

### **Report of Findings from Self-Study Reports For 2021 NCLEX Examination Pass Rates**

Thirteen Professional Nursing Education and 10 Vocational Nursing Education programs experienced drops below 80% in their 2021 NCLEX examination pass rates and were required to conduct a Self-Study to determine possible causative factors for the pass rates. Most programs focused on the effects of the pandemic on student performance. The following common findings from the reports validated the importance of the certain educational practices in nursing education:

1. For students who enrolled in the program after the pandemic began, **student socialization** to the program, to the faculty, to their peers, and to nursing as a profession was missing and never really occurred. Reality: socialization in nursing education is a valuable aspect of learning and connecting with the discipline.
2. Interferences with the **balance of work/school/family life** affected the students' learning and resulted in drops in grades. Education slipped to a lower level in student priorities among student because of more basic family concerns. Reality: change bring stresses to all areas in one's life and affects education.
3. The **loss of hands-on patient care** in health care settings resulted in lost opportunities for application of didactic content to practice and to learn to make clinical judgments at the bedside. Faculty feedback to students for clinical evaluations was missing.
4. Programs failed to follow their established grading **policies**. Test security was questioned. Admission criteria were not consistently followed.
5. The **abrupt switch to online education** was met with challenges:  
There was difficulty maintaining engagement with students online.  
In some situations, students perceived a lack of organization in the learning management systems and in adhering to syllabi.  
Problems arose due to limited communications, suggesting the important value of face-to-face communications between faculty and students.  
New teaching strategies were foreign and uncomfortable to students who relied on the familiar.  
Faculty reported feeling ill-prepared to teach online.  
Students complained of online/video conferencing fatigue.  
Students missed the chance for questions/answers in the classroom.

6. The increased **turnover** of program directors and nursing faculty created instability and insecurity among the students who were looking to the leadership as a consistent variable in the program. Some faculty resigned because of COVID-19, or because of the heavier workload. There was a tendency to recruit more adjunct faculty to meet the needs. As new leadership and faculty entered, the need for an orientation program was paramount, but there were often inconsistencies in onboarding new faculty. Some new faculty had no preparation in education.
7. There was a growing reliance on the use of **standardized examinations** as a help.

In spite of the challenges and hardships during 2021, the 2021 NCLEX pass rates for 46 RN programs and 44 VN programs was over 90%. During the summer of 2022, Board Staff surveyed these programs to seek their explanations for their success.

A question to VN and RN programs was: *To what do you attribute your success on the NCLEX examination for 2021?*

The theme that surfaced in most of the responses acknowledged the commitment and dedication of the FACULTY with such positive attributes as:

- Faculty working countless extra hours...
- Faculty commitment and flexibility in their own learning...
- Dedicated faculty...
- Remediation of students by faculty..
- Faculty's enforcement of policies even in difficult time...
- Consistent faculty leadership and teaching...
- Faculty building strong relationships with students...
- Faculty perseverance and creativity...
- Faculty accessible to students...
- Incredible instructors...
- Faculty – the primary attribute to program success.

Other attributes in the survey data worthy of mention were:

- Dedicated students!
- Student support provided by the school...
- Emphasis on teaching clinical judgment...
- NCLEX preparatory review...
- Ongoing collaboration with clinical partners...
- Clinicals balanced with simulation, case studies, and lab experiences...
- Active involvement in online learning...
- Administrative support.

This report is for information. No action is required.