

**CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF NATIONAL NURSING ACCREDITING AGENCIES AND  
AN EDUCATION GUIDELINE OUTLINING  
SPECIFIC EXEMPTIONS FROM EDUCATION RULE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR NURSING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS  
HOLDING VOLUNTARY NATIONAL NURSING ACCREDITATION**

**SUMMARY OF REQUEST:**

Consider the staff recommendation concerning approval of national nursing accrediting agencies and an education guideline providing specific exemptions from education rule requirements for nursing educational programs holding voluntary national nursing accreditation related to NPA Section 301.157(b)(5) requiring that the Board select one or more national nursing accrediting agencies to accredit nursing programs.

**BACKGROUND:**

- In their report dated September 2006, the Sunset Commission recommended that nursing programs, once accredited by an agency recognized by the U. S. Department of Education, are exempt from Board approval.
- HB 2426 effective September 1, 2007, enacted by the 80<sup>th</sup> Session of the Texas Legislature requires in Section 301.157(b)(5) that “The board shall select one or more national nursing accrediting agencies, recognized by the United States Department of Education and determined by the board to have acceptable standards, to accredit schools of nursing and educational programs...”
- Subsequently Rule 215.4 Professional Nursing Education, and Rule 214.4 Vocational Nursing Education, Section(c)(4) relating to *Approval* state that “The Texas Board of Nursing will select one or more national nursing accrediting agencies, recognized by the United States Department of Education and determined by the Board to have standards *equivalent* to the Board’s ongoing approval standards.” (These rule changes were adopted at the October 2007 Board meeting and became effective January 8, 2008.)
- Board staff initiated separate communications with representatives from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) and the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC) in June 2007 to establish a process for determining whether the voluntary organizations’ accreditation standards are equivalent to BON ongoing approval standards.
- In collaboration with CCNE, a lengthy matrix was developed comparing CCNE accreditation standards with BON approval standards.
- Likewise, NLNAC assisted in developing a similar matrix comparing NLNAC accreditation standards with BON approval standards.
- After a careful review and analysis, board staff have determined that, though CCNE and NLNAC standards are not identical to BON standards, most are generally comparable EXCEPT for areas where there are significant exceptions. Abbreviated summary tables examining the comparison and identifying exceptions in the CCNE and NLNAC standards were prepared.
- These tables were submitted to CCNE and NLNAC with explanatory letters and with copies of the Nursing Practice Act and pertinent Rules & Regulations.
- Separate conference calls between CCNE and board staff and between NLNAC and board staff allowed further discussion of the comparisons.
- In the conversations, there was agreement on some common ground in some areas of exception to move more criteria into the acceptable comparison range.
- Written responses from CCNE and NLNAC provided their feedback to the analyses from the matrixes.
- An update to the Sunset Commission regarding this issue has been submitted. The response identifies criteria in the accreditation standards which are acceptable as comparative to BON rules and criteria in which there are serious exceptions to BON rules. Areas of exception basically focus on protection of the public and patient safety.
- Board staff have concluded that the accreditation standards of the two national nursing accrediting agencies, CCNE and NLNAC, warrant their selection as acceptable accreditation agencies with exceptions in criteria related to protecting the public, patient safety and jurisprudence.

- Board staff have prepared a guideline indicating sections of the education rules from which programs which hold voluntary national nursing accreditation may be exempt and sections of the education rules related to public safety and jurisprudence that will be required of all nursing educational programs (See Attachment #1).

**PROS:**

- Accepting specific accreditation standards as meeting BON rules would eliminate duplication in ongoing program approval.
- The monitoring of nursing programs' compliance with BON rules pertaining to the protection of the public would ensure patient safety.

**CONS:**

- Since accreditation standards as well as State regulations routinely undergo review and revision, ongoing efforts in comparing accreditation standards with BON rules will be necessary.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

In the comparison of the accrediting bodies' standards with the Board's ongoing approval criteria, board staff focused on critical components to patient safety that would not be evaluated by the accrediting bodies nor have the in-depth review needed to ensure compliance with regulations related to protecting the public. Therefore, move to:

- accept the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) and the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC) as the nursing accrediting bodies that generally have acceptable standards to accredit schools of nursing and education programs, but
- retain oversight of a limited number of education rules pertaining to patient safety and jurisprudence, and
- endorse the exemptions outlined in this report and approve the guideline for specific exemptions from education rule requirements for nursing educational program holding voluntary national nursing accreditation to ensure the Board will retain oversight of educational requirements related to patient safety and jurisprudence. This guideline will be reviewed periodically and will be subject to revision by board staff as necessary.

**TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING**  
**3.2.4.a. EDUCATION GUIDELINE**  
**Specific Exemptions From Education Rule Requirements**  
**For Nursing Educational Programs**  
**Holding Voluntary National Nursing Accreditation**

**BACKGROUND:**

- HB 2426 effective September 1, 2007, enacted by the 80<sup>th</sup> Session of the Texas Legislature requires in Section 301.157(b)(5) that “The board shall select one or more national nursing accrediting agencies, recognized by the United States Department of Education and determined by the board to have acceptable standards, to accredit schools of nursing and educational programs...”
- Additionally HB 2426 stated that nursing educational programs that are accredited and maintain their voluntary accreditation and maintain acceptable pass rates on the licensing examination are exempt from board rules that require ongoing approval.
- Board staff have conducted an extensive comparison of accreditation criteria with board standards and have found that though the accrediting agencies’ standards are generally acceptable, there are a few areas where significant exceptions exist, specifically those related to protection of the public and patient safety.
- Based upon the results of the comparison between accreditation standards and Board criteria, programs with voluntary national nursing accreditation are **exempt** from the education rules that are comparable to accreditation standards but are **not exempt** from rules related to protecting the public, patient safety and content related to jurisprudence. These distinctions are provided below.

**BON Education Rule Exemptions for Programs Holding Voluntary Nursing Accreditation**

| <b>Exemptions from Rule 214 Vocational Nursing Education</b> | <b>Exemptions from Rule 215 Professional Nursing Education</b> | <b>Section Title</b>                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 214.2                                                        | 215.2                                                          | Definitions                                     |
| 214.3                                                        | 215.3                                                          | Program Development, Expansion and Closure      |
| 214.4                                                        | 215.4                                                          | Approval                                        |
| 214.5                                                        | 215.5                                                          | Philosophy/Mission and Objectives/Outcomes      |
| 214.6                                                        | 215.6                                                          | Administration and Organization                 |
| 214.7                                                        | 215.7                                                          | Faculty Qualifications and Faculty Organization |
| 214.11                                                       | 215.11                                                         | Facilities, Resources and Services              |
| 214.12                                                       | 215.12                                                         | Records and Reports                             |
| 214.13                                                       | 215.13                                                         | Total Program Evaluation                        |

**BON Education Rules Not Exempt to Programs Holding Voluntary Nursing Accreditation**

| <b>Sections Not Exempt - Rule 214 Vocational Nursing Education</b> | <b>Sections Not Exempt - Rule 215 Professional Nursing Education</b> | <b>Section Title and Specific Exception Area</b>                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 214.1                                                              | 215.1                                                                | General Requirements - director/coordinator and faculty are accountable for complying with Board's rules.                              |
| 214.8                                                              | 215.8                                                                | Students - regulations related to TOC, TAC                                                                                             |
| 214.9                                                              | 215.9                                                                | Program of Study - inclusion of Texas law and rules in curriculum.                                                                     |
| 214.10                                                             | 215.10                                                               | Management of Clinical Learning Experiences and Resources - regulations related to clinical supervision and faculty to student ratios. |

Texas Occupation Code 301.157(d-1) related to Programs of Study and Approval requires that "A school of nursing or educational program is considered approved by the board and, except as provided by Subsection (d-7), is exempt from board rules that require ongoing approval if the school of program:

- (1) is accredited and maintains accreditation through a national nursing accrediting agency selected by the board under Subsection (b)(5); and
- (2) maintains an acceptable pass rate as determined by the board on the applicable licensing examination under this chapter."

Subsection (d-7) states that "A school of nursing or educational program approved under Subsection (d-1) shall:

- (1) provide the board with copies of any reports submitted to or received from the national nursing accrediting agency selected by the board;
- (2) notify the board of any change in accreditation status; and
- (3) provide other information required by the board as necessary to evaluate and establish nursing education and workforce policy in this state."

It will be the responsibility of programs holding voluntary national nursing accreditation to provide the board with accreditation reports from the accrediting agencies and to continue to provide other required information related to the educational program to the board.