STANDARD 1

Mission and Administrative Capacity

The mission of the nursing education unit reflects the governing organization's core values and is congruent with its mission/goals. The governing organization and program have administrative capacity resulting in effective delivery of the nursing program and achievement of identified program outcomes.

1.1 The mission and philosophy of the nursing education unit are congruent with the core values, mission, and goals of the governing organization.

1.2 The governing organization and nursing education unit ensure representation of the nurse administrator and nursing faculty in governance activities; opportunities exist for student representation in governance activities.

1.3 The assessment of end-of-program student learning outcomes and program outcomes is shared with communities of interest, and the communities of interest have input into program processes and decision-making.

1.4 Partnerships that exist promote excellence in nursing education, enhance the profession, and benefit the community.

1.5 The nursing education unit is administered by a nurse who holds a graduate degree with a major in nursing and is doctorally prepared.

1.6 The nurse administrator is experientially qualified, meets governing organization and state requirements, and is oriented and mentored to the role.

1.7 When present, nursing program coordinators and/or faculty who coordinate or lead program options/tracks are academically and experientially qualified.

1.8 The nurse administrator has authority and responsibility for the development and administration of the program and has sufficient time and resources to fulfill the role responsibilities.

1.9 The nurse administrator has the authority to prepare and administer the program budget with faculty input.

1.10 Policies for nursing faculty and staff are comprehensive, provide for the welfare of faculty and staff, and are consistent with those of the governing organization; differences are justified by the purpose and outcomes of the nursing program.

1.11 Distance education, when utilized, is congruent with the mission of the governing organization and the mission/philosophy of the nursing education unit.

All programs with APRN options are also expected to adhere to the current National Task Force Guidelines for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs as well as other requirements of the specialty organizations as they apply to the current ACEN Standards and Criteria. See crosswalk between ACEN Standards and Criteria and 2016 National Task Force Guidelines for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs.

STANDARD 2

Faculty and Staff

Qualified and credentialed faculty are sufficient in number to ensure the achievement of the end-of-program student learning outcomes and program outcomes. Sufficient and qualified staff are available to support the nursing program.

Full- and part-time faculty include those individuals teaching and/or evaluating students in didactic, clinical, and/or laboratory settings.

2.1 Full-time nursing faculty hold educational qualifications and experience as required by the governing organization, the state, and the governing organization's accrediting agency, and are qualified to teach the assigned nursing courses.

2.2 Part-time nursing faculty hold educational qualifications and experience as required by the governing organization, the state, and the governing organization's accrediting agency, and are qualified to teach the assigned nursing courses.

2.3 Non-nurse faculty teaching nursing courses hold educational qualifications and experience as required by the governing organization, the state, and the governing organization's accrediting agency, and are qualified to teach the assigned nursing courses.

2.4 Preceptors, when utilized, are academically and experientially qualified, oriented, mentored, and monitored, and have clearly documented roles and responsibilities.

2.5 The number of full-time faculty is sufficient to ensure that the end-of-program student learning outcomes and program outcomes are achieved.

2.6 Faculty (full- and part-time) maintain expertise in their areas of responsibility, and their performance reflects scholarship and evidence-based teaching and clinical practices.

2.7 The number and qualifications of staff within the nursing education unit are sufficient to support the nursing program.

2.8 Faculty (full- and part-time) are oriented and mentored in their areas of responsibility.

2.9 Faculty (full- and part-time) performance is regularly evaluated in accordance with the governing organization's policy/procedures, and demonstrates effectiveness in assigned area(s) of responsibility.

2.10 Faculty (full- and part-time) engage in ongoing development and receive support for instructional and distance technologies.

All programs with APRN options are also expected to adhere to the current National Task Force Guidelines for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs as well as other requirements of the specialty organizations as they apply to the current ACEN Standards and Criteria. See crosswalk between ACEN Standards and Criteria and 2016 National Task Force Guidelines for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs.

STANDARD 3

Students

Student policies and services support the achievement of the end-of-program student learning outcomes and program outcomes of the nursing program.

3.1 Policies for nursing students are congruent with those of the governing organization as well as the state, when applicable, and are publicly accessible, non-discriminatory, and consistently applied; differences are justified by the end-of-program student learning outcomes and program outcomes.

3.2 Public information is accurate, clear, consistent, and accessible, including the program's accreditation status and the ACEN contact information.

3.3 Changes in policies, procedures, and program information are clearly and consistently communicated to students in a timely manner.

3.4 Student services are commensurate with the needs of nursing students, including those receiving instruction using alternative methods of delivery.

3.5 Student educational records are in compliance with the policies of the governing organization and state and federal guidelines.

3.6 Compliance with the Higher Education Reauthorization Act Title IV eligibility and certification requirements is maintained, including default rates and the results of financial or compliance audits.

    3.6.1 A written, comprehensive student loan repayment program addressing student loan information, counseling, monitoring, and cooperation with lenders is available.

    3.6.2 Students are informed of their ethical responsibilities regarding financial assistance.

    3.6.3 Financial aid records are in compliance with the policies of the governing organization, state, and federal guidelines.

3.7 Records reflect that program complaints and grievances receive due process and include evidence of resolution.

3.8 Orientation to technology is provided, and technological support is available to students.

3.9 Information related to technology requirements and policies specific to distance education are accurate, clear, consistent, and accessible.

All programs with APRN options are also expected to adhere to the current National Task Force Guidelines for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs as well as other requirements of the specialty organizations as they apply to the current ACEN Standards and Criteria. See crosswalk between ACEN Standards and Criteria and 2016 National Task Force Guidelines for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs.

STANDARD 4

Curriculum

The curriculum supports the achievement of the end-of-program student learning outcomes and program outcomes and is consistent with safe practice in contemporary healthcare environments.

4.1 Consistent with contemporary practice, the curriculum is congruent with established standards for clinical doctorate programs, including appropriate advanced nursing practice competencies, role-specific professional standards and guidelines, and certification requirements, and has clearly articulated end-of-program student learning outcomes.

4.2 The end-of-program student learning outcomes are used to organize the curriculum, guide the delivery of instruction, and direct learning activities.

4.3 The curriculum is developed by the faculty and regularly reviewed to ensure integrity, rigor, and currency.

4.4 The curriculum is designed to prepare graduates to practice from an evidence-based perspective in their role through effective use and collaborative production of clinically-based scholarship.

4.5 The curriculum is designed so that graduates of the program are able to practice in a culturally and ethnically diverse global society.

4.6 The curriculum and instructional processes reflect educational theory, interprofessional collaboration, research, and current standards of practice.

4.7 Evaluation methodologies are varied, reflect established professional and practice competencies, and measure the achievement of the end-of-program student learning outcomes.

4.8 The total number of credit/quarter hours required to complete the defined nursing program of study is congruent with the attainment of the identified end-of-program student learning outcomes and program outcomes, and is consistent with the policies of the governing organization, the state, and the governing organization's accrediting agency.

4.9 Student clinical experiences and practice learning environments are evidence-based; reflect contemporary practice and nationally established patient health and safety goals; and support the achievement of the end-of-program student learning outcomes.

4.10 Written agreements for clinical practice agencies are current, specify expectations for all parties, and ensure the protection of students.

4.11 Learning activities, instructional materials, and evaluation methods are appropriate for all delivery formats and consistent with the end-of-program student learning outcomes.

All programs with APRN options are also expected to adhere to the current National Task Force Guidelines for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs as well as other requirements of the specialty organizations as they apply to the current ACEN Standards and Criteria. See crosswalk between ACEN Standards and Criteria and 2016 National Task Force Guidelines for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs.

STANDARD 5

Resources

Fiscal, physical, and learning resources are sustainable and sufficient to ensure the achievement of the end-of-program student learning outcomes and program outcomes of the nursing program.

5.1   Fiscal resources are sustainable, sufficient to ensure the achievement of the end-of-program student learning outcomes and program outcomes, and commensurate with the resources of the governing organization.

5.2   Physical resources are sufficient to ensure the achievement of the end-of-program student learning outcomes and program outcomes, and meet the needs of the faculty, staff, and students.

5.3   Learning resources and technology are selected with faculty input and are comprehensive, current, and accessible to faculty and students.

5.4   Fiscal, physical, technological, and learning resources are sufficient to meet the needs of the faculty and students engaged in alternative methods of delivery.

All programs with APRN options are also expected to adhere to the current National Task Force Guidelines for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs as well as other requirements of the specialty organizations as they apply to the current ACEN Standards and Criteria. See crosswalk between ACEN Standards and Criteria and 2016 National Task Force Guidelines for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs.

STANDARD 6

Outcomes

Program evaluation demonstrates that students have achieved each end-of-program student learning outcome/role-specific professional competency and each program outcome.

The nursing program has a current systematic plan of evaluation. The systematic plan of evaluation contains:

a.   Specific, measurable expected levels of achievement for each end-of-program student learning outcome/role-specific professional competency and each program outcome.

b.   Appropriate assessment method(s) for each end-of-program student learning outcome/role-specific professional competency and each program outcome.

c.   Regular intervals for the assessment of each end-of-program student learning outcome/role-specific professional competency and each program outcome.

d.   Sufficient data to inform program decision-making for the maintenance and improvement of each end-of-program student learning outcome/role-specific professional competency and each program outcome.*

e.   Analysis of assessment data to inform program decision-making for the maintenance and improvement of each end-of-program student learning outcome/role-specific professional competency and each program outcome.

f.   Documentation demonstrating the use of assessment data in program decision-making for the maintenance and improvement of each end-of-program student learning outcome/role-specific professional competency and each program outcome.

*Programs seeking initial accreditation are required to have data from the time that the program achieves candidacy with the ACEN.

6.1   The program demonstrates evidence of students' achievement of each end-of-program student learning outcome/role-specific professional competency.

There is ongoing assessment of the extent to which students attain each end-of-program student learning outcome/role-specific professional competency.

There is analysis of assessment data and documentation that the analysis of assessment data is used in program decision-making for the maintenance and improvement of students' attainment of each end-of-program student learning outcome/role-specific professional competency.

6.2   The program demonstrates evidence of graduates' achievement on each certification examination.

For each certification examination, the annual pass rate for **all** first-time test-takers will be at or above the national mean for the same three-year period; in the absence of a national mean, the pass rate for each certification examination will be at least 80% for **all** first-time test-takers during the same 12-month period.

There is ongoing assessment of the extent to which graduates succeed on the certification examination(s).

There is analysis of assessment data and documentation that the analysis of assessment data is used in program decision-making for the maintenance and improvement of graduates' success on the certification examination(s).

There is a minimum of the three (3) most recent years of available certification examination pass rate data, and data are aggregated for the nursing program as a whole as well as disaggregated by program option/certification examination, location, and date of program completion.

6.3   The program demonstrates evidence of students' achievement in completing the nursing program.

The expected level of achievement for program completion is determined by the faculty and reflects student demographics.

There is ongoing assessment of the extent to which students complete the nursing program.

There is analysis of assessment data and documentation that the analysis of assessment data is used in program decision-making for the maintenance and improvement of students' completion of the nursing program.

There is a minimum of the three (3) most recent years of annual program completion data, and data are aggregated for the nursing program as a whole as well as disaggregated by program option, location, and date of program completion or entering cohort.

6.4   The program demonstrates evidence of graduates' achievement in job placement.

The expected level of achievement for job placement is determined by the faculty and reflects program demographics.

There is ongoing assessment of the extent to which graduates are employed.

There is analysis of assessment data and documentation that the analysis of assessment data is used in program decision-making for the maintenance and improvement of graduates being employed.

There is a minimum of the three (3) most recent years of available job placement data, and data are aggregated for the nursing program as a whole.

All programs with APRN options are also expected to adhere to the current National Task Force Guidelines for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs as well as other requirements of the specialty organizations as they apply to the current ACEN Standards and Criteria. See crosswalk between ACEN Standards and Criteria and 2016 National Task Force Guidelines for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs.