

**Consideration of Change in Approval Status  
From Full Approval with Warning to Conditional Approval  
Valley Grande Institute for Academic Studies in Weslaco, Texas  
Vocational Nursing Education Program**

**Summary of Request:**

Consider the proposed change in approval status for Valley Grande Institute for Academic Studies (VGI) Vocational Nursing (VN) Education Program in Weslaco, Texas from Full Approval with Warning to Conditional Approval based upon the 2017 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate, findings in the 2016 Self-Study Report (SSR), survey findings, and areas for improvement to align with Rule 214.

**Historical Perspective:**

- The VN program has been in operation since September 1992.
- VGI is accredited by the Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES) until 2021 and approved by the Texas Workforce Commission through December 16, 2018.
- Allied health programs also offered by VGI include Limited Medical Radiologic Technologist/Phlebotomy Technician, Medical Assistant, Medical Insurance Coder & Billing Technician, and Patient Care Technician.
- The VN program director role has been fulfilled by five different directors in the past five years.
- Leonardo Galvan, RN, is the new Interim Program Director, has experience as a VN director and was approved by the Board in March 2018.
- A board ordered survey visit was conducted by Board Staff in December 2017 due to low NCLEX-PN® pass rates for two subsequent years and warning status.

**Summary of Survey Findings from December 5, 2017 survey Visit:**

**Positive Aspects of Survey Visit:**

- The program has been in existence for 25 years and has strong administrative and community support.
- The Program Director has dedicated time for administration of the program and does not carry a teaching load.
- Areas for improvement identified in the SSR have been implemented or planned.
- All courses are offered face-to-face in a classroom or in a skills lab setting.
- Four faculty members have been with the program for over 10 years.
- Administration plans to pursue grants for simulation equipment and faculty development.
- Off-site personal counseling is available to students free of charge.

### Concerns of Survey Visit:

- There have been five different program directors in the past five years.
- Course objectives lacked significant detail that allows students to identify expected outcomes for the course.
- A written faculty organization plan, including established committees with duties and responsibilities, was not available.
- Students expressed concerns about clinical faculty coverage when full-time faculty are absent and about sporadic internet connection that delays taking exams.
- The faculty group lacked a balanced mix in educational preparation and expertise.
- The Program Director shared an office with the VN Coordinator.
- The program lacked a handbook specific to nursing faculty.
- Student records that were reviewed did not contain final clinical evaluations as required by Rule 214.12.

- The NCLEX-PN® examination pass rates for the past five years are included in the table below:

<b>NCLEX Examination Year</b>	<b>BON Approval Status</b>	<b>NCLEX-RN® Examination Pass Rate</b>	<b>Number of First Time Candidates (Passed/Total)</b>
2017	Pending	76.12%	51/67
2016	Full With Warning	75.36%	52/69
2015	Full	78.18%	43/55
2014	Full	84.91%	45/53
2013	Full	94.44%	51/54

- Due to the 2015 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate of 78.18%, the program submitted a SSR in 2016. Although the program implemented measures to improve the performance of students on the national licensing examination, the NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate has continued to be below 80%.
- The Program Director and faculty members identified factors in the SSR that may have affected the pass rate and designed the following corrective measures:
  - strengthen admission, readmission and progression criteria;
  - mandate tutoring for at-risk students identified by grades;
  - revise faculty orientation program to prepare and support faculty;
  - plan consistency in clinical instruction;
  - provide feedback to faculty with data from faculty evaluations;
  - ensure consistent use of policies; and
  - review and revise entire curriculum and total program evaluation.
- The program has provided several updates to the Board regarding their corrective measures. Despite these efforts for improvement, the pass rate for 2016 was 75.36%.
- In April 2017, the Board changed the approval status of the VN program from Full Approval to Full Approval with Warning, and issued a requirement for a survey visit.
- The survey visit focused on the program's identified areas for improvement and corrective measures taken by the program.

- At the January 19-20, 2018 Board meeting, Board members accepted the report of the December 5, 2017 survey visit made to VGI Nursing (VN) Education Program in Weslaco, Texas. Five requirements and three recommendations were issued to the program. Requirements to be met included:
    - revise course objectives/outcomes to indicate expectation of student comprehension by the end of each course;
    - develop written faculty organization policies and procedures and/or by-laws for faculty committees including duties and membership of each committee;
    - provide a private office for the program director;
    - develop a process to ensure final clinical evaluations are placed and maintained in current student files; and
    - develop a comprehensive total program evaluation plan (TPE) based on Rule 214.13 and TPE Board Education Guideline 3.11.1.
- The recommendations included:
- The program is encouraged to review faculty credentials, educational preparation, and practice expertise and to develop policies that ensure faculty assignments are appropriate with a plan to cover faculty absences for clinical supervision that meets the requirements of Rule 214.7(b).
  - Administration is encouraged to evaluate the resources needed for the effective management of computer-based exams.
  - The program is encouraged to develop a Nursing Faculty Handbook that includes all required faculty policies outlined in Rule 214.7.
- Sixty-four students were currently enrolled in the program as of March 20, 2018 with prospective graduation dates of:
    - May 18, 2018 – 17 students
    - September 18, 2018 – 24 students
    - January 18, 2019 – 23 students
  - Forty-four prospective students were identified as of March 20, 2018 and projected to begin the program on April 4, 2018.

**Rationale for Recommendations:**

Rule 214.4(c)(3) states: ...."A change in approval status is based upon each program's performance and demonstrated compliance to the Board's requirements and responses to the board's recommendations. A change from one approval status to another may be determined by NCLEX-PN® examination pass rates, compliance audits, survey visits and other factors ...." Further, Rule 214.4(c)(3)(B)(i) states: "A program may be placed on conditional approval status if the pass rate of first-time NCLEX-PN® candidates... is less than 80% for three (3) consecutive examination years."

**Staff Recommendation:**

Move to change the approval status of the Valley Grande Institute for Academic Studies Vocational Nursing (VN) Education Program in Weslaco, Texas from Full Approval with Warning to Conditional Approval as indicated in the attached letter and Board Order. (See Attachment #1).

DRAFT LETTER

April 19, 2018

Leonardo Galvan, RN, Interim Director of Vocational Nursing  
Vocational Education Program  
Valley Grande Institute for Academic Studies  
345 S. Texas Blvd.  
Weslaco, Texas 78596

Dear Mr. Galvan:

At the April 19-20, 2018 meeting, members of the Texas Board of Nursing (BON) discussed the approval status for the Valley Grande Institute for Academic Studies Vocational Nursing Education Program in Weslaco, Texas,

Based upon the discussion and review of information, it was the decision of the Board to change the approval status of the Valley Grande Institute for Academic Studies Vocational Nursing Education Program in Weslaco, Texas from Full Approval with Warning to Conditional Approval as indicated in the attached Board Order.

If you have any questions or if we may be of any assistance, please contact Board Staff at [beverly.skloss@bon.texas.gov](mailto:beverly.skloss@bon.texas.gov) or 512-318-3219.

Sincerely,

Katherine A. Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN  
Executive Director

Copy: Mari Aviles, School Director  
Texas Workforce Commission  
Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools

**BEFORE THE TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING**

\*\*\*\*\*

**ORDER OF THE BOARD**

In the Matter of  
Valley Grande Institute for Academic Studies  
Vocational Nursing Education Program  
In Weslaco, Texas

A public meeting of the Texas Board of Nursing, hereinafter referred to as the Board, was held on April 19, 2018, 333 Guadalupe, Tower II, Room 225, Austin, Texas, to consider the approval status of the Valley Grande Institute for Academic Studies Vocational Nursing Education Program in Weslaco, Texas, pursuant to Section 301.157, Texas Occupations Code and 22 Tex. Admin. Code Chapter 214, based upon the 2017 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate, findings in the 2016 Self-Study Report, survey findings and areas for improvement to align with Rule 214.

After review and due consideration of the materials presented by Staff and filed by the Valley Grande Institute for Academic Studies Vocational Nursing Education Program in Weslaco, Texas, and other interested parties, if any, the Board hereby CHANGES the approval status for the Valley Grande Institute for Academic Studies Vocational Nursing Education Program in Weslaco, Texas from FULL APPROVAL WITH WARNING to CONDITIONAL APPROVAL and hereby imposes the following conditions/requirements:

1. The program shall not enroll students while on conditional approval status.
2. The program will remain on conditional approval status until the program demonstrates a pass rate for first-time candidates of at least 80% on the 2018 NCLEX-PN® examination. The NCLEX-PN® examination year is January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018.
3. The program must demonstrate full compliance with Rule 214 prior to consideration of a change in approval status.

Entered this 19th day of April, 2018

---

Katherine A. Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN  
Executive Director  
On Behalf of the Texas Board of Nursing