

PRACTICAL NURSING TEMPLATE

INTRODUCTION

The Practical Nursing Template must be completed by institutions offering nursing programs. The template supplements and augments ACCET Document 3.1 – Analytic Self-Evaluation Report, which incorporates the ACCET Standards for Accreditation (Document 2). The template expands upon the ACCET Standards specifically referenced herein by adding Specific Field Criteria and Supplemental Questions/Statements, in order to elicit a more relevant and valid self-evaluation of the institution and emphasize those standards where unique characteristics are identified.

PRACTICAL/VOCATIONAL NURSING PROGRAMS: Practical/vocational nursing programs provide the skills and knowledge necessary for a student to become a licensed practical nurse (LPN) or licensed vocational nurse (LVN) who cares for the sick, injured, convalescent, and disabled under the direction of physicians or registered nurses (RN). All states require the LPN or LVN to pass a licensing examination after completing a State-approved practical nursing program that is about a year in duration.

SPECIFIC FIELD CRITERIA AND SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS/STATEMENTS

STANDARD I – MISSION, GOALS, AND PLANNING

The institution has a mission and goals that are compatible with the mission, scope, and standards of ACCET and has an effective planning process to enhance and improve the institution and its education, training, and services.

- A. **Mission:** The institution clearly states its mission and makes it public. The mission defines the purpose of the institution and provides a definitive basis upon which to deliver and assess its education and training programs. The institution establishes and utilizes specific criteria to measure whether it is achieving its mission. The education and training provided by the institution are consistent with its mission, and the rationale for offering this education is documented by either an assessment of projected need and/or successful market experience.

Specific Field Criteria for Practical Nursing:

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

- B. **Goals:** The institution establishes broad goals that support the institution's mission and are consistent with the Principles of Ethics for ACCET Institutions. These goals guide the operation of the institution, including admissions, finances, education and training, management, and student services.
- C. **Planning:** The institution utilizes a planning process, consistent with its scope and

size, to establish plans that support the institution's mission and goals. The plans are reviewed at least annually, updated regularly, and implemented to improve the effectiveness of the institution. There are sound, written one-year and longer range (three to five year) plans that encompass both the educational and operational objectives of the institution. The plans include specific and measurable objectives, along with corresponding operational strategies, projected time frames, required resources, and method(s) for subsequent evaluation, that are utilized to measure progress in achieving the established objectives.

STANDARD II – GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The institution is capably and responsibly managed.

- A. **Governance:** The institution has a clearly identified and accountable governance structure which delineates authority for the approval of institutional policies and responsibility for the overall direction and effectiveness of the institution. This management structure ensures the integrity and capability of the institution and its compliance with statutory, regulatory, and accreditation requirements.

Specific Field Criteria for Practical Nursing:

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.

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

- B. **Institutional Management:** The institution's management is responsible for developing and effectively implementing policies within an organizational framework that is clearly defined, understood, and effective. Written policies and procedures guide the day-to-day operations of the institution.

Specific Field Criteria for Practical Nursing:

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.

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 students learning outcomes and program outcomes.

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

- C. **Human Resource Management:** The institution's management develops and implements written human resource policies and procedures. These policies and procedures ensure that qualified and capable personnel, at appropriate staffing levels, are effectively utilized and evaluated at least annually. These policies and procedures address the recruitment, selection, hiring, orientation, supervision, evaluation, retention, training, and professional development of all personnel.

Specific Field Criteria for Practical Nursing:

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

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

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

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

- D. **Records:** The institution has an organized record-keeping system that ensures all records are maintained in an accurate, orderly, and up-to-date manner. The record-keeping system facilitates ready access and review of these records by appropriate parties. All records are protected from unauthorized access and undue risk of loss. Employees and students have appropriate access to information contained in their files. Records are maintained for a period of time consistent with applicable statutes, regulations, and sound business and educational practices.

Specific Field Criteria for Practical Nursing:

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

- E. **Communications:** Management ensures regular and effective communication among appropriate members of the institution on pertinent aspects of its operations, including the delivery of quality education, training services, and student services. To maintain operational effectiveness, periodic meetings with employees are conducted and appropriate documentation is maintained on significant issues, consistent with the size and purpose of the institution.
- F. **Professional Relationships:** The institution establishes relationships, memberships, and affiliations with other organizations within the education/training and employer/industry network. These relationships are maintained, utilized, and documented for the purpose of enhancing the quality of the education, training, and student services.

Specific Field Criteria for Practical Nursing:

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.

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

STANDARD III – FINANCIAL CAPACITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

The institution is fiscally sound and demonstrates ethical financial practices.

- A. **Stability:** The institution demonstrates a record of responsible financial management with resources sufficient to provide quality education, training, and student services and to complete the instruction of all enrolled students. Financial reports provide clear evidence of financial stability and sound fiscal practices.

- B. **Financial Procedures:** The institution assesses its finances at adequate intervals, not less than quarterly. Written policies and procedures exist for proper financial controls and the supervision of financial management staff. Tuition charges are applied fairly and consistently. Receipt of tuition payments and other monies is properly recorded and tracked. Cancellation and refund policies are written, fair, and equitable; are consistently administered; and comply with statutory, regulatory, and accreditation requirements. Qualified and capable individuals manage and evaluate the effectiveness of the financial operations and practices.

Specific Field Criteria for Practical Nursing:

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

- C. **Financial Assistance/Scholarships:** The institution ensures that any student financial assistance programs, including federal and state financial aid programs, institutional scholarships, and externally funded scholarships, are responsibly administered, governed by written policies and procedures, and in full compliance with relevant statutes and regulations. All student financial assistance are awarded in a fair and equitable manner.

Specific Field Criteria for Practical Nursing:

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.

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

Students are informed of their ethical responsibilities regarding financial assistance.

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

STANDARD IV – CURRICULUM DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

The institution’s curriculum design and instructional materials are up-to-date, educationally sound, and appropriate for the expected outcomes of the program/courses.

- A. **Educational Goals and Objectives:** The institution’s programs and courses have appropriate educational goals and objectives. The curriculum content and learning experiences are preplanned and present a sound, systematic, and sequential educational methodology. Sufficient and appropriate knowledge and skill elements are included to meet the specific and measurable performance outcomes expected for the courses and programs.

Specific Field Criteria for Practical Nursing:

Consistent with contemporary practice, the curriculum incorporates established professional nursing standards, guidelines, and competencies, and has clearly articulated end-of-program student learning outcomes.

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

The curriculum includes general education courses/concepts that enhance professional nursing knowledge and practice.

The curriculum includes cultural, ethnic, and socially diverse concepts and may also include experiences from regional, national, or global perspectives.

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

The total number of credit/quarter/clock hours required to complete the defined nursing program of study is congruent with the attainment of the 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.

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

Nursing programs must demonstrate that students are instructed in appropriate laboratory skills prior to their practicum. The practicum must be appropriate to the length and scope of the program.

- B. **Program/Instructional Materials:** Program materials, including syllabi, lesson plans, instructional guides, and texts demonstrate the appropriate scope, sequence, and depth of each program or course in relation to the stated goals and objectives. Instructional materials, including supplementary textbooks, software, learning activities, visual aids, electronic links, and other teaching tools support the goals and objectives. All materials are up-to-date, readily available, and facilitate positive learning outcomes.
- C. **Externships/Internships/Practicums:** When required as a part of a program, an externship/internship/practicums or other training-related work experience is based on a preplanned outline of the specific knowledge, skills, and experience to be acquired. Written policies and procedures for the supervision and evaluation of externships/internships/practicums are established and followed to ensure consistency and effectiveness. The institution provides a sufficient number of sites to ensure appropriate and timely learning experiences in its externship/internship/practicum program.

Specific Field Criteria for Practical Nursing:

The institution provides a practicum experience that meets the ACCET definition in Document 33 – Definitions and Document 25 – Policy for New, Revised and Existing Programs/Courses.

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 learning outcomes.

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

- D. **Curriculum Review/Revision:** The institution implements effective written policies to continuously monitor and improve the curriculum. The policies include both soliciting and utilizing feedback from relevant constituencies (e.g. faculty, students, graduates, employers, and advisory/certification boards) and analyzing student outcomes, including student completion, and, if applicable, job placement results. The policies focus on a comprehensive review of the curriculum as it relates to the expected learning outcomes.

Specific Field Criteria for Practical Nursing:

The curriculum is developed and regularly reviewed to ensure integrity, rigor, and currency.

STANDARD V – INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY AND RESOURCES

The institution utilizes appropriate and effective instructional methods and other resources to ensure sound instructional delivery, which may be provided through a variety of delivery modes, including traditional classroom/lab instruction, interactive distance learning, and blended instruction.

- A. **Instructional Methods:** Instructional methods encourage active and motivated responses from students. Written policies and procedures are in place to ensure that the curricula are followed and that there is consistency of application by all instructional staff. The instructional methodology is consistent with contemporary training industry standards and appropriate to the educational goals and curricular objectives, facilitates learning, and serves the individual learning needs and objectives of students. Instructional methods provide encouragement, challenges, and learning opportunities for all enrolled students, taking into consideration different learning abilities and styles, prior levels of achievement, and different learning modalities such as visual, audio, and kinesthetic.

Specific Field Criteria for Practical Nursing:

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

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

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

- B. **Learning Resources, Equipment, and Supplies:** Learning resources support the goals and objectives of the programs offered by the institution. Adequate, appropriate, up-to-date, and functional equipment, learning resources, supplies, and furnishings are readily available for instructor and student use and for the effective delivery of the institution's education and training.

Specific Field Criteria for Practical Nursing:

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.

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

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

Equipment for the safety of the student must be maintained in working order and in sufficient number in all institutional laboratory settings. Such safety equipment must include fire extinguishers, biohazard containers, eye-wash stations, first aid kits, and sinks for hand washing. Laboratory spaces must provide appropriate technology.

- C. **Facilities:** The institution's facilities are appropriate for the education, training, and student services offered. Instruction is conducted in a safe, accessible, sanitary, and comfortable environment conducive to learning. The facilities meet all applicable local, state, and federal requirements.

Specific Field Criteria for Practical Nursing:

The institution's laboratories meet OSHA requirements, including a documented blood-borne pathogen standard and specific exposure control plan. Students are trained in laboratory safety rules and the use of equipment. Institutions offering programs in which students are at risk of exposure to blood and other body fluids must provide training in laboratory safety requirements such as universal precautions and blood-borne pathogen standards.

**STANDARD VI – QUALIFICATIONS AND SUPERVISION OF
INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL**

The institution ensures that qualified instructors, under professional and capable direction, effectively deliver education and training services.

- A. **Qualifications of Instructional Personnel:** Instructional personnel possess the appropriate combination of relevant educational credential(s), specialized training and/or certification, work experience, and demonstrated teaching and classroom management skills, which qualifies them for their training assignments. Instructional personnel meet all relevant accreditation, federal, state, local, and/or industry-specific requirements.

Specific Field Criteria for Practical Nursing:

Full-time 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.

Part-time 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.

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.

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

- B. **Supervision of Instruction:** Individuals with relevant education and experience in instructional delivery and management supervise instructional personnel. Supervisors of instructional personnel demonstrate good practice in the evaluation and direction of instructors. Regular classroom observations are conducted at least annually by qualified supervisors and, along with student and supervisory feedback, are documented and effectively utilized to enhance the quality of instruction.

Specific Field Criteria for Practical Nursing:

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

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

When present, nursing program coordinators and/or faculty who assist with program administration are academically and experientially qualified.

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.

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.

- C. **Instructor Orientation and Training:** The institution develops and implements written policy for the effective orientation and training of instructional personnel to ensure a consistent, high level of instruction. Regular and relevant in-service training and/or professional development of instructional personnel are conducted and documented.

Specific Field Criteria for Practical Nursing:

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

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

STANDARD VII – ADMISSIONS AND STUDENT SERVICES

The institution recruits and enrolls only qualified students who can reasonably be expected to benefit from the education and training services and provides student services appropriate to their needs.

- A. **Recruitment:** Informational and promotional materials, advertising, and representations made by or on behalf of the institution for recruiting purposes make only justifiable and provable claims regarding the courses, programs, costs, location(s), instructional personnel, student services, outcomes, and other benefits. All communications with prospective students are ethical, honest, and consistent with ACCET policies. The institution does not state or imply that employment, occupational advancement, and/or certification and licensing are guaranteed.

Specific Field Criteria for Practical Nursing:

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

- B. **Admissions/Enrollment:** The institution's written policies for admissions and enrollment are clearly stated, defined, and in compliance with statutory, regulatory, and accreditation requirements. Reliable and regular means are utilized to ensure that, prior to acceptance, all applicants are able to benefit from the education and training services, consistent with ACCET policies. The enrollment process, including any online process, is preplanned, effective, and regularly monitored by the institution to ensure its integrity.

The written enrollment agreement, contract, or application, as applicable, is furnished to appropriate parties before any payment or obligation is made and clearly identifies the rights, obligations, and responsibilities of all parties. This document includes: (1) all costs stated in clear and explicit language, and (2) cancellation and refund policies that comply with statutory, regulatory, and accreditation requirements.

Specific Field Criteria for Practical Nursing:

Appropriate screening at enrollment is performed, in accordance with applicable state standards, for communicable diseases. During the admissions process, the institution discloses any conditions that may adversely impact the students' ability to: (1) benefit from the training, (2) obtain certification/licensure, if applicable, and/or (3) work in the field (e.g. felony convictions).

- C. **Transfer of Credit:** A vocational institution has written policies and procedures that ensure the fair and equitable treatment of students relative to the transfer of credit to and from the institution. The institution provides clear, complete, factual, and timely information regarding its transfer policies and practices. All institutions making statements relative to the acceptance of their coursework for credit by

another institution have documented evidence to support such statements.

- D. **Student Services:** Student services are provided consistent with the mission and learning objectives of the institution and include such services as student orientation, academic and non-academic advising, tutoring, job placement assistance, extracurricular activities, and housing, as applicable.

Specific Field Criteria for Practical Nursing:

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

STANDARD VIII – STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT

The institution utilizes appropriate and educationally sound methods to assess student performance, attendance, and achievement.

- A. **Performance Measurements:** Performance measurements are written, periodically evaluated, and updated to ensure instructional effectiveness. The institution has a sound, written assessment system that contains a set of defined elements, such as grading scale, weighting factors, tests, quizzes, reports, projects, attendance, and participation, that are appropriately related to the performance objectives of the program or course. The institution clearly and effectively communicates the assessment system to students at orientation and/or the beginning of the course/program.

Specific Field Criteria for Practical Nursing:

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

The program demonstrates evidence of students' achievement of each end-of-program student learning outcome. There is ongoing assessment of the extent to which students attain each end-of-program student learning outcome.

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.

- B. **Attendance:** The institution establishes and implements written policies and procedures for monitoring and documenting attendance. The attendance policy ensures that student attendance and participation are consistent with: (1) the expected performance outcomes of the course or program and (2) statutory, regulatory, and accreditation requirements, including at a minimum the required student attendance rate established by the Accrediting Commission. The institution publishes a clear description of its attendance requirements and informs students of their attendance on a regular and

timely basis.

- C. **Student Progress:** The institution effectively monitors, assesses, and records the progress of students utilizing the sound and clearly defined assessment system established by the institution. Semester credits, quarter credits, clock hours, and/or continuing education units are used to denote the successful completion of the education and training services. Student progress is documented consistently in accordance with institutionally established performance outcomes and is communicated to all students. Students are informed of their progress on a regular and timely basis. The institution publishes a clear description of its requirements for satisfactory student progress and utilizes sound written policies and procedures to determine student compliance with these requirements and to document the results.

IX. INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The institution utilizes appropriate methods of evaluation to assess institutional effectiveness and to ensure that student outcomes are consistent with the institution's mission and the benchmarks established by the Accrediting Commission.

- A. **Student Satisfaction:** The institution establishes and implements written policies and procedures that provide an effective means to regularly assess, document, and validate student satisfaction relative to the quality of education, training, and student services provided. Open lines of communication with students exist and demonstrate responsiveness to student issues. Interim evaluations and a final evaluation upon completion of the term of enrollment are specified components of determining student satisfaction. Student feedback is utilized to improve the education, training, and student services provided by the institution.

Specific Field Criteria for Practical Nursing:

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

- B. **Employer/Sponsor Satisfaction:** The institution establishes and implements written policies and procedures that provide an effective means to regularly assess, document, and validate employer/sponsor satisfaction relative to the quality of the education and training provided. Feedback from sponsoring organizations, agencies that fund the training of students, and employers who hire graduates is documented and utilized to improve the education, training, and student services of the institution. This feedback is obtained through various means such as surveys, advisory committees, and/or focus groups.
- C. **Certification and Licensing:** When the purpose of instruction is to prepare students to meet the standards for licensing, certification, registration, or examination requirements, the curriculum includes appropriate content, hours, preparation, and materials to meet the requirements for such credentials. The institution records and

tracks the pass rates of graduates and uses the results to measure and improve the quality of the educational programs offered.

Specific Field Criteria for Practical Nursing:

The program demonstrates evidence of graduates' achievement on the licensure examination.

The program's most recent annual licensure examination pass rate 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 licensure examination.

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 licensure examination.

There is a minimum of the three (3) most recent years of available licensure examination pass rate 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.

D. Completion and Job Placement: The institution establishes and implements written policies and procedures that provide effective means to regularly assess, document, and validate the quality of the education and training services provided relative to completion and placement rates, as applicable.

- **Completion: The number of students who complete the programs and courses in which they enroll is consistent with the benchmarks established by the Accrediting Commission.**
- **Job Placement: Institutions offering vocational programs provide job placement assistance to graduates and document the results to enhance the effectiveness of the training services provided. The quality of such programs is validated by positive training-related outcomes consistent with the benchmarks established by the Accrediting Commission.**

Specific Field Criteria for Practical Nursing:

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.

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.