination Pass Rates – Faculty	Suggested Corrective Measures to Improve Success – Faculty
<p>Inadequate faculty orientation and mentoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hiring of new inexperienced faculty Lack of formal orientation and mentoring program Faculty not familiar with item-writing or analysis Lack of faculty training No process for faculty evaluation 	<p>Inadequate faculty orientation and mentoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and revise faculty orientation plan Provide ongoing faculty development. Establish faculty training using “Nurse Tim” resource Require faculty participation in item-writing workshop Lengthen time for formal faculty mentoring Develop a faculty orientation check list

Factors That May Have Contributed to NCLEX Examination Pass Rates – Faculty	Suggested Corrective Measures to Improve Success – Faculty
<p>Insufficient number of faculty to effectively carry out teaching, clinical instruction, and other responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy teaching load • High faculty turnover 	<p>Insufficient number of faculty to effectively carry out teaching, clinical instruction, and other responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconsider faculty workload • Revise faculty salary structure
Factors That May Have Contributed to NCLEX Examination Pass Rates – Curriculum	Suggested Corrective Measures to Improve Success – Curriculum
<p>Need for major curriculum revision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to align curriculum with NCLEX test plan (curriculum mapping) • Need for curriculum update • Skills lab curriculum deficient <p>Ineffective clinical evaluation tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deficient clinical evaluation tools <p>Growing scarcity of clinical practice sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for additional clinical sites • Clinical sites average 	<p>Need for major curriculum revision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review entire curriculum to align with NCLEX test plan • Develop plan for curriculum review • Establish solid curriculum plan to include check list in skills lab <p>Ineffective clinical evaluation tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review, revise, and strengthen clinical evaluation tools <p>Growing scarcity of clinical practice sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constantly seek additional clinical sites • Upgrade current clinical sites
Factors That May Have Contributed to NCLEX Examination Pass Rates – Teaching and Evaluation	Suggested Corrective Measures to Improve Success – Teaching and Evaluation
<p>Inconsistencies in Exam Processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty lack test-writing and item analysis skills. • Lack of use of test plan and blueprint • Formal item analysis not carried out • Repeated use of same test items <p>Insufficient Test Security:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major issues with student cheating <p>Use of Standardized Examinations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy reliance on standardized examinations • Faculty not properly utilizing standardized examination evaluation form • Inconsistent faculty use of standardized examination vendor resources • Ineffective use of evaluation data from standardized examinations • Lack of student participation in standardized examinations prior to NCLEX testing 	<p>Inconsistencies in Exam Processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan faculty development in test writing skills, use of test blueprints, and item-analysis • Assist faculty in proper utilization of test plan and blueprints • Develop a program testing policy • Develop test blueprint template for each course • Offer NCLEX training seminar <p>Insufficient Test Security:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new policies and procedures for exam security. • Implement computer testing • Assign two faculty members to proctor each testing session <p>Use of Standardized Examinations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider how standardized examinations may be most appropriately utilized • Offer faculty training on effective use of resources • Determine best ways to use data provided by standardized testing outcomes • Consider linking student participation in standardized examination assignments to course grades

Factors That May Have Contributed to NCLEX Examination Pass Rates – Teaching and Evaluation	Suggested Corrective Measures to Improve Success – Teaching and Evaluation
<p>Need for Student Preparation to take the NCLEX:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of interactive activities using NCLEX style questions <p>Inadequacy of Total Program Evaluation Plan and Use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to use data for decision-making • Non-operational Total Program Evaluation Plan • Ineffective Total Program Evaluation Plan • Plan not effectively utilized 	<p>Need for Student Preparation to take the NCLEX:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist faculty to understand how to more effectively utilize the NCLEX test plan • Offer faculty development activities to become skilled in writing NCLEX style test items • Include more interactive activities based on NCLEX style questions <p>Inadequacy of Total Program Evaluation Plan and Use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and revise Total Program Evaluation Plan to ensure effectiveness • Review and revise plan to utilize outcome data for decision-making. • Review and revise Total Program Evaluation Plan to measure the effectiveness of each item • Establish schedule for review of the Total Program Evaluation Plan • Implement plan and process as identified in program proposal
Factors That May Have Contributed to NCLEX Examination Pass Rates – Evaluation Methods for Class and Clinical	Suggested Corrective Measures to Improve Success – Evaluation Methods for Class and Clinical
<p>Grading Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistencies in grading • Poor grading criteria • Lack of testing policies <p>Lack of Possibility for Computerized Testing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of use of computerized testing <p>Need for Revision of Clinical Evaluation Tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to revise clinical evaluation tools • Grade inflation in clinical evaluation tool use • Deficient clinical evaluation tools 	<p>Grading Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage faculty in discussion and develop policies to eliminate grade inflation • Provide faculty development in inter-rater reliability for more consistent grading outcomes • Review and revise testing and grading policies <p>Lack of Possibility for Computerized Testing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute computerized testing • Replace non-working computers with new ones <p>Need for Revision of Clinical Evaluation Tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critically review clinical evaluation tools and revise as appropriate

Factors That May Have Contributed to NCLEX Examination Pass Rates – Other	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of a convenient NCLEX testing site • No faculty office hours • Sporadic faculty meetings • Sporadic advisory board meetings • Need to integrate student learning outcomes into all course packets • Need to require comprehensive remediation plan following standardized exit exam • Need to increase pass rate of standardized exit examination • Student financial issues 	

Summary of Commonly-Cited Areas of Concern in Self-Study Reports in Order of Frequency:

1. High faculty turnover
2. Faculty not proficient in test item-writing or analysis
3. Lack of rigor in admission criteria
4. Need for more effective faculty orientation and additional mentoring due to the hiring of inexperienced faculty members
5. Grade inflation
6. Lack of rigor in progression policies
7. Need for curriculum changes
8. Need to timely identify and remediate at-risk students
9. Ineffective use of standardized examinations
10. Inadequate use of the Total Program Evaluation Plan

This report is for information only. No Board action is necessary.