

Understanding the 2024 *Standards for Accreditation of Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Programs*

Standard IV Webinar
December 4, 2024



Presenters

Lori Escallier, PhD, RN, CPNP-PC, FAAN
Dean and Professor
College of Nursing
State University of New York Downstate Health Sciences University

Frank D. Hicks, PhD, RN, CNE
Associate Dean for Academic Programs & Affairs
Professor, Adult Health and Gerontological Nursing
College of Nursing
Rush University

Jennifer Butlin, EdD
CCNE Executive Director

Applying for CCNE Accreditation	Submitting a Continuous Improvement Progress Report	Submitting a Substantive Change Notification
Baccalaureate & Graduate Programs	Baccalaureate & Graduate Programs	Baccalaureate & Graduate Programs
Entry-to-Practice Nurse Residency Programs	Entry-to-Practice Nurse Residency Programs	Entry-to-Practice Nurse Residency Programs
Nurse Practitioner Fellowship/ Residency Programs	Nurse Practitioner Fellowship/ Residency Programs	Nurse Practitioner Fellowship/ Residency Programs

CCNE Standards Revision Update for Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Programs

The CCNE Board of Commissioners Approves Revised *Standards for Accreditation of Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Programs* [Read More](#)

CCNE Webinar Series Addressing the 2024 Standards for Accreditation of Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Programs

[Learn More](#) [View Webinars](#)

CCNE Accreditation Connection

CCNE is pleased to announce a new initiative offering program leaders the opportunity to learn about a topic related to CCNE accreditation and network with other program leaders.

[Learn More](#)



<https://www.aacnnursing.org/ccne-accreditation>

STANDARD IV. PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS: ASSESSMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT OF PROGRAM OUTCOMES

The program is effective in fulfilling its mission and goals as evidenced by achieving expected program outcomes. Program outcomes include student outcomes, faculty outcomes, and other outcomes identified by the program. Data on program effectiveness are used to foster ongoing program improvement.

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES TO STANDARD IV

- ❑ Clarification that the key element is applicable to programs that prepare individuals for the NCLEX-RN® or other professional nursing licensure examination (Key Element IV-C).
- ❑ Added flexibility allowing a program to exclude test takers who take the licensure examination more than two years after program completion (Key Element IV-C).
- ❑ Added flexibility allowing a program to exclude test takers who take the certification examination more than two years after program completion (Key Element IV-D).
- ❑ An increase in CCNE's expected level of achievement for employment rates from 70% to 80% (Key Element IV-E).

STANDARD IV - SETTING THE STAGE

The Glossary in the *CCNE Standards* defines program outcomes as:

Results that participants (individually or grouped in the aggregate) derive from their association with the nursing program. The results are measurable and observable and may be quantitative or qualitative, broad or detailed.

STANDARD IV - SETTING THE STAGE

Outcomes are indicators of achievement and should be:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Observable

Example of a specific and measurable outcome:

Alumni from the baccalaureate degree program in nursing will express satisfaction with overall program effectiveness and in meeting expected student learning outcomes at 80% or higher on the alumni survey.

Example of an outcome that is not specific or measurable:

Upon graduation, students will be better citizens of the world.

STANDARD IV - SETTING THE STAGE

To analyze and use data for program improvement, all outcomes must have an:

- expected level of achievement - statements of *desired* and *predetermined* levels of student, faculty, and program achievement
- actual level of achievement - results describing real student, faculty, and program achievement

In Key Elements IV-B, IV-C, IV-D, and IV-E, CCNE has set the expected level of achievement (rates), as required by the U.S. Department of Education, and these expectations are detailed in the elaboration statements.

STANDARD IV: MAKE A NOTE

For CCNE's purposes, "completion" or "completer" refers to any student who has *graduated* from a nursing degree program or *completed* a post-graduate APRN certificate program

KEY ELEMENT IV-A

A systematic process is used to determine program effectiveness.

Elaboration: The program (baccalaureate, master's, DNP, and/or post-graduate APRN certificate) uses a systematic process to obtain relevant data to determine program effectiveness. The process:

- *is written, is ongoing, and exists to determine achievement of program outcomes;*
- *is comprehensive (includes completion, licensure, certification, and employment rates, as required by the U.S. Department of Education; faculty outcomes; and other program outcomes);*
- *identifies which quantitative and/or qualitative data are collected to assess achievement of the program outcomes;*
- *includes timelines for each of the following: data collection, review of expected and actual outcomes, and analysis; and*
- *is periodically reviewed and revised as appropriate.*

KEY ELEMENT IV-B

Program completion rates demonstrate program effectiveness.

This key element is not applicable to a degree or certificate program that does not yet have individuals who have completed the program.

Elaboration: The program (baccalaureate, master's, DNP, and/or post-graduate APRN certificate) demonstrates achievement of required program outcomes regarding completion in any one of the following ways:

- the completion rate for the most recent calendar year (January 1 through December 31) is 70% or higher;*
- the completion rate is 70% or higher over the three most recent calendar years;*
- the completion rate is 70% or higher for the most recent calendar year when excluding students who have identified factors such as family obligations, relocation, financial barriers, and decisions to change major or to transfer to another institution of higher education; or*
- the completion rate is 70% or higher over the three most recent calendar years when excluding students who have identified factors such as family obligations, relocation, financial barriers, and decisions to change major or to transfer to another institution of higher education.*

The program identifies the cohort(s), specifies the entry point, and defines the time period to completion, each of which may vary by track; however, the program provides the completion rate for the overall degree/certificate program. The program describes the formula it uses to calculate the completion rate. The program identifies the factors used and the number of students excluded if some students are excluded from the calculation.

KEY ELEMENT IV-B: Completion Rate

As with Key Elements IV-C and IV-D, there are multiple ways to calculate the program completion rate:

Option #1

- *the completion rate for the most recent calendar year (January 1 through December 31) is 70% or higher;*

KEY ELEMENT IV-B: Completion Rate

Option #2

- *the completion rate is 70% or higher over the three most recent calendar years;*

KEY ELEMENT IV-B: Completion Rate

Option #3

- *the completion rate is 70% or higher for the most recent calendar year when excluding students who have identified factors such as family obligations, relocation, financial barriers, and decisions to change major or to transfer to another institution of higher education; or*

KEY ELEMENT IV-B: Completion Rate

Option #4

- *the completion rate is 70% or higher over the three most recent calendar years when excluding students who have identified factors such as family obligations, relocation, financial barriers, and decisions to change major or to transfer to another institution of higher education.*

KEY ELEMENT IV-B

For CCNE's purposes, "completion rate" means:

- those who have *completed* the post-graduate APRN certificate program (if under review); and
- those who have *graduated* from the nursing degree program under review.

When calculating the completion rate, do not include individuals who have completed coursework but have not yet been awarded the certificate or graduated from the program.

KEY ELEMENT IV-B GUIDANCE

Keep in Mind

Program completion rate data are to be provided for each overall degree/certificate program under review (i.e., baccalaureate, master's, DNP, and/or post-graduate APRN certificate).

Completion rates are calculated and provided based on a calendar year (January 1-December 31). The formula used to calculate the rate is provided by the program.

If students are excluded from the calculation of the completion rate, the program indicates how many were excluded and why.

KEY ELEMENT IV-B GUIDANCE

Examples that Meet CCNE's Expectations

The completion rate for the program under review is 70% or higher for the most recent calendar year (January 1-December 31), even if the completion rate for an individual track (when multiple tracks exist) is less than 70%. The program provides documentation that the completion rate for the program meets the 70% rate.

The completion rate for the program is less than 70% for the most recent calendar year (January 1-December 31), but is 70% or higher over the three most recent calendar years.

The completion rate for the program is less than 70% for the most recent calendar year (January 1-December 31), but is 70% or higher when excluding students who have dropped out due to family obligations, relocation, financial barriers, changed majors or transferred to another institution. The program provides supporting documentation (e.g., evidence of analysis of responses to surveys or institutional records).

KEY ELEMENT IV-C

Nursing licensure pass rates demonstrate program effectiveness.

This key element is not applicable to a program that does not prepare students for licensure examinations or does not yet have individuals who have taken licensure examinations.

This key element is applicable to a program that prepares students for the NCLEX-RN® or other professional nursing licensure examination.

KEY ELEMENT IV-C ELABORATION

Elaboration: Programs with a pre-licensure track demonstrate achievement of required program outcomes regarding licensure. The program demonstrates that it meets the licensure pass rate of 80% in any one of the following ways:

- the pass rate for each campus/site and track is 80% or higher for first-time takers for the most recent calendar year (January 1 through December 31);*
- the pass rate for each campus/site and track is 80% or higher for all takers (first-time and repeaters who pass) for the most recent calendar year;*
- the pass rate for each campus/site and track is 80% or higher for all first-time takers over the three most recent calendar years; or*
- the pass rate for each campus/site and track is 80% or higher for all takers (first-time and repeaters who pass) over the three most recent calendar years.*

A program is required to provide these data regardless of the number of test takers. For each campus/ site and track, identify which of the above options was used to calculate the pass rate. The program may exclude test takers who take the licensure examination more than two years after program completion.

KEY ELEMENT IV-C GUIDANCE

Keep in Mind

The licensure pass rate for each campus/site and track must be 80% or higher.

Licensure pass rates are calculated and provided based on a calendar year (January 1 through December 31). The program identifies which CCNE option it has chosen to use to calculate the rate.

The way the program calculates the pass rate for each campus/site and track can differ, as long as it is calculated using one of the CCNE options noted in the elaboration statement. Each campus/site and track is expected to meet the CCNE expected level of achievement of 80%.

The program may exclude test takers who take the licensure examination more than two years after program completion.

KEY ELEMENT IV-D

Certification pass rates demonstrate program effectiveness.

This key element is not applicable to a degree or certificate program that does not prepare students for certification examinations or does not yet have individuals who have taken certification examinations.

KEY ELEMENT IV-D (CONTINUED)

Elaboration: The master's, DNP, and post-graduate APRN certificate programs demonstrate achievement of required program outcomes regarding certification. For programs that prepare students for certification, certification pass rates are obtained and reported for those graduates/completers taking each examination, even when national certification is not required to practice in a particular state.

For programs that prepare students for certification, data are provided regarding the number of graduates/completers taking each certification examination and the number that passed. A program is required to provide these data regardless of the number of test takers. The pass rate is provided separately for each degree program (master's and DNP) and the post-graduate APRN certificate program.

KEY ELEMENT IV-D (CONTINUED)

A program that prepares students for certification demonstrates that it meets the certification pass rate of 80%, for each examination, in any one of the following ways:

- the pass rate for each certification examination is 80% or higher for first-time takers for the most recent calendar year (January 1 through December 31);*
- the pass rate for each certification examination is 80% or higher for all takers (first-time and repeaters who pass) for the most recent calendar year;*
- the pass rate for each certification examination is 80% or higher for all first-time takers over the three most recent calendar years; or*
- the pass rate for each certification examination is 80% or higher for all takers (first-time and repeaters who pass) over the three most recent calendar years.*

The program identifies which of the above options was used to calculate the pass rate. The program provides certification pass rate data for each examination but, when calculating the pass rate described above, may combine certification pass rate data for multiple examinations relating to the same role and population. The program may exclude test takers who take the certification examination more than two years after program completion.

KEY ELEMENT IV-D GUIDANCE

Keep in Mind

Pass rate data must be provided for each exam for which the program states that it prepares graduates, regardless of whether the exam is required to practice.

Certification pass rates are calculated and provided based on a calendar year (January 1 through December 31). The program identifies which CCNE option it has chosen to use to calculate the pass rate.

The program must provide certification pass rate data for each exam but may combine pass rate data if multiple exams relate to the same role and population (e.g., FNP).

Certification pass rate data are not provided by campus/site and track; this only applies to licensure pass rate data (Key Element IV-C).

The program may exclude test takers who take the certification examination more than two years after program completion.

KEY ELEMENT IV-E

Employment rates demonstrate program effectiveness.

This key element is not applicable to a degree or certificate program that does not yet have individuals who have completed the program.

Elaboration: The program demonstrates achievement of required outcomes regarding employment rates.

- The employment rate is provided separately for each degree program (baccalaureate, master's, and DNP) and the post-graduate APRN certificate program.*
- Data are collected within 12 months of program completion. Specifically, employment data are collected at the time of program completion or at any time within 12 months of program completion.*
- The employment rate is 80% or higher. However, if the employment rate is less than 80%, the employment rate is 80% or higher when excluding graduates/completers who have elected not to be employed.*

KEY ELEMENT IV-E GUIDANCE

Keep in Mind

The employment rate is reported for each overall degree/certificate (baccalaureate, master's, DNP, and/or post-graduate APRN certificate) program under review (not by track).

Employment data are collected within 12 months of program completion. (The program may additionally choose to collect employment data at program entry, but this is not a CCNE requirement and would not satisfy the CCNE expectation.)

The program may exclude graduates who have elected not to be employed.

KEY ELEMENT IV-E GUIDANCE

Example for Key Element IV-E:

Expected Outcome:

80% of baccalaureate degree nursing program graduates who seek employment will be employed within 12 months of graduation.

Actual Outcome:

88% of baccalaureate degree nursing program graduates who sought employment were employed within 12 months of graduation.

Therefore, baccalaureate degree nursing program graduates exceeded the CCNE expected outcome of 80% for employment within 12 months of graduation.

KEY ELEMENT IV-F

Data regarding completion, licensure, certification, and employment rates are used, as appropriate, to foster ongoing program improvement.

This key element is applicable if one or more of the following key elements is applicable: Key Element IV-B (completion), Key Element IV-C (licensure), Key Element IV-D (certification), and Key Element IV-E (employment).

Elaboration: The program uses outcome data (completion, licensure, certification, and employment) for improvement.

- *Discrepancies between actual and CCNE expected outcomes (program completion rates 70%, licensure pass rates 80%, certification pass rates 80%, employment rates 80%) inform areas for improvement.*
- *Changes to the program to foster improvement and achievement of program outcomes, as appropriate, are deliberate, ongoing, and analyzed for effectiveness.*
- *Faculty are engaged in the program improvement process.*

KEY ELEMENT IV-G

Aggregate faculty outcomes demonstrate program effectiveness.

Elaboration: The program demonstrates achievement of expected faculty outcomes. In order to demonstrate program effectiveness, outcomes are consistent with and contribute to achievement of the program's mission and goals and are congruent with institution and program expectations. Expected faculty outcomes:

- *are identified for the faculty as a group;*
- *specify expected levels of achievement for the faculty as a group; and*
- *reflect expectations of faculty in their roles.*

Actual faculty outcomes are compared to expected levels of achievement. Actual faculty outcomes are presented in the aggregate. If expected faculty outcomes vary for different groups of faculty (fulltime, part-time, adjunct, tenured, non-tenured, or other), actual faculty outcomes may be presented separately for each different group of faculty. These outcomes correspond to the faculty expectations identified by the nursing unit (refer to Key Element I-D).

EXAMPLES OF FACULTY OUTCOMES: KEY ELEMENT IV-G

- At least 90% of nursing faculty will engage in a professional development activity related to their teaching assignments.
- The amount of revenue generated through faculty practice will increase by 3% over the prior year.
- The amount of grant funding for the school of nursing will increase by 10% over the prior year.
- Seventy-five percent of nursing faculty will serve on a college or university committee.

KEY ELEMENT IV-H

Aggregate faculty outcome data are analyzed and used, as appropriate, to foster ongoing program improvement.

Elaboration: The program uses faculty outcome data for improvement.

- *Faculty outcome data are used to promote ongoing program improvement.*
- *Discrepancies between actual and expected levels of achievement inform areas for improvement.*
- *Changes to foster achievement of faculty outcomes, as appropriate, are deliberate, ongoing, and analyzed for effectiveness.*
- *Faculty are engaged in the program improvement process.*

KEY ELEMENT IV-I

Other program outcomes demonstrate program effectiveness.

Elaboration: The program demonstrates achievement of outcomes other than those related to completion rates (Key Element IV-B), licensure pass rates (Key Element IV-C), certification pass rates (Key Element IV-D), employment rates (Key Element IV-E), and faculty (Key Element IV-G).

Program outcomes are defined by the program and incorporate expected levels of achievement. The program describes how outcomes are measured. Actual levels of achievement, when compared to expected levels of achievement, demonstrate that the program, overall, is achieving its outcomes. Program outcomes are appropriate and relevant to the degree and certificate programs offered.

Programs that do not yet have completers identify other program outcomes and specify the expected levels of achievement for those outcomes.

EXAMPLES OF OTHER PROGRAM OUTCOMES: KEY ELEMENT IV-I

- Student/alumni/employer surveys will reflect a score of at least 3 on a 4-point Likert-like scale.
- At least 25% of baccalaureate students will participate in honors program, study abroad program, or service learning.
- On exit surveys, at least 20% of baccalaureate students will report an intent to seek graduate education within 5 years.
- The alumni survey documents that 40% of graduates have served in at least one professional leadership role after graduation.

KEY ELEMENT IV-J

Other program outcome data are used, as appropriate, to foster ongoing program improvement.

Elaboration: For program outcomes defined by the program:

- *Actual program outcomes are used to promote program improvement.*
- *Discrepancies between actual and expected levels of achievement inform areas for improvement.*
- *Changes to the program to foster improvement and achievement of program outcomes, as appropriate, are deliberate, ongoing, and analyzed for effectiveness.*
- *Faculty are engaged in the program improvement process.*

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION: STANDARD IV

1. Evidence of a systematic, written, comprehensive process to determine program effectiveness (e.g., evaluation or assessment plan).
2. Examples of periodic review of the systematic process (e.g., meeting minutes, supplemental documents).
3. Summary of aggregate student outcomes with comparison of actual levels of aggregate student achievement to expected levels of aggregate student achievement. Aggregate student outcome data (applicable only to programs with graduates/completers), including:
 - completion rates for each degree and post-graduate APRN certificate program;
 - nursing licensure pass rates for each campus/site and track;
 - certification pass rates for each degree/certificate program for each APRN role, population focus, and/ or specialty for which the program prepares students;
 - certification pass rates for each degree program for each role/area other than APRN roles for which the program prepares students; and
 - employment rates for each degree/certificate program.

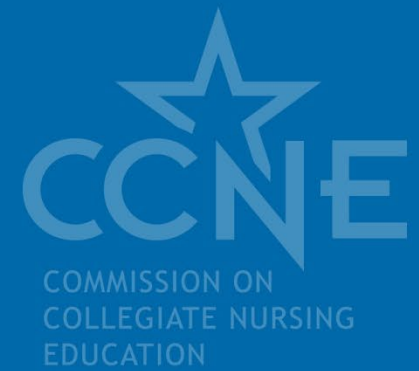
SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION: STANDARD IV

4. Summary of aggregate faculty outcomes for the past three years with comparison of actual levels of aggregate faculty achievement to expected aggregate faculty achievement.
5. Summary of aggregate program-identified outcomes for the past three years with comparison of actual levels of aggregate achievement in relation to expected levels of achievement.
6. Documents (e.g., minutes, memoranda, reports) that demonstrate data analysis, explanations of variances between actual and expected outcomes, and use of the analysis for ongoing program improvement.



Questions & Answers





Contacting CCNE Staff

Daniel S. Michalski, Director of Accreditation Services
dmichalski@ccneaccreditation.org

655 K STREET NW
SUITE 750
WASHINGTON DC 20001

WWW.CCNEACCREDITATION.ORG