

Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education

Opportunity to Review and Comment on Proposed Changes to Substantive Change Policy

Current Policy on Substantive Changes:

Irrespective of required annual reports, progress reports, or other reports, the chief nursing administrator is required to notify CCNE of any substantive change affecting the nursing education program. Substantive changes include, but are not limited to: change in legal status, control, ownership, or resources of the institution; change in status with state board of nursing or other accrediting or approval agency; significant change in faculty composition and size; significant change in teaching affiliations; significant change in student enrollment or student achievement; major curricular revisions; and change in degree offerings, specialty track offerings, or program options.

The substantive change report must document how, if at all, the change affects the program's compliance with the accreditation standards. The substantive change report should not exceed five pages, unless otherwise negotiated with CCNE staff.

A report submitted by the chief nursing administrator on the nature and scope of the substantive change is reviewed by CCNE staff. If warranted, the report is reviewed by the CCNE Board. Continued accreditation of the program is contingent upon the chief nursing administrator's apprising CCNE of substantive changes.

The chief nursing administrator is advised to contact CCNE staff to determine whether a particular change constitutes a substantive change for the purpose of submitting a report to CCNE.

Proposed Policy on Substantive Changes:

Irrespective of required annual reports, continuous improvement progress reports, or other reports, the program is required to notify CCNE of any substantive change affecting the nursing program. Substantive changes include, but are not limited to:

- change in legal status, control, ownership, or resources of the institution;
- change in status with state board of nursing or other accrediting or approval entity, including cases in which the program is placed on warning or probationary status by any regulatory body;
- change in degree offerings, program options, and track offerings (including the development, suspension or closing of a track);
- the addition of a new nursing degree (e.g., a master's degree), when another nursing degree (e.g., a baccalaureate degree) is accredited by CCNE;
- the addition of courses that represent a significant change in method or location of delivery from those offered when CCNE last evaluated the program;
- significant change in faculty composition and size;
- significant change in student enrollment;
- significant change in teaching affiliations;
- major curricular revisions; and
- significant change in student achievement (see below).

Consistent with the U.S. Secretary of Education's *Criteria for Recognition*, CCNE has identified student achievement thresholds for nursing programs within its scope. The CCNE accreditation standards require that nursing programs provide data related to student achievement. If any of the following conditions exist with respect to student achievement, a written explanation and action plan must be provided to CCNE:

- degree completion rates are less than 80% in the expected time period;
- NCLEX-RN pass rates for all test takers (first time and repeat) over a three-year period are less than 80% (CCNE recognizes that many state boards of nursing establish minimum licensure thresholds, and that these vary by state);
- job placement rates within 12 months following degree completion are less than 80%; and
- certification pass rates for all test takers (first time and repeat) over a three-year period are less than 80%.

A substantive change must be submitted to CCNE no later than 60 days after implementation or occurrence of the change.

The substantive change report is submitted by the chief nurse administrator and must document the nature and scope of the substantive change. The report also must document how, if at all, the change affects the program's compliance with the accreditation standards. The substantive change report should not exceed five pages, unless otherwise negotiated with CCNE staff.

The substantive change report is reviewed by the Executive Committee of the CCNE Board, which comprises the officers of the Board. Upon review of the notification, the committee may act to approve the change or may request additional information. If warranted, the report is forwarded to the CCNE Board for review and action. The Board's review of a substantive change may result in additional reporting requirements, a focused or comprehensive on-site evaluation, or an adverse action.

Continued accreditation of the program is contingent upon the chief nurse administrator's apprising CCNE of substantive changes in a timely manner. The chief nurse administrator is encouraged to contact CCNE staff if there is a question about whether a particular change constitutes a substantive change.

Policy Proposed by the CCNE Board of Commissioners: April 7, 2006