

**An Analysis of Four Self-Study Reports  
Vocational Nursing Education Programs  
2017 NCLEX-PN® Examination Pass Rates**

**Historical Perspective:**

Rule 214.4(c)(2)(B) requires nursing programs to submit a Self-Study Report (SSR) when their NCLEX® examination pass rate is below the benchmark of 80%. Four vocational nursing (VN) programs were required to develop a SSR based upon the 2017 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rates. The implementation of corrective strategies has usually resulted in programs adjusting their curricula for more rigor; revising their admission, readmission, and progression criteria; and providing more effective faculty development and faculty mentoring programs.

The NCLEX® examination pass rate is not the only indicator of the quality of the educational preparation in the nursing program but is a gauge that improvements need to be made. The passing rate of first-time candidates provides the best measure of the effectiveness of the program of study in preparing graduates for entry-level practice. Many graduates succeed on second or third attempts on the NCLEX® and become licensed nurses, but other factors (such as further study and review courses) contribute to the pass rate of repeaters, not just the education provided in the program.

The majority of programs improve their pass rates through successful implementation of corrective measures. The SSR represents a focused self-evaluation by the director and nursing faculty, and most programs testify that it is a valuable insight into their total program.

Beginning in October 2014, Board Staff provided an analysis of findings in the SSRs at the October Board meetings for professional nursing education programs and at the January or April Board meetings for the VN education programs.

This report captures information from the SSRs and focuses on common factors that may have contributed to the lowered pass rates for 2017. Although commonalities among the programs exist, more distinctions than similarities were identified in the analysis.

Three of the programs are housed in community colleges and one in a career school/college. Two of the programs are located in rural areas, one in a small city, and one in a large city. Three of the programs are well established, beginning in 1969, 1973, and 1975; whereas, one program began operation in 2012.

Pass rates among the four VN programs ranged from 42.86% to 71.43%. The largest candidate pool from a single nursing education program was 50 first-time test-takers while the smallest candidate group was seven first-time test-takers.

A review of the past five years of NCLEX® pass rates of the four VN programs reveals that one program had no history of a pass rate below 80%, two programs fell below the benchmark in 2015, and one program fell below 80% in both 2014 and 2015.

None of the programs experienced a turnover in Program Directors. Three programs acknowledged faculty issues as contributing to the lowered NCLEX® pass rates. Two programs cited a high faculty turnover rate as problematic; however, one program noted that a low faculty turnover may have allowed instructors to become complacent.

Length of curricula were 11 months, 12 months, 13 months, and 16 months. Two of the four programs offered select nursing courses in an online format. One program identified providing a high school entry track.

Findings from the SSRs written by the Texas-approved programs were consistent with past SSRs:

- Admission policies should be reviewed and revised to ensure students were qualified.
- Readmission policies should be evaluated.
- Faculty and student policies must be followed and enforced.
- Faculty should be provided ongoing faculty development.
- Curriculum should be reviewed regularly for currency, rigor, relevance.
- Evaluation methods (grading) for classroom and clinical should be reviewed and revised.
- The Total Evaluation Plan should be used regularly and changes documented.

Of the 94 Board approved vocational nursing education programs, 90 programs had acceptable pass rates during the 2017 NCLEX-PN® examination year, January 1 through December 31. Further, 58 (62%) of the 94 programs on the 2017 report achieved a pass rate above 90%. Of these 58 programs, 32 achieved 100%.

The overall 2017 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate for Texas programs is 86.84% (3,986/4,590), which is above the national average of 83.85%. Texas had over 4,000 candidates for the NCLEX-PN® examination for 2017, second only to California with more than 6,000 candidates.

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