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CCNEACCREDITATION.ORG

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To: U.S. Department of Education
State Boards of Nursing
Statewide Agencies of Higher Education
Institutional Accrediting Agencies
Specialized Accrediting Agencies
Selected Federal Agencies
CCNE-Affiliated Nursing Programs
College and University Officials
CCNE On-Site Evaluators
National Nursing Organizations
Other Interested Parties

From: Dr. Elizabeth Ritt, Chair
CCNE Board of Commissioners

Re: Revised CCNE *Procedures for Accreditation of Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Programs*

The Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE)--a nationally recognized accrediting agency for baccalaureate and graduate nursing programs--is pleased to announce that, on July 29, 2021, the CCNE Board of Commissioners amended the *Procedures for Accreditation of Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Programs (Procedures)*. Before amending the *Procedures*, the Board considered all comments that were received from the community of interest in response to the Call for Comments issued on June 7, 2021. In accordance with its commitment to ongoing self assessment and continuous quality improvement, CCNE periodically undertakes a review of its core documents and provides opportunity for constituents to review the documents and suggest revisions, and these revisions are a result of such review.

The *Procedures* document can be accessed at <http://www.aacnnursing.org/Portals/42/CCNE/PDF/Procedures.pdf>. The revised *Procedures* document goes into effect immediately. CCNE publishes separate accreditation procedures guiding the accreditation of nurse residency and fellowship programs.

A summary of changes is presented as follows:

- Updates CCNE's definition of distance education to conform with the revised U.S. Department of Education definition (see p. 6).
- Clarifies the reporting timelines for a program when there is a change in status of its parent institution with an institutional accrediting agency (see pp. 6 and 25).
- Provides information clarifying that post-graduate APRN certificate programs pursuing initial accreditation must host an on-site evaluation concurrently with a degree program offered by the institution. Accredited post-graduate APRN certificate programs host on-site evaluations for continued accreditation based on the term of accreditation granted by the CCNE Board (see p. 9).
- Establishes a policy for conducting virtual evaluations in place of on-site evaluations when extraordinary circumstances warrant (e.g., pandemic), including conducting in-person verification visits, in accordance with new U.S. Department of Education requirements (see p. 11).

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- Revises the policy by changing the “on-site resource room” to a “virtual resource room,” requiring that the program make all evaluation resource materials available to the CCNE evaluation team in electronic form at least 7 days prior to the CCNE evaluation, whether the evaluation is conducted on site or virtually (see p. 12).
 - In response to feedback received from the community of interest during the comment period, retains the expectation that team leaders will submit the team report to CCNE within 2 weeks of the on-site evaluation (see p. 13).
 - Updates Accreditation Denied and Accreditation Withdrawn sections to align with revised U.S. Department of Education regulations, which require that programs notify students and prospective students of denial or withdrawal of accreditation within 7 business days of being notified of such an action by the accrediting agency. Additionally, the revised regulations require the accrediting agency to notify the U.S. Department of Education and other entities of the adverse action at the same time the program is notified and to notify the public within 1 business day (see pp. 15-16).
 - Provides a process for programs that have accreditation withdrawn to request an effective date that is different than the date of the adverse action. Such request must be made in writing following established timelines and must be particularly related to student protection and the imminent graduation/completion of students in the affected program (see pp. 16 and 27).
 - Establishes that actions by the CCNE Board to issue a show cause directive (i.e., “show cause as to why accreditation should not be withdrawn”) are public actions, as required by the U.S. Department of Education. Changes to federal regulations require CCNE and the program to notify various entities of said action (see p. 17).
 - Establishes that “CCNE may require a program to publicly correct any misleading or inaccurate advertising, marketing materials, published documents, or public claims regarding the program’s offerings, outcomes, and accreditation status” (see p. 19).
 - Publishes the criteria used by CCNE for monitoring increases in student enrollment (see pp. 21-22).
 - Allows the CCNE Board, at its discretion, to waive the requirement to submit a continuous improvement progress report (CIPR) when a program is awarded an accreditation term of less than 3 years as the program would already be under special monitoring by CCNE during the shortened term of accreditation (see p. 22).
 - Establishes the effective date of decisions by the CCNE Hearing Committee to affirm or amend adverse decisions of the CCNE Board as “no earlier than the date of the Hearing Committee’s decision.” Further, if the CCNE Hearing Committee remands an action to the CCNE Board for further consideration, the effective date of a resulting adverse action will be “no earlier than the Hearing Committee’s decision to remand” (see p. 27).
 - Establishes policies for the recording and transcription of an appeal hearing (see p. 29).
 - Revises the actions that may be taken by a CCNE Hearing Committee, consistent with revised U.S. Department of Education regulations (see p. 30).

- Updates CCNE's records retention practices to reflect revised U.S. Department of Education regulations (see p. 34).

Finally, no sections were added to or removed from the *Procedures* document.

If you have any questions about these revisions, please contact Benjamin Murray, Deputy Executive Director, at 202-887-6791 x275 or at bmurray@ccneaccreditation.org.

Thank you.

