GLOSSARY

Academic Progression Models – Models for the delivery of nursing education programs that facilitate progression from one level of nursing education and/or practice to a higher level of nursing education and/or practice.

Accreditation – The voluntary, self-regulatory process by which non-governmental associations recognize educational institutions or programs that have been found to meet or exceed standards and criteria for educational quality. Accreditation also assists in the further improvement of the institutions or programs as related to resources invested, processes followed, and results achieved.

Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) – Licensure classification for nurses who have advanced education, knowledge, and skills in one of four practice roles: clinical nurse specialist, nurse practitioner, certified registered nurse anesthetist, or certified nurse midwife.

Annual Report – Information an ACEN-accredited program is required to submit to the ACEN on an annual basis. **Note:** See *ACEN Policy #24 Assessment of the Adequacy of Standards and Criteria, ACEN process, and Practices.*

Approval – The term generally referred to by most state regulatory agencies for nursing programs to describe authorization of nursing education programs meeting minimal standards as defined in the state nurse practice act and/or rules and regulations.

Assessment and Evaluation Methods

> **Direct Outcome Assessment Methods** – Student demonstrations and/or the actual products of student work used by faculty to determine achievement of course and/or end-of-program student learning outcomes (and for graduate programs, the role-specific nursing competencies). Examples include, but are not limited to, examinations (e.g., standardized or faculty-developed), portfolio, clinical performance tools, rubrics, and assignments (e.g., papers, projects, presentations).

> **Indirect Outcome Assessment Methods** – Perspectives (e.g., reflections, opinions or thoughts) about student's learning achievement regarding course and/or end-of-program student learning outcomes (and for graduate programs, the role-specific nursing competencies). Examples include, but are not limited to surveys, self-assessments, focus groups, interviews, and student peer review.

> **Formative and Summative Student Evaluation Methods** – The use of assessment methods to gauge students' comprehension and learning by comparing it against a standard or benchmark while learning is in progress (Formative) or at the completion of a learning experience, such as a unit or course (Summative).

> > **Formative** evaluation methods provide ongoing feedback to assist the student and faculty to identify the student's strengths/weaknesses regarding learning achievement and target areas that need work.

> > **Summative** evaluation usually involves students receiving a grade that indicates their level of performance on an assignment, examination, and/or course that reflects learning achievement.

Summative Nursing Program-Level Assessment – The aggregation of student performance data used by faculty to identify the extent to which a group of students achieved the identified end-of-program student learning outcomes (and for graduate programs, the role-specific nursing competencies) upon completion of the program of study. Data for program-level assessment may include direct and indirect assessment and evaluation methods in courses at or near the end of the program. The analysis and evaluation of aggregate program-level summative assessment data, according to program-established benchmarks, forms the basis for making changes to the program of study for program improvement in support of student learning and achievement.

Branch Campus – A location of a governing organization that is geographically separate and independent from the main campus of the governing organization. A location is independent of the main campus if the location:

- is permanent in nature;
- offers courses in educational nursing programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential;
- has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization; and
- has its own budgetary and hiring authority.

Candidacy – The beginning process for a nursing program seeking accreditation with the ACEN.

Candidate Status – Candidate status is granted after a review of the potential of a nursing program to achieve ACEN accreditation. See the ACEN Accreditation Manual – Section I General Information for additional information regarding the Candidacy process. Pre-accreditation is not within the scope of recognition the ACEN has with the United States Department of Education (USDE). Any program/institution granted Candidacy may not use the ACEN Candidacy status to seek or gain Title IV eligibility or eligibility for any other federal funding.

Certification – The process by which an organization, association, voluntary agency, or state regulatory agency grants recognition that an individual possesses predetermined knowledge and/or skills specified for practice in an area of specialization.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) – The official who has the primary responsibility of carrying out the mission and purpose of the governing organization. In some circumstances, there may be an overall governing organization CEO and a local or campus CEO (e.g., a chancellor of the overall governing organization and a president of a campus).

Closing Report – A written plan developed by a governing organization/nursing education unit that provides for the equitable treatment of students should a governing organization/nursing education unit, or a nursing program location that provides 50% or more of a nursing program, cease to operate before all students have completed their nursing program of study. The Closing Report may include, if required by the governing organization's accrediting agency, a teach-out agreement between governing organizations/nursing education units. This applies to the closure of a governing organization, an off-campus instructional site, a branch campus, or a nursing program. The Closing Report requires ACEN approval in advance of implementation. See *ACEN [Policy #16 Program Closing](#)* for additional information and the procedures that must be followed.

Communities of Interest – A group of people, identified by the nursing education unit who formally or informally influence nursing program processes, decision-making of a nursing education unit, the end-of-program student learning outcomes, and the program outcomes of a nursing program. Examples include, but are not limited to, students, graduates, healthcare employer representatives, governing organization representatives, regulatory agency representatives, and members of the public.

Compliance – When the nursing program meets the intent of the ACEN Standards and Criteria as determined by peer evaluators after a review of the program's supporting evidence and the application of professional judgement.

Contractual Agreement – Typically, one in which a nursing program enters an agreement for receipt of courses or portions of courses (e.g., general education courses) delivered by another college/university or service provider to educate the program's students.

Consortia Relationship – Typically, one in which two or more governing organizations/nursing education units share the responsibility of developing and delivering nursing courses or a nursing program, in whole or part. This does not include clinical agreements for student learning experiences required by a nursing program. See *ACEN Policy #3 Eligibility for Initial and Continuing Accreditation* and *Policy #30 Agreement for Education-Related Component from an External Source* for additional information and the procedures that must be followed.

Contemporary Professional Nursing Standards, Guidelines, and/or Competencies for Nursing Practice – A set of guidelines approved by a nationally recognized nursing organization for use in the development and evaluation of a nursing curriculum. The most recent version/edition of the standards/guidelines must be used. The standards/guidelines include, but are not limited to:
- Consensus Model for APRN Regulation (APRN Consensus Work Group & the National Council of State Boards of Nursing APRN Advisory Group)
- Core Competencies for Interprofessional Collaborative Practice© (Interprofessional Education Collaborative)
- Criteria for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs (National Task Force on Quality Nurse Practitioner Education)
- Essentials of Entry-Level and Advanced Level Nursing (American Association of Colleges of Nursing)
- Health Professions Education: A Bridge to Quality© (Institute of Medicine)
- Interprofessional Education Collaborative (IPEC) Core Competencies
- NLN Competencies for Graduates of Nursing Education Programs© (National League for Nursing)
- National/International Patient Health and Safety Goals
- Nurse Practice Standards for the Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse (National Federation of Licensed Practical Nurses)
- Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice© (American Nurses Association)
- Standards of Practice and Educational Competencies of Graduates of Practical/Vocational Nursing Programs (National Association for Practical Nurse Education and Services)
- Statement on Clinical Nurse Specialist Practice and Education© (National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists)
- Quality and Safety Education for Nurses (QSEN) Competencies

Course Student Learning Outcomes – Statements of learner-oriented expectations written in measurable terms that express the knowledge, skills, or behaviors that the students should be able to demonstrate upon completion of the course. Course student learning outcomes must be consistent with standards of contemporary nursing practice. Course student learning outcomes:
- must be aligned and linked to the end-of-program student learning outcomes;
- should have a single, measurable action;
- support students' achievement of the end-of-program student learning outcomes and program outcomes; and for graduate programs, role-specific nursing competencies;
- typically progress from "simple to complex" as students advance through the nursing program of study; and
- organize, guide, and direct course curricular matters such as, but not limited to, the inclusion of content, learning activities, selection of practice learning environments and learning experiences, and student performance assessment methods, etc.

Criteria – Statements that identify the elements that need to be examined in evaluation of a Standard.

Default Rate – The percentage of student borrowers at each governing organization who fail to remain current with repayment of their federal financial aid student loans during the reporting period specified by the United States Department of Education.

Disaggregate Data – The separation of aggregated data into subcomponents to enhance understanding of student achievement and expose unseen trends. Program faculty should consider disaggregation when warranted and applicable such as by option, location, cohort, and/or diversity. For example, end-of-program student learning outcome data may be disaggregated by location; job placement data may be disaggregated to include: pre/post-licensure options, role/track options, and degree/certificate options.

Distance Education – See Methods of Delivery.

Diversity – The wide range of human characteristics that make one individual or a group of individuals different from another. Diversity characteristics include, but are not limited to, race, ethnicity, culture, gender identity and expression, age, national origin, religious beliefs, work sector, physical ability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, level of education, marital status, language, physical appearance, and neurocognitive differences.

DNP Specialist Certificate – A selected series of courses that are a subset of courses within a clinical doctorate program specific to one area of practice (e.g., certificates in nursing administration, certificates in nursing education, certificate as a family nurse practitioner), which are taken after an individual is already credentialed with a doctorate degree in nursing in a different specialty.

Due Process – A disciplined, analytical decision-making procedure in which relevant standards are applied by a properly constituted and authorized body, using a process that is based on published rules of procedure and is free of improper influence.

Evidence-based Nursing Practice – Professional nursing knowledge, skills, and behaviors that are based on current research and professional standards of the present time.

Evidence-based Teaching/Instructional Strategies –Methods that are based on current research and professional standards of the present time used by faculty to enhance and relate course content to students for attainment of educational outcomes.

End-of-Program Student Learning Outcomes – Statements of learner-oriented, practice-ready expectations written in measurable terms that express the knowledge, skills, or behaviors that the students should be able to demonstrate upon completion of the nursing program, regardless of the nursing program option.

End-of-program student learning outcomes provide the framework for all curricular matters, represent the point of transition from being a student to being an entry-level practitioner for the chosen level of nursing education, and must be different for each program type (e.g., the end-of-program student learning outcomes for an associate degree and a baccalaureate degree offered by the same governing organization should be unique to each program).

Equity – The use of intentional actions and efforts to ensure fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all individuals.

Expected Level of Achievement (ELA) – A measurable index identified by the faculty that reflects a desired outcome. An ELA should be high enough as to be genuine and encourage continuous improvement, but not so high as to be idealistic and, thus, unachievable.

Program leaders and faculty are encouraged to set a realistic "stretch ELA" for student achievement outcome without fear of penalty. Whether or not the ELA is met, the program is expected to analyze all student achievement outcomes data (Criteria 5.1, 5.2, 5.4), to assist with making decisions related to student performance. If the program does not meet its stated ELA for program completion (Criterion 5.2) or job placement (Criterion 5.4), OR the program's licensure/certification pass rate does not meet at least one of the six benchmarks identified in Criterion 5.3, then consult ACEN *Policy #14 Reporting Substantive Changes*. A report to the ACEN may be warranted.

Faculty, Non-Nursing – Non-nurses (e.g., dietician, pharmacologist, or physiologist) who teach and evaluate nursing students, are educationally and experientially qualified, and are **assigned to teach a nursing course**. Non-nurse faculty are not faculty members who teach general education courses. Non-nurse faculty are not guest speakers/invited presenters who teach selected topics in a nursing course.

Faculty, Nursing – Nurses who teach and evaluate nursing students in didactic, clinical, and/or laboratory settings, and are educationally and experientially qualified for their assigned roles and responsibilities. **Note:** Governing organizations use a variety of terms to describe individuals who teach and evaluate nursing students in didactic, clinical, and/or laboratory settings. Such titles include, but are not limited to, full-time or part-time faculty, adjunct faculty, clinical faculty, a rank (e.g., professor, associate professor, assistant professor, instructor, lecturer), staff, etc.

> **Full-time Faculty** – Nurses who teach and/or evaluate nursing students and have a full-time employment status at the governing organization

> **Part-time Faculty** – Nurses who teach and/or evaluate nursing students and have an appointment that is less than a full-time status at the governing organization.

Faculty Development – Activities that facilitate faculty maintenance or enhancement of expertise in clinical and teaching/instructional responsibilities. Examples include, but are not

limited to, certification, continuing education, formal advanced education, clinical practice, research, publications, and other scholarly activities.

Formal Complaints and Grievances – An allegation against a nursing program consistent with the nursing program or governing organization's definition of formal complaints and/or grievances, typically expressed as a written, signed statement. The governing organization/accredited nursing education program is expected to maintain a record of all formal complaints or grievances against the program since the last ACEN accreditation visit, including evidence of documentation of due process and timely resolution. **Note:** Programs seeking initial accreditation should maintain records of formal student complaints and/or grievances from the time Candidate status is achieved.

Geographic Region – In reference to the Substantive Change process, an area serving the same/similar population of students and communities as the original/main location of a nursing program, an off-campus instructional site, or a branch campus. See *ACEN Policy #14 Reporting Substantive Changes* for additional information and the procedures that must be followed.

Geographically Separate – An off-campus instructional site or branch campus that is located physically apart from the main campus of the governing organization.

Governing Organization – The institution with overall responsibility and authority for a nursing education unit and a nursing program (e.g., university, college, hospital/medical center, career center).

Governing Organization System – Multiple governing organizations operating jointly under the same corporation.

High Stakes Testing – The use of a single test or examination (written, electronic, or demonstration) used to determine an important outcome, such as a student passing a course or graduating. The use of high stakes testing should be based on current evidence and best teaching/instructional practices; third-party testing products should be used only for the purposes as defined by the developer. The use of high-stakes testing must clearly align with the program's end-of-program student learning outcomes. High-stakes testing policies, and the implications of a negative outcome, should be clearly explained to students. Students should be provided multiple opportunities to practice and prepare for a high-stakes test, including feedback about their performance.

Inactivation of a Nursing Program: A period of time during which no new students are admitted into a nursing program; therefore, there will be no graduates from the nursing program for an intervening period of time. A nursing education unit may inactivate a nursing program for a limited period of time per the schedule at this link: https://www.acenursing.org/for-programs/resources-reporting-substantive-change/closings-and-inactivation/. See *ACEN Policy #14 Reporting Substantive Changes*.

Inactivation of an Off-Campus Instructional Site – A period of time during which a nursing education unit does not offer 1) a nursing program and the nursing courses for the nursing program or 2) a nursing program option and the nursing courses for the nursing program option at an approved off-campus instructional site for five academic years. See *ACEN Policy #14 Reporting Substantive Changes* for additional information and the procedures that must be followed.

Inclusion - The intentional and continuing efforts in which all individuals respect, support, and value others. An inclusive environment provides equitable access to opportunities and resources and offers respect in words and actions for all.

Information Literacy – The ability to identify appropriate sources of information, evaluate the quality and applicability of the information obtained, and use the information in nursing practice to enhance patient care and outcomes, and effectively communicate with other healthcare professionals.

Initial Accreditation – The first time that a program is accredited with the ACEN; the period of accreditation is for five years. See ACEN Policy #4.

Interprofessional Collaboration – Sharing of information among two or more healthcare professionals from different disciplines who are working together as a team with a common purpose and mutual respect to improve patient outcomes.

Job Placement Rate – Percentage of graduates, typically within one (1) year of graduation who are employed in a position for which a nursing program prepared them.

Learning Environments and Experiences, Clinical/Practicum – Direct, hands-on, planned learning activities required of nursing students in all degree or certificate granting nursing education programs, regardless of the student's licensure status at the time of admission. Settings include, but are not limited to, acute-care and specialty hospitals, long-term care facilities, ambulatory care centers, physician offices, communities, and home health care. Clinical/practicum learning experiences should engage nursing students in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor work of nursing appropriate for the level at which students are being prepared. Consistent with the level of academic study and the roles and responsibilities after graduation, clinical/practicum experiences should prepare graduates for practice in the care of patients/clients including a/an: individual, family, group, or populations, and support students' attainment of the identified end-of-program student learning outcomes and/or role-specific nursing competencies. Clinical/practicum experiences are overseen by qualified nursing faculty and may include assistance from preceptors who provide feedback to students in support of their learning and professional development.

> **Clinical/practicum learning experiences are required for all nursing students enrolled in any undergraduate or graduate program, including all students enrolled in post-licensure undergraduate programs, graduate programs, all program options in any undergraduate and graduate programs, and/or certificate program options.**

Learning Environments and Experiences, Skills and/or Simulation Laboratory – Opportunities for students to learn about nursing care in settings designed to look, feel, and/or function as a real-world practice learning environment, offering real-world practice learning experiences, which may include the use of low-fidelity, mid-fidelity, high-fidelity and/or virtual simulation equipment. These experiences facilitate students' application of knowledge, skills, and behaviors in the care of patients/clients including a/an: individual, family, group, or populations, and support the end-of-program student learning outcomes and and/or role-specific nursing competencies.

> High-fidelity simulation: Practice learning experiences that incorporate a full-body computerized patient simulator that mimics the patient's responses to the student's actions.

Mid-fidelity simulation: Practice learning experiences that incorporate a computerized patient simulator with basic physiologic functions, such as computer-based self-directed learning systems.

Low-fidelity simulation: Practice learning experiences that utilize static mannequins or task-trainers for basic nursing skills.

Virtual simulation: Practice learning experiences that are computer-generated simulations with virtual (e.g., three-dimensional images) patients and/or care environments for the development of nursing knowledge and skills.

Letter of Notification – A letter from the nurse administrator of a nursing program, or his/her designee, to the ACEN Chief Executive Officer summarizing a Substantive Change and pertinent information thereto appertaining. **Note:** See *ACEN Policy #14 Reporting Substantive Changes* for additional information and the procedures that must be followed.

Licensure – The process by which a governmental agency gives affirmation to the public that the individuals engaged in an occupation or profession have minimal education, qualifications, and competence necessary to practice in a safe manner.

Location – Sites where a nursing program is delivered, in whole or part, including the main location, off-campus instructional sites, and branch campuses. **Note:** See *ACEN Policy #14 Reporting Substantive Changes* for additional information and the procedures that must be followed when adding or closing an additional location. *See Branch Campus/Off-Campus Instructional Site.*

Methods of Delivery – The teaching/instructional strategies used by faculty to deliver instruction of a nursing course. **Note:** See *ACEN Policy #14 Reporting Substantive Change* for additional information about the procedures that must be followed when a program changes its methods of delivery from the methods of delivery currently approved by the ACEN.

> **Traditional Education** – A method for delivering nursing courses in which instruction occurs when a student and instructor are physically in the same place at the same time (e.g., face-to-face). This method of delivery may be web-enhanced/supported, where the instruction occurs through traditional face-to-face delivery, and students are expected to attend the in-person class. The learning management system (LMS), or other web-based system, is used to support the course such as posting syllabi and calendars for easy student access. In addition, students may also be expected to participate in web-based learning activities, such as discussion boards or learning activities posted online.

> **Distance Education** – A method of delivery of nursing courses in which instruction occurs when a student and instructor are not physically in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. Distance education uses one or more distance technology (e.g., one-way, or two-way transmissions, audio, video, the Internet) to support **regular and substantive** interactions between the instructor and the students.

>> **Substantive Interaction** – Engaging students in teaching, learning, and assessment, consistent with the content under discussion and includes at least two of the following:

1. Providing direct instruction;
2. Assessing or providing feedback on a student's coursework;
3. Providing information or responding to questions about the content of a course or competency;
4. Facilitating a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency; or
5. Providing other teaching/instructional activities considered common practice and/or best practice.

Regular Interaction
1. Providing the opportunity for substantive interactions with the student on a predictable and scheduled basis commensurate with the length of time and the amount of content in the course.
2. Monitoring the student's academic engagement, success, and ensuring that an instructor is responsible for promptly and proactively engaging in substantive interaction with the student when needed based on such monitoring or upon request by the student.

Hybrid Education – A method of delivery for nursing courses in which instruction occurs using both distance and traditional education methods of delivery. Hybrid education, regardless of the percentage of the traditional education time it replaces, is considered a form of distance education by the ACEN.

Mentored – A formal or informal process through which a more experienced individual advises, guides, and/or coaches another individual who is less experienced or is transitioning to a new position or employment setting.

Mission, Goals and /or Values – Description of the beliefs, philosophy, and underpinnings that describes the unique characteristics and/or purpose of a nursing program, nursing education unit, and/or governing organization.

Non-compliance – When the nursing program does not meet the intent of the ACEN Standards and Criteria as determined by peer evaluators after a review of the program's supporting evidence and the application of professional judgement.

Non-Discriminatory – Policies, processes, and practices that are fair and equitable for students regardless of personal or social identifiers including but not limited to gender, race, ethnicity, and/or religion.

Nurse Administrator – The nurse with responsibility and authority for the administrative and teaching/instructional activities of a nursing education unit and nursing programs within the governing organization (e.g., dean, chairperson, director, etc.). See Single Nursing Program.

Nursing Program Option – The program of study designed for a subset of students within a nursing program type. Examples include, but are not limited, to prelicensure/traditional program option, LPN-to-RN program option, RN-to-BSN program option, evening/weekend program option, full- and part-time program options, face-to-face and online program options. **Note:** See *ACEN Policy #14 Reporting Substantive Change* for additional information and the procedures that must be followed when adding or closing a nursing program option.

Nursing Program Type – The educational level (clinical doctorate, DNP specialist certificate, master's, post-master's certificate, baccalaureate, associate, diploma, and practical curriculum)

offered by a governing organization that leads to the awarding of a certificate, diploma, or degree.

Off-Campus Instructional Site – Any location that is physically apart from the main campus of the governing organization where a nursing program is offered, in whole or part. See definition of Branch Campus, which is not an off-campus instructional site. **Note:** See *ACEN Policy #14 Reporting Substantive Change* for additional information and the procedures that must be followed when adding or closing an off-campus instructional site.

Pass Rates, Examinations

Certification Examination Pass Rates – The number of graduates, shown as a percent, who were successful on a particular certification examination when required for practice.

Licensure Examination Pass Rates – The number of graduates, shown as a percent, who were successful on a licensure examination required for practice in a particular nation/territory and at the level for which the program prepared the graduates.

Philosophy – A description of the values, beliefs, and underpinnings of the nursing faculty's practice and patient care ethics for the nursing program.

Policies, Admission – Nursing program or governing organization policies that describe non-discriminatory requirements for admission to a nursing program. Admission requirements may include, but are not limited to, transfer of credit, program prerequisites, GPA, pre-entry examination results, health status (e.g., vaccinations), criminal background checks, licensure status, and gap analysis process.

Policies, Progression – Nursing program and/or governing organization policies that describe non-discriminatory requirements for progression within a nursing program. Progression requirements may include, but are not limited to, GPA, minimum course grade requirements, minimum examination score or average requirements, academic honesty, readmission processes, and high-stakes testing.

Policies, Graduation – Nursing program and/or governing organization policies that describe non-discriminatory requirements for graduation from a nursing program. Graduation requirements may include, but are not limited to, course completion requirements (major and general education) and high-stakes testing.

Policies, Technology Requirement – Nursing program and/or governing organization polices that describe non-discriminatory requirements for student access to technology while enrolled in a nursing program. Technology requirements may include, but are not limited to, internet access, hardware, software or applications, browsers, virus protection, student identification verification technology and/or fees, and memory or storage capacity.

Policies, Transfer of Credit - Nursing program and/or governing organization policies that describe non-discriminatory specifications under which the governing organization/nursing program will accept courses/credits that were earned at another governing organization/nursing program. The credit(s) from the courses at the former governing organization/nursing program may or may not be accepted by the new governing organization/nursing program. Each governing organization/nursing program makes its own decisions about accepting transfer credit.

Post-Master's Certificate (PMC) – A selected series of courses that are a subset of courses within a master's program specific to one area of practice (e.g., certificates in nursing administration, certificates in nursing education, certificate as a family nurse practitioner) that are taken after an individual is already credentialed with a master's degree in nursing in a different specialty.

Professional Identity – A sense of oneself, and in relationship with others, that's influenced by the characteristics, norms, and values of the nursing discipline, resulting in an individual thinking, acting, and feeling like a nurse.[1]

[1]Godfrey N, Young E. Professional identity. In: Giddens JF, ed. *Concepts for Nursing Practice*. 3rd ed. New York, NY: Elsevier; 2020.

Program of Study – Total number of credit/quarter/clock hours required to complete the defined certificate, diploma, or degree allocated over a specific number of academic terms (semester/trimester/quarter); the program of study is inclusive of all prerequisite courses, general education/core courses, and nursing courses required to complete the certificate, diploma, or degree.

Program Outcomes – Measurable indicators that reflect the extent to which the purposes of the nursing program are achieved and by which nursing program effectiveness is documented. The ACEN specifies and requires the assessment of the following nursing program outcomes:
- Undergraduate programs:
  - licensure examination pass rate;
  - program completion rate; and
  - job placement rate.
- Graduate programs:
  - licensure examination pass rate and/or certification examination pass rate;
  - program completion rate; and
  - job placement rate.
  - Graduate programs with APRN options are also expected to adhere to any outcomes monitoring, such as graduate and employer satisfaction, required by the current National Task Force Guidelines for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner programs and other specialty organizations, as applicable.
- The assessment of additional program outcomes is the choice of the governing organization and nursing education unit. **Note:** See *ACEN Policy #29 Advertising and Recruitment of Students Reporting* for publishing student achievement data and ACEN Guidelines for Publishing Student Achievement Outcome Data for additional information and the procedures that must be followed.

Preceptor – An educationally and experientially qualified person who has received orientation to function as a resource and role model for nursing students. While a student can have input into identifying preceptors, it is the responsibility of the nursing program faculty/leaders to identify and arrange for preceptors and to ensure all students have preceptors. **Note:** Nursing programs use a variety of terms to describe individuals who act in a preceptor capacity. Such titles include, but are not limited to, mentors, coaches, and volunteers.

Prerequisite Course – A course that is required prior to enrolling in another course. **Note:** All credit courses that are required prerequisites and/or requirements for admission to a nursing program <u>do</u> count toward the total number of credit/quarter/clock hours.

Program Completion Rate – Program completion rate calculation begins with a student's enrollment in the first nursing course and at the time when a student can no longer receive a 100% tuition refund for the first nursing course regardless of the source of funds used to pay

the students' tuition. The moment in time may be referred to as the census date or something different. The calculation ends with students' completion of all requirements for conferral of a certificate, diploma, or degree.

Public – Any individual or group with an interest in, but no direct responsibility for, the development or delivery of a nursing program (e.g., patients/clients, non-nursing students, non-nursing faculty, healthcare providers, and citizens).

Public Information – Information available to the public as required by ACEN policy or applicable regulatory agency. May include, but is not limited, to admission criteria, graduation criteria, program of study, and program outcomes data.

Published – All forms of information made available by a nursing program and/or governing organization, including paper and electronic sources intended to inform the public.

Qualified, Educationally – The required academic degree(s) that prepare individuals for their assigned roles and responsibilities.

Qualified, Experientially – Documented current or recent direct engagement in a significant manner in nursing experiences for those whose roles and responsibilities include teaching, administrating, and/or precepting students. The experience-based activities and experiences that enhance one's knowledge, skills, and/or abilities to perform assigned roles and responsibilities.

Reactivation of a Nursing Program – After a period of inactivity, the process of admitting new students into a nursing program. If a nursing education unit does not reactivate a nursing program within the period of time specified by the ACEN, the nursing program is considered closed and is removed from the list of accredited nursing programs. For a deactivated nursing program to be reactivated, the nursing education unit must reapply for accreditation with the ACEN. **Note:** See *ACEN Policy #14 Reporting Substantive Change* for additional information and the procedures that must be followed to reactivate a nursing program.

Reactivation of an Off-Campus Instructional Site – After a period of inactivity, the process of offering 1) a nursing program and the nursing courses for the nursing program or 2) a nursing program option and the nursing courses for the nursing program option at an approved off-campus instructional site. If a nursing education unit does not reactivate the off-campus instructional site within five (5) academic years of no students being enrolled and no nursing courses being offered at the off-campus instructional site, then the nursing program must follow the substantive change process to reinstate the off-campus instructional site. **Note:** See *ACEN Policy #14 Reporting Substantive Change* for additional information and the procedures that must be followed to reactivate an off-campus instructional site.

Regulatory Agencies – Appropriate government agency or agencies that has/have jurisdictional authority over a governing organization and/or nursing program. Examples include, but are not limited to, a regulatory agency for nursing, an education department or ministry, or a higher education system.

Resources, Fiscal – The financial support required for securing and maintaining the human and physical resources (e.g., personnel, supplies, materials, equipment) and student support services necessary to ensure the achievement of the end-of-program student learning outcomes and program outcomes. Fiscal resources include, but are not limited to, tuition, fees, grants, governmental appropriations, donations, and investment earnings.

Resources, Physical – The physical spaces needed to facilitate student learning and support student achievement of end-of-program student learning outcomes and program outcomes. Physical resources may include, but are not limited to, classrooms, laboratories, faculty and staff offices, and other common spaces used by nursing students and faculty and staff.

Resources, Learning and Technology – The equipment and/or materials needed to facilitate student learning and development of the necessary knowledge, skills, and behaviors to support achievement of the end-of-program student learning outcomes and program outcomes; additionally, the equipment needed by faculty and staff to fulfill their job responsibilities. Learning resources may include, but are not limited to, laboratory equipment and supplies, electronic or physical journals, databases, books, and physical or electronic media (e.g., videos). Technology resources include, but are not limited to, hardware (e.g., computers), general software or applications (e.g., word processing, presentation software), healthcare specific technology, software or applications (e.g., VSim, medication management, electronic health records), learning management systems, internet access, browsers, virus protection, and memory or electronic storage capacity.

Role-Specific Nursing Competencies (Graduate Programs Only) – Expected, measurable levels of graduate level nursing performance that integrate knowledge, skills, and behaviors in the specialty area. Competencies may include, but are not limited to, specific knowledge areas, clinical judgments, and behaviors based upon the role and/or scope of practice of the master's- or doctoral-prepared nurse.

Single Nursing Education Unit – A unit within a governing organization that offers one or more nursing programs; all nursing programs within a nursing education unit must be administered by a single nurse administrator with the responsibility and authority for all nursing programs. If a governing organization elects to have a different nurse administrator for one or more nursing programs, then each nursing program with a different nurse administrator is a separate nursing education unit. The ACEN retains the right to determine whether a nursing education unit is a single nursing education unit.

Single Nursing Program – Determination of whether a nursing program is a single nursing program offered at different sites, or are multiple nursing programs, depends on several factors. The ACEN retains the right to determine whether a nursing program is a single nursing program and whether a location at which a nursing program is offered must hold separate accreditation. Factors used by the ACEN to determine program status are described below.

> Method of Delivery –
> When 51% or more of the nursing program is offered in a traditional method of delivery, the nursing program and all locations where the nursing program is offered must be in the same state and under the jurisdiction of the same state regulatory agency for nursing.
>
> When 51% or more of the nursing program is offered through a distance education method of delivery, it is possible for the nursing program and all locations where the nursing program is offered to be in the same state or in different states, and under the same or different state regulatory agency. If two (2) or more state regulatory agencies are involved, the nursing program must meet all the requirements set by each state regulatory agency for the nursing program.

A nursing program is a single nursing program when all the following academic control criteria are met:

- The nursing program is within a single governing organization that is accredited through an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the ACEN.
- The nursing program is located only on a governing organization's main campus, off-campus instructional site(s), and/or branch campus(es).
- A single certificate, diploma, or degree is awarded from the same governing organization to students who successfully complete the nursing program.
- A NCSBN program code or codes that are specific to the accredited nursing program offered by the single governing organization.
- There is one (1) nursing program of study for each nursing program option offered by the single governing organization.
- There is one (1) set of end-of program student learning outcomes and program outcomes utilized for the nursing program offered by the single governing organization.
- There is a systematic plan for evaluation in place that addresses the end-of program student learning outcomes and program outcomes for the nursing program offered by the single governing organization.
- There is one (1) nurse administrator for the nursing program.
  - The nurse administrator must have continuous, active, daily, and personal responsibility and authority at all locations for the nursing program.
  - Must have academic control of the nursing program
  - The nurse administrator must continually have adequate time and resources daily at all locations to administer the nursing program.
  - The nurse administrator must oversee the daily governing organization, nursing education unit, and nursing program matters such as, but not limited to, personnel matters, student matters, curricular matters, and resources matters.
- All nursing program and nursing education unit personnel at all locations must report to the nurse administrator.
- There is one (1) group of faculty members for the nursing program who continually function daily as a faculty of the whole program within a set of established faculty policies through their organization and decision-making processes and continually have input into the curriculum development, delivery, and evaluation.
- There is a single set of policies governing all nursing students enrolled in the nursing program that is established by a single governing organization and a single nursing education unit.

The ACEN retains the right to determine whether a nursing program is a single nursing program and whether a location at which a nursing program is offered must hold separate accreditation.

Staff – Non-faculty personnel who assist, support, and/or coordinate in nursing programs. Staff include, but are not limited to, clerical, laboratory, and administrative personnel (regardless of the individual's title or classification by the governing organization) that are part of the nursing program. **Note:** Governing organizations use a variety of terms to describe individuals who act in an assisting/supporting/coordinating capacity. Such titles include, but are not limited to, administrative assistants, advisors, program directors, clinical coordinator, skills laboratory coordinator, simulation coordinator, associate nursing director, etc.

Standard – Agreed-upon expectations to measure quantity, extent, value, and educational quality.

Student Records – Student records, electronic or physical, that are maintained by the governing organization, nursing program, or third-party vendor on behalf of the nursing program. Student records may include, but are not limited to, admission application materials

(including gap analysis for post-master's certificate or DNP APRN students), financial aid materials, grades, assessment of student performance (e.g., clinical evaluation tools), health records (e.g., vaccinations), BLS certification, license verifications, and counseling documents.

Any information alone or in combination that is linked or linkable to a specific student may be subject to state or federal privacy laws and, as applicable, measures must be taken to protect the student's privacy. Access to student records, electronic or physical, must be limited to authorized personnel to ensure the protection and confidentiality of students' records.

Student Support Services – Services available to nursing students designed to facilitate and support student success in the nursing program. May include, but is not limited to, advising, counseling, tutoring, library services, technology, and health services (mental and/or physical).

Sufficient – Enough or adequate for the purpose of achieving the end-of-program student learning outcomes and program outcomes.

Sufficient Faculty –
Adequate number of full- and/or part-time faculty to support the values, mission, goals, and/or philosophy of the nursing program. Evidence of adequacy typically includes, but is not limited to:
- The ratio of faculty to the total number of nursing students enrolled in all the nursing courses required for a nursing program or programs;
- The faculty to student ratios for didactic, skills/simulation laboratories, and clinical/practicum experiences;
- The required workload for faculty; workload duties include, but are not limited to, teaching, advisement, administration, committee activity, service, practice, research, and other scholarly activities.
- Required and voluntary non-teaching responsibilities required by the governing organization and/or nursing education unit;
- Adequate faculty time to implement a variety of teaching/learning strategies, develop and review the curriculum, and assess the end-of-program student learning outcomes and program outcomes;
- The number of faculty on required or voluntary overload and amount of required and voluntary overload for each faculty member; and
- Achievement of end-of-program student learning outcomes and program outcomes.

Suggestions for Improvement – When the nursing program meets the intent of the ACEN Standards and Criteria and is in compliance with the Criterion, as determined by peer evaluators, after a review of the program's supporting evidence and the application of professional judgement. However, evidence also demonstrates that an opportunity for improvement is available to enhance the quality of the nursing program.

Sustainable Resources – The capacity of the governing organization to continuously replenish fiscal, physical, and/or human resources to meet current needs and the capacity of the governing organization to increase fiscal, physical, and/or human resources to meet future needs.

Systematic Plan for Evaluation (SPE) – A written document emphasizing the plan for ongoing, comprehensive assessment of the end-of-program student learning outcomes and program outcomes. Plan must include assessment methods, frequency of data collection, and frequency of evaluation for each end-of-program student learning outcome and program outcome. May also include documentation of the plan's implementation (data, analysis, and actions) *or* indicate where that information is located.

Teach-Out Agreement – A written agreement between governing organizations/nursing education units that provides for the equitable treatment of students and a reasonable opportunity for students to complete their nursing program of study should a governing organization/nursing education unit, or a nursing program location that provides 50% or more of a nursing program offered, cease to operate before all enrolled students have completed their nursing program of study. This applies to the closure of a governing organization, an off-campus instructional site, a branch campus, or a nursing program. A teach-out agreement requires ACEN approval in advance of implementation. **Note:** See *ACEN Policy #16 Closings* for additional information and the procedures that must be followed.

Title IV Gatekeeper – An accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education as meeting the criteria established by law for that agency to fulfill one requirement for institutions and programs to participate in federal student aid programs (e.g., Direct Subsidized/Unsubsidized Loan, Direct Graduate PLUS Loan, Direct PLUS Loan, Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, Federal Perkins Loan, and TEACH grants).