

**Consideration of Adding the  
National League for Nursing (NLN) Commission for Nursing Education Accreditation  
(CNEA) to the List of Board-Approved National Nursing Accreditation Organizations**

**Summary of Request:**

Consider the recommendation to add the name of the NLN CNEA to the list of Board-approved nursing accreditation agencies recognized by the United States Department of Education, and determined by Board Staff to have standards equivalent to the Board's ongoing approval standards. Any identified areas that are not equivalent to the Board's ongoing approval standards are to be monitored by the Board on an ongoing basis.

**Historical Perspective:**

- House Bill 2426 enacted by the 80<sup>th</sup> Session of the Texas Legislature initiated amendments to Rule 214.4(c)(5) and Rule 215.4(c)(5) requiring the Board to select one or more national nursing accreditation agencies, recognized by the United States Department of Education (DE), and determined by the Board to have standards equivalent to the Board's ongoing approval standards. Identified areas not equivalent to the Board's ongoing approval standards would be monitored by the Board on an ongoing basis.
- In 2007, Board Staff conducted a comprehensive comparative review of the accreditation standards for the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) and the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) with Board regulations for ongoing program approval. Board Staff also consulted with accreditation representatives for feedback on the crosswalk.
- Board Staff identified eight approval areas among the accreditation standards that were substantially equivalent to Board standards and five approval areas that were not equivalent. Based on these findings, [Education Guideline 3.2.4.a. Specific Exemptions from Education Rule Requirements For Nursing Education Programs Accredited by a Board-Approved National Nursing Accreditation Organization](#) was adopted that specified Board rules to which accredited programs would be considered exempt and Board rules to which all programs (including accredited programs) must adhere.
- These crosswalks have been updated over time as the accreditation standards have been revised.
- NLN launched a third nursing accreditation organization in 2013, and 115 programs across 29 states representing all program types have been pre-accredited or accredited by NLN CNEA.
- On May 25, 2021, NLN CNEA was recognized by the US DE as a fully accrediting agency for an initial five-year period.
- A full crosswalk of NLN CNEA standards has been developed with similar findings to those for the ACEN and CCNE crosswalks.

## Monitoring Accredited and Non-Accredited Nursing Programs:

The following tables from Education Guideline 3.2.4.a. indicate areas where accredited programs are exempt from rules and present pertinent comments:

<b>Accredited Programs - Exemptions from Rules Rules 214 and 215</b>	<b>Section Title and <i>Comments</i></b>
214.2 – 215.2	Definitions
214.3 – 215.2	Program Development, Expansion and Closure
214.4 – 215.4	Approval <i>The BON approves all <u>new</u> programs and places them on initial approval. If a program achieves national nursing accreditation, the Board considers the program’s accreditation status as one criterion, among others, for ongoing program approval.</i>
214.5 – 215.5	Philosophy/Mission and Objectives/Outcomes
214.7 – 215.7	Faculty <i>Board rules do allow faculty waivers for qualified candidates who have 50% of their graduate education completed (this provides an incentive for “grow-your-own faculty”). Board rules also allow professional programs to use Clinical Teaching Assistants as a faculty extension in the clinical area.</i>
214.11 – 215.11	Facilities, Resources and Services
214.12 – 215.12	Records and Reports
214.13 – 215.13	Total Program Evaluation <i>Evaluation criteria used by the accreditation organizations are similar to Board-identified criteria</i>

In addition, Rule 214.4(c)(4) and Rule 215.4(c)(4) waive the requirement for a regular (6-year) Board survey visit for a nursing program that is accredited by a Board-recognized national accrediting agency.

All nursing programs, whether accredited or not, **must** adhere to the exceptions to exemptions in the following table:

Accredited Programs - Sections Not Exempt Rules 214 and 215	Section Title and Specific Exception Area with Explanations
214.1- 215.1	<p>General Requirements</p> <p><i>Director and Faculty are accountable for complying with the Board's rules and regulations and the NPA.</i></p>
214.6 – 215.6	<p>Administration and Organization</p> <p><i>Board rules require program directors to have a specified number of years teaching experience with the same level of nursing education. This requirement is based on evidence related to success of programs. Other qualifications have some differences related to educational preparation and practice experience</i></p>
214.8 - 215.8	<p>Students</p> <p><i>Board rules have specific curriculum requirements related to Texas jurisprudence, eligibility and discipline, and professional comportment.</i></p>
214.9 – 215.9	<p>Program of Study</p> <p><i>Board rules require that the curriculum is based on the DEC's competencies for entry into practice at the appropriate level. A rule amendment in 2016 requires Board approval for enrollment increases above 25% for non-accredited programs only since accredited programs will submit a substantive change proposal to the accreditation organization.</i></p>
214.10 – 215.10	<p>Clinical Learning Experiences</p> <p><i>Each state has established faculty-to-student ratios for the clinical experiences and Texas programs must adhere to Texas regulations.</i></p>

The Education Guideline ends with this comment:

In spite of the few discrepancies between ongoing Board approval and continuing accreditation, research indicates that accredited nursing education programs across the country are more likely to maintain full approval from boards of nursing and experience higher NCLEX pass rates. Though the criteria for Board approval and accreditation vary, a joint approval-accreditation approach facilitates excellence in nursing education.

**Board Staff Recommendation:**

Add the name of the National League for Nursing Commission for Nursing Education Accreditation to the list of Board-approved accrediting agencies recognized by the United States Department of Education determined to have standards equivalent to the Board's ongoing approval standards. Programs with nursing accreditation may follow Education Guideline 3.2.4.a. Any standards not equivalent will continue to be monitored by the Board.