

**Co-Regulation of Nursing Education Programs - 2015**  
**Texas Board of Nursing (BON) and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB)**

The co-regulation of nursing education programs in Texas provides a collaborative approach to ensuring that the nursing programs adhere to state education regulations and nursing requirements, thus strengthening both approval processes. The education rules support the mission of the BON to protect the public by ensuring that graduates will be safe, competent nurses.

Nursing education programs that require THECB approval are those housed in

- Degree granting nursing programs in state colleges and universities (ADN and BSN)
- Degree granting nursing programs in career schools
- Vocational nursing (VN) programs in state community colleges
- Out-of-state nursing programs seeking to provide nursing education with a physical presence in Texas through clinicals or internships

**Review Processes:**

Review Area	THECB	BON
Considerations for Initial Approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-THECB approves the governing entity and the nursing program in state colleges and universities.</li> <li>-ICUT schools must follow SACS accreditation and approval.</li> <li>-Approves the nursing program based upon cost of program and other THECB requirements.</li> <li>-Recognizes private/independent colleges and universities based upon regional or national accreditation by the THECB-recognized accreditor.</li> <li>-Approves the governing entity of career schools or out-of-state colleges and universities based upon accreditation status.</li> <li>-THECB defers to BON on nursing curriculum content and nursing requirements.</li> <li>-Exemptions apply – If a non-ICUT school is exempted from some rules by THECB, limited monitoring will occur. Schools are subject to student data reporting and annual compliance reporting. Follow-up on compliance issues may occur.</li> <li>-No fees are charged to institutions under Certificates of Authorization.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Prior THECB approval is necessary before proposal will be considered by the BON</li> <li>-Approves nursing programs (not the governing entity) based upon compliance with Board rules</li> <li>-No exemptions are made</li> <li>-If a school is exempt by THECB, BON must scrutinize all criteria since they are not being monitored by another agency</li> <li>-If a school receives a Certificate of Authorization from THECB because they have recognized accreditation, BON must scrutinize both the governing entity and the nursing program</li> <li>-BON must scrutinize all areas in the proposal from a private/independent college or university (regionally accredited)</li> <li>-Approval fee applies</li> <li>-BON proposal process must be followed</li> <li>-BON approves new programs at scheduled Board meeting</li> <li>-Programs remain on initial approval until graduates take the NCLEX examination and an annual pass rate is above 80%</li> </ul>

	<p>Program approval considerations for public institutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-&lt;\$2 million and meets THECB rules = staff approval</li> <li>-&gt;\$2 million – Information on need, quality, cost must be approved by the Board</li> <li>-Estimated cost of program over 5 years and committed funding are major considerations.</li> </ul>	
Evidence of Need for Program	<p>For public institutions, THECB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Considers the financial stability of the governing entity and the cost of the new program.</li> <li>-Uses a supply/demand pathway model.</li> <li>-Considers the Bureau of Labor statistics and employer need</li> <li>-Considers potential job placements for graduates</li> <li>-Considers the success of other programs in the governing entity</li> <li>-Considers the needs in the community for the new program</li> <li>-Considers the adequacy of clinical learning experiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-BON reviews community support for program, especially in providing clinical learning experiences and job opportunities following graduation.</li> <li>-Evidence of opportunities for program success include: adequate qualified faculty and director, facilities provide a positive learning environment, available clinical learning experiences for students, job opportunities for graduates</li> </ul>
Standards for Administration and Organization	<p>For public institutions, THECB reviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Structure of the organization</li> <li>-Financial stability</li> <li>-Qualifications of school administration and program director</li> <li>-Organizational structure of the governing entity</li> <li>-Accreditation status</li> <li>-School catalog, advertising, enrollment materials</li> <li>-Appropriateness of the program for the mission of the institution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-BON requires the author of proposal and program director to meet specific qualifications.</li> <li>-Program director must be in place at least 6 months prior to presentation to the Board.</li> <li>-Financial resources must be available to effectively conduct the program.</li> <li>-There must be evidence that the director will have the full authority to direct all aspects of the program.</li> </ul>
Standards for Nursing Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-THECB regulations and accreditation standards for faculty qualifications must be met.</li> <li>-THECB defers to BON for nursing faculty qualification requirements</li> <li>-THECB reviews qualifications of core and support faculty based on THECB regulations and accreditation standards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Nursing faculty must meet rule-specific requirements</li> <li>-Specific nursing faculty policies must be in place including faculty orientation, development, organization, and evaluation.</li> <li>-There must be assurance that the nursing faculty will be responsible for developing, implementing, and evaluating the curriculum.</li> <li>-Adequate faculty must be available for clinical supervision and teaching responsibilities.</li> <li>-There must be a plan for nursing</li> </ul>

		faculty to be responsible for supervision and evaluation of students in clinical practice.
Standards for Students	<p>For public institutions, THECB reviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-enrollment projections</li> <li>-recruitment efforts and admission requirements</li> <li>-There must be a critical mass of qualified students to enter the program with sufficient enrollments to support the program into the future.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Number of students to be admitted annually is regulated by the Board for new programs.</li> <li>-BON requires pretesting of all students.</li> <li>-Student policies must be in place including admission, dismissal, progression, graduation, articulation, evaluation of courses and faculty.</li> <li>-Student input into department governance must be planned.</li> <li>-Faculty to student ratio in the clinical area will be 1:10 to promote patient safety.</li> <li>-BON requires that students are provided with eligibility information evidenced by a signed student receipt.</li> </ul>
Standard for Program of Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-All public institution programs must adhere to credit hour limits</li> <li>-ADN programs must follow WECM and GIPWE requirements</li> <li>-THECB will review degree requirements and curriculum for each program for public institutions.</li> <li>-Institutions under Certificates of Authorization must adhere to their institutional and programmatic accreditors' standards.</li> <li>-THECB requires that the curriculum in programs resulting in licensure to meet the standards of the appropriate regulatory bodies (BON).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Nursing content must include nursing courses which include didactic and clinical learning experiences in medical-surgical, maternal/child health, pediatrics, and mental health nursing for individuals of all ages across the lifespan.</li> <li>-Curriculum must include content to prepare graduates' competencies described in the <i>Differentiated Essential Competencies</i>.</li> <li>-Content specific to Texas nursing laws and rules must be included.</li> <li>-Faculty supervised hand-on clinical learning experiences to meet clinical objectives shall be included.</li> <li>-Signed contracts for appropriate clinical and classroom hours to meet program objectives and include major population areas must be available.</li> </ul>
Standards for Clinical Learning Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Arrangements for any essential clinical placements should be made before program approval.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Signed clinical affiliating agreements with appropriate agencies must be included to meet clinical objectives.</li> <li>-Faculty-supervised clinical learning experiences acceptable for each required clinical area must be planned.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Faculty to student ratios in clinical areas shall be 1:10 except where preceptors are used.</li> <li>-Clinical evaluation tools which measure student progression across program shall be included.</li> </ul>
Standards for Facilities, Resources, and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Adequate classroom and laboratory space, equipment, and office space should be available for the proposed program.</li> <li>-Facilities and equipment shall be equivalent to those provided at similar programs in the state and nation.</li> <li>-Library and information technology resources must be adequate for the program and meet the standards of the appropriate accrediting agencies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Facilities and nursing skills labs and equipment must be adequate to meet program objectives and scope of practice.</li> <li>-Offices, lounges, and classrooms for a conducive learning environment are required.</li> <li>-Current information technology and library access must be available.</li> </ul>
Standards for Records and Reports	Adequate records of each student's academic performance shall be securely and permanently maintained by the institution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Safe and secure storage for all formal documents must be provided.</li> <li>-Complete and organized student files shall be in place.</li> </ul>
Standards for Total Program Evaluation	-An evaluation process must be in place that will be used to assess the quality and effectiveness of the new degree program.	-TPE shall follow BON requirements.
Standards for Expansion and for Extension Sites	-Distance education is defined by the percentage of mandatory time in the presence of the instructor. A public institution must submit an Institutional Plan for Distance Education for THECB approval. Each degree program offered via distance education shall be approved by an institution's governing board.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Extension sites with same curriculum are seen as a part of main campus.</li> <li>-New extension sites need BON approval based upon criteria in the rule.</li> <li>-Programs holding national nursing accreditation do not need to get BON approval but should submit a substantive change report to the nursing accreditation organization.</li> </ul>

<p>Continuing Approval</p>	<p>For out-of-state institutions under a Certificate of Authorization: at least on an annual basis, institutions must update clinical information, including sites, degree program names, number of students and dates of clinicals.</p> <p>In state institutions do not need to report or update clinical information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The program's NCLEX examination pass rate must be at least 80%</li> <li>-There must be evidence of compliance with Board rules.</li> <li>-Annual Data Reports shall provide required information.</li> <li>-Investigations of complaints and noncompliance will be made by Board Staff.</li> <li>-Approval status may be changed to warning or conditional, or approval may be withdrawn if noncompliance issues warrant.</li> <li>-Monitoring fees may apply.</li> </ul>