

Overview of the CCNE Accreditation Process Entry-to-Practice Nurse Residency Programs

- The program begins engaging in the self-study process approximately 12-18 months in advance of the on-site evaluation.
- Approximately 12 months prior to a scheduled on-site evaluation, CCNE notifies the program that it is scheduled to host an evaluation. This notification advises the program to log in to the CCNE Online Community (www.ccnecommunity.org), using the provided login credentials (username and password), to choose and confirm the dates of the on-site evaluation. The availability of dates is “first come, first served” so it is advantageous for a program to choose its dates as soon as possible upon receiving the notice. All programs (those seeking initial or continuing accreditation) are required to schedule the on-site evaluation at least 12 months in advance.

Note: To schedule an on-site evaluation an institution must already have a) a CCNE-accredited program or b) a program that holds new applicant status with CCNE. If an institution already has a CCNE-accredited program but wishes to seek accreditation of a new residency program (e.g., the institution has an accredited federally funded traineeship nurse residency program and wishes to seek accreditation of its employee-based nurse residency program), the institution must notify CCNE of its intent to seek accreditation of that program. This notification must be in writing and should include the type of program, the date the program became operational (residents enrolled), and when the institution is planning to host the on-site evaluation. In addition to submitting this letter of intent, the existing accredited program must also submit a substantive change notification in accordance with the CCNE substantive change notification policy.

- Programs hosting an on-site evaluation in the fall are invoiced for the evaluation fee in July of the same year; programs hosting an on-site evaluation in the spring are invoiced for the evaluation fee in November of the previous year. This fee must be paid prior to hosting the scheduled on-site evaluation.
- Two months prior to the date of the on-site evaluation, the program must inform its communities of interest of the opportunity to provide written third-party comments directly to CCNE. Third-party comments are accepted by CCNE up to 21 days prior to the start of the on-site evaluation. All third-party comments received by CCNE are considered confidential and are only shared with the evaluation team.
- Approximately 3 months prior to the start of an accreditation cycle, CCNE publishes a list of all programs under review for the upcoming accreditation cycle. Additionally, CCNE communicates directly with its communities of interest (e.g., state boards of nursing, healthcare facility licensing and certifying bodies, other accrediting bodies, etc.), and informs them of the opportunity to provide third-party comments up to 21 days prior to the start of the on-site evaluation. These third-party comments are considered to be confidential and are only shared with the evaluation team.
- Approximately 3 months prior to the scheduled on-site evaluation, CCNE tentatively appoints an evaluation team. Once the team has been appointed, the chief nursing officer/chief nurse executive is invited to log in to the CCNE Online Community to review the team for any potential conflicts of interest. The program then either accepts the team as presented or notifies CCNE of concerns. Information regarding each member of the team is available via the CCNE Online Community so that the institution can easily contact the members of the team throughout the accreditation process.

- CCNE requests that a program notify CCNE at least 6 weeks in advance of the on-site evaluation if the healthcare organization will be hosting a joint evaluation by CCNE and another regulatory or approval entity. The healthcare organization should work closely with the team leader from each review entity in the development of the agenda.
- Once the team has been accepted, the chief nursing officer/chief nurse executive (or designee) should consult with the team leader in the development of the agenda, as well as before finalizing the agenda.
- In advance of the on-site evaluation, the program must make a hotel reservation for each member of the evaluation team. Each team member should be sent a hotel confirmation number as well as pertinent information about the hotel (e.g. name, address, phone number). Although the hotel rooms are paid for by each team member, a program official should guarantee the reservations with a credit card. Each team member then provides the hotel with his/her credit card information upon check-in. Team members are responsible for making their own travel arrangements after coordinating with the team leader regarding the agenda.
- At least 6 weeks prior to the on-site evaluation, the program is required to log in to the CCNE Online Community to upload the completed self-study document (including appendices and any supplemental materials), the Program Information Form (PIF), and the agenda. While it is not required that hard copies be automatically sent to the team, CCNE requests that the program reach out to each team member individually to determine if a hard copy of the documents is desired. If it is, CCNE asks that the program provide the hard copy documents as requested. CCNE and the evaluators that have been assigned to the team have access to the electronic version of the documents via the CCNE Online Community as soon as the documents have been uploaded by the institution. Please do not send hard copies of these documents to the CCNE office unless specifically requested to do so.
- At the time the program submits the self-study document, PIF, and agenda via the CCNE Online Community, the program must also provide evidence that constituents were afforded the opportunity to submit third-party comments to CCNE, in accordance with CCNE policy. This evidence must also be uploaded to the CCNE Online Community. Twenty-one days prior to the on-site evaluation, CCNE provides each team member copies of any third-party comments received by CCNE.
- The evaluation team conducts the review, and the team leader verbally reports the major findings to the chief nursing officer/chief nurse executive (and any other individuals invited by the chief nursing officer/chief nurse executive to attend) during the exit interview. The team does not formulate a recommendation about accreditation or leave a copy of its report with the program.
- The team completes its written report and the team leader submits it electronically to CCNE via the CCNE Online Community. CCNE staff review and edit the team report as appropriate.
- After CCNE staff complete their review of the team report, staff upload the final team report into the CCNE Online Community. The chief nursing officer/chief nurse executive receives notification of the availability of the report via the CCNE Online Community. The program then has the opportunity to review the team report and to submit a response to the team's findings. CCNE requires that the program provide a written response to the team report. Additionally, the program is afforded no less than 15 calendar days to submit the written response. Once uploaded, CCNE and the evaluators that have been assigned to the team have access to the program response via the CCNE Online Community.
- The self-study document, the team report, and the program response to the team report are forwarded to the CCNE Entry-to-Practice Residency Accreditation Committee (EPRAC). The EPRAC formulates a confidential recommendation to the CCNE Board of Commissioners based on its review of the aforementioned documents. A program that hosts an on-site evaluation in the fall is reviewed by the EPRAC in late winter and then reviewed by the CCNE Board of Commissioners in the spring; a program that hosts an on-site evaluation in the spring is reviewed by the EPRAC in the summer and then reviewed by the CCNE Board of Commissioners in the fall.

Note: CCNE policy allows for program officials to participate in the EPRAC meeting, but this is not required. The EPRAC deliberates and forms its recommendations in executive session; therefore, program officials are not present during this portion of the meeting.

- Within 30 days of the CCNE Board of Commissioners meeting, CCNE notifies institutional and program officials as well as appropriate agencies of all final actions. The report of the evaluation team and the program's response to the team report are available to the institution in the CCNE Online Community. In addition, CCNE notifies the EPRAC and members of the evaluation team of the accreditation decision. CCNE makes all final actions available to the public by posting them on the CCNE website.
- CCNE invites and encourages the chief nursing officer/chief nurse executive (or designee) to evaluate the CCNE accreditation review process by completing the survey that is available on the CCNE Online Community. The survey will become available after the program has received notification of the accreditation decision by the CCNE Board of Commissioners.

January 2022