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CCNEACCREDITATION.ORG

June 7, 2021

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: Opportunity to Comment on Proposed Revisions to *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--invites your comments about proposed revisions to the *CCNE Procedures for Accreditation of Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Programs*. 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.

The [proposed Procedures document](#) shows changes in tracking. As you review the document, you will find that many of the proposed changes are non-substantive in nature and codify existing CCNE practice. A summary of proposed substantive changes is provided below.

- Updates CCNE's definition of distance education to conform with the revised definition used by the U.S. Department of Education (see p. 6).
- Clarifies the reporting timelines programs are to follow in the event there is a change in status with an institutional accreditation agency (see pp. 6 and 26).
- Provides information regarding the scheduling of accredited post-graduate APRN certificate programs hosting an on-site evaluation for continued accreditation (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 pp. 11-12).
- Updates sections titled Accreditation Denied and Accreditation Withdrawn to align with revised U.S. Department of Education regulations, which require that programs notify students and prospective students of denial or withdrawal of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 that program's student cohort (see pp. 16 and 28).
- 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. 18).
- 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. 20).
- Publishes the criteria used by CCNE for monitoring increases in student enrollment (see pp. 22-23).
- 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. 23).
- 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. 28).
- Establishes policies for the recording and transcription of an appeal hearing (see p. 30).
- Revises the actions that may be taken by a CCNE Hearing Committee, consistent with revised U.S. Department of Education regulations (see pp. 30-31).
- Updates CCNE's records retention practices to reflect revised U.S. Department of Education regulations (see pp. 35-36).

Finally, no new sections are proposed and no sections are proposed to be removed from the *Procedures* document.

It is the intent of CCNE that any revisions to its procedures will serve the following purposes:

1. reflect the CCNE values, good accreditation practices, and what occurs in practice;

2. ensure consistency within and among CCNE publications;
3. be responsive to constituents' suggestions for clarifying the procedures; and/or
4. continue to satisfy the U.S. Department of Education regulations and the U.S. Secretary of Education's *Criteria for Recognition*.

CCNE looks forward to receiving your comments regarding the proposed changes to the procedures. Please submit your comments to CCNE by June 28, 2021. **Email comments to ccneprocedures@ccneaccreditation.org**. When submitting your comments, please use "Comments on CCNE Education Procedures" as the Subject to the email.

CCNE values your input and will consider all written comments before adopting final changes to the procedures. Once the CCNE Board of Commissioners approves a revised *Procedures* document, it will go into effect immediately. If you have any questions about the proposed changes or the revision process, please contact Ms. Renée Kalan, CCNE Accreditation Manager, at 202-887-6791 x230 or rkalan@ccneaccreditation.org.

Thank you.

