

Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services

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WISCONSIN BOARD OF NURSING

GUIDELINES FOR NURSING SCHOOL APPROVAL AND REFRESHER COURSE APPROVAL

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I. Role of the Board of Nursing

The Board of Nursing has the legal authority to establish minimum standards for schools for professional nurses and schools for licensed practical nurses in Wisconsin (Ch. 441.01, Wis. Stats.). All new nursing schools for professional nurses or licensed practical nurses in Wisconsin shall be approved by the Board in order to operate (Ch. 441.12, Wis. Stats.).

Wisconsin Administrative Code Chapter N 1 relating to approval for schools of nursing and approval of nursing refresher courses was adopted pursuant to the Board's authority in ss. 15.08 (5) (b) and 441.01 (3), Wis. Stats.

II. Nursing School Approval Process

Step 1: Authorization to Plan a School of Nursing (Chapter N 1.03, Wis. Admin. Code)

An institution that wishes to establish and conduct a school of nursing for professional or practical nursing shall file an application with the Board of Nursing; form #3025, 'Application for Authorization to Plan a Nursing School,' which may be found on the DSPS website at <http://dsps.wi.gov/Licenses-Permits/Credentialing/education-exams>.

- "School of practical nursing" refers to a school preparing students for practical nurse licensure.
- "School of professional nursing" refers to a school preparing students for registered nurse licensure which includes schools granting certificate of completion for practical nurse licensure or professional nurse licensure.

An application for authorization to plan a nursing school must include the following:

1. Name and address of the controlling institution and evidence of the accreditation status of the controlling institution.
2. Statement of intent to establish a school of nursing, including the academic and licensure levels of all programs to be offered and the primary method of instruction.
3. Evidence of the availability of sufficient clinical facilities and resources.
4. Plans to recruit and employ a qualified educational administrator and qualified faculty.
5. A proposed timeline for planning and implementing the program and intended date of entry for the first class.

The Board shall make a decision on the application to plan a nursing school within two months of receipt of the completed application and will notify the controlling institution of the action taken on the application.

Step 2: Authorization to Admit Students (Chapter N 1.04, Wis. Admin. Code)

Following the granting of authorization to plan a nursing school by the Board of Nursing, the school of nursing shall file an application for authorization to admit students with the Board in order to request approval to begin to admit students to the school; form #3027, 'Application for Authorization to Admit Students,' may be found on the the DSPS website at <http://dsps.wi.gov/Licenses-Permits/Credentialing/education-exams>.

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An application for authorization to admit students must include the following:

1. Verification of employment of an educational administrator meeting requirements in N 1.08 (2); form #1114, 'Faculty/Educational Administrator Qualification Record,' must be submitted and may be found on the DSPS website at <http://dsps.wi.gov/Licenses-Permits/Credentialing/education-exams>.
2. Evidence of provision of faculty meeting the qualifications in N 1.08; form #1114, 'Faculty/Educational Administrator Qualification Record,' must be submitted for each faculty and may be found on the DSPS website at <http://dsps.wi.gov/Licenses-Permits/Credentialing/education-exams>.
3. The school of nursing's philosophy and objectives.
4. An overview of curriculum including:
 - a. Content
 - b. Course sequence
 - c. Course descriptions
 - d. Program evaluation plan
 - e. Course syllabi for the first year and plan for subsequent years
5. Verification of the establishment of student policies for admission, progression, retention and graduation.
6. Verification of students' ability to acquire clinical skills. Submit a completed form #1004, 'Clinical/Facility Selection and Simulated Settings Experiences,' for each clinical facility or simulated setting experience; form #1004 may be found on the DSPS website at <http://dsps.wi.gov/Licenses-Permits/Credentialing/education-exams>. In addition, submit the following:
 - a. Letter of intent or contracts from clinical facilities and documentation of the facility type, size, number of beds and type of patients.
 - b. Documentation of simulation equipment and experiences.
7. Updated timeline for implementing the school's program(s) and intended date of entry of the first class.

The Board shall make a decision on the application to admit students within two months of receipt of the completed application and notify the controlling institution of the action taken on the application. Once a school receives authorization to admit, the school may begin admitting students while seeking to obtain program approval. Withdrawal of authorization may occur if the school fails to meet and maintain standards in N 1.08.

Step 3: School of Nursing Initial Approval (Chapter N 1.05, Wis. Admin. Code)

A nursing school that has received authorization to admit students is eligible to apply for approval upon graduation of the first class or eligibility to sit for the NCLEX, but may not apply later than graduation of the third class (3 years). The Board shall approve the school upon verification that it is in compliance with standards in N 1.07 and N 1.08.

An application for school of nursing approval must include all of the following:

1. Self-evaluation report setting forth evidence of compliance with the standards in N 1.08. Form #3029, 'Nursing School Self-evaluation Form For Initial Approval,' must be submitted to the Board; form #3029 may be found on the DSPS website at <http://dsps.wi.gov/Licenses-Permits/Credentialing/education-exams>.
2. The school's ongoing systematic evaluation plan including an evaluation of the NCLEX success rate.

The Board shall make a decision on the application for school approval within two months of the completed site survey or receipt of the completed application, whichever is later.

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Site Survey and Site Survey Report

The board may conduct a site survey of the school of nursing. Form #3030, 'Nursing School Survey Report Form,' is completed by the Board representatives as part of the survey. A determination to conduct a site survey shall occur within two months of receipt of a completed application for school approval.

Conditional Approval

The Board may grant conditional approval. The notice of conditional approval shall contain a short statement in plain language specifying the standards upon which the conditional approval is based. A school of nursing that receives conditional approval may not admit new students to the school of nursing until the school of nursing receives full approval. The school of nursing may apply for full approval in three months from the date the school of nursing receives conditional approval.

Denial of Request for School of Nursing Approval

If the Board denies the school of nursing approval request, the notice of denial shall contain a short statement in plain language specifying the standards upon which the denial is based.

If the Board denies school of nursing approval, the controlling institution shall do all of the following:

1. Following the timeframe established by the board, implement the transfer of enrolled students to an approved school of nursing and report the date of transfer for each student to the Board.
2. Arrange for the secure storage and access to academic records and transcripts for the next 50 years. Provide the board with the name and address of the educational institution or other organization that will be responsible for the secure storage and access to academic records and transcripts for 50 years.

NOTE: Closure of the school of nursing occurs when the last student has transferred.

A school of nursing denied approval or granted conditional approval may request a hearing within 30 calendar days after the notice of denial is sent. A school may be granted a stay of the school closure during the appeal process.

III. Approval of Out-of-State Schools of Nursing (N 1.06, Wis. Admin. Code)

An out-of-state school of nursing shall be approved and shall maintain approval if all of the following requirements are met and maintained:

1. The school is approved by the board of the state in which the school is located.
2. The school is accredited by a nursing accreditation body recognized by the Wisconsin board.

An application form and verification of the above information must be submitted to the Board; form #3067OEE, 'Request for Approval of Out-of-State School of Nursing,' may be found on the DSPS website at <http://dsps.wi.gov/Licenses-Permits/Credentialing/education-exams>. Once approved, notice will be sent to the out-of-state school of nursing.

NOTE: Schools of professional nursing that grant a certificate of completion must hold accreditation at the level of the complete degree at which a diploma is conferred.

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- Example One: A school of professional nursing grants a certificate of completion when a student has completed the portion of the program equivalent to a diploma in practical nursing; the school would be required to hold accreditation at the level of associate or bachelor's level based on the diploma conferred when the program is completed.
- Example Two: A school of professional nursing grants a certificate of completion when a student has completed the portion of the program equivalent to a diploma in professional nursing; the school would be required to hold accreditation at the level

IV. Accreditation (Chapter N 1.07, Wis. Admin. Code)

A school of nursing must receive nursing accreditation by a Board of Nursing recognized accreditation agency within three years of school approval by the Board. Schools will be required to provide the Board with proof of maintained accreditation. Current Board recognized accreditation agencies include Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) and Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN).

- Schools of nursing, which have received Board approval prior to July 1, 2014 must receive nursing accreditation by a board recognized nursing accreditation agency by July 1, 2017 and provide proof of accreditation to the Board.
- Schools of professional nursing, in-state and out-of-state, that grant a certificate of completion must hold accreditation at the level of the complete degree at which a diploma is conferred.
 - Example One: A school of professional nursing grants a certificate of completion when a student has completed the portion of the program equivalent to a diploma in practical nursing; the school would be required to hold accreditation at the level of associate or bachelor's level based on the diploma conferred when the program is completed.
 - Example Two: A school of professional nursing grants a certificate of completion when a student has completed the portion of the program equivalent to a diploma in professional nursing; the school would be required to hold accreditation at the level
- Failure to maintain nursing accreditation shall result in withdrawal of school approval by the Board; procedures listed in N 1.11 (2) shall commence.

V. Standards (Chapter N 1.08, Wis. Admin. Code)

All approved schools must comply with the standards under N 1.08 as well as all other requirements in Chapter N 1 in the following areas relating to school approval:

- Organization and administration
- Educational administrator and faculty (including faculty exceptions)
- Curriculum
- Clinical learning experiences
- Preceptors
- Evaluations

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Organization and Administration

Institution assumes legal responsibility for overall conduct of the school of nursing and shall do all of the following:

1. Designate an educational administrator, establish administrative policies, and provide fiscal, human, physician, clinical and technical learning resources adequate to support school processes, security and outcomes.
2. Maintain institutional accreditation.
3. Develop and maintain written school of nursing administrative policies which are in accord with the institution.
4. Have written contracts between school of nursing and institutions which offer associated academic study, clinical facilities and agencies for related services for students.

Educational Administrator

Qualifications for the educational administrator include all of the following:

1. Current, active registered nurse license or privilege to practice in Wisconsin that is not encumbered.
2. Graduate degree with a major in nursing.
3. Knowledge of learning principles for adult education, including nursing curriculum development, administration and evaluation and either educational preparation or 2 years experience as an instructor in a nursing education program within the last 5 years.
4. Current knowledge of nursing practice.

Termination, Resignation or Retirement of Educational Administrator

Institution must notify the Board within 48 hours of the termination, resignation or retirement of an educational Administrator and designate the interim educational administrator within 5 business days. The institution may request board approval of an interim educational administrator who does not meet the full qualification. The interim educational administrator may serve no longer than 6 months. The institution may request an extension of time based upon hardship.

For additional details, please refer to form #1114, 'Faculty/Educational Administrator Qualification Record.'

Faculty

The school of nursing shall have evidence of faculty meeting the standards on file in the school of nursing office and available upon request to the Board.

Professional nursing faculty must meet all of the following qualifications:

1. Hold a current, active registered nurse license or privilege to practice in Wisconsin that is not encumbered.
2. Graduate degree with a major in nursing. Interprofessional faculty teaching non-clinical nursing courses shall have advanced preparation appropriate for the content being taught.

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Practical nursing faculty must meet all of the following qualifications:

1. Hold a current, active registered nurse license or privilege to practice in Wisconsin that is not encumbered.
2. Baccalaureate degree with a major in nursing.

Please refer to form #1114, Faculty/Educational Administrator Qualification Record, for additional details.

Faculty Exceptions

An educational administrator may apply to the Board for exceptions to faculty requirements if recruitment of fully-qualified faculty has been unsuccessful.

A school of nursing granted an exception for faculty shall provide the faculty member with a supervisor who meets the qualifications in N 1.08 (3)(b) and (c). A minimum of 50% of faculty must meet the faculty qualifications.

For specific details regarding exceptions, please refer to form #2662, 'Request for Nursing Faculty Exception.'

Curriculum

The curriculum shall enable the student to develop the nursing knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for the level, scope and standards of competent nursing practice expected at the level of licensure. All curriculum shall be developed by faculty with a graduate degree. Curriculum shall be revised as necessary to maintain a program that reflects advances in health care and its delivery.

The curriculum shall include all of the following:

1. Evidence-based learning experiences and methods of instruction consistent with the written curriculum plan. The methods of instruction may include distance education methods.
2. Diverse didactic and clinical learning experiences consistent with program outcomes.
3. Coursework shall include all of the following:
 - a. Content in the biological, physical, social and behavioral sciences to provide a foundation for safe and effective nursing practice.
 - b. Content regarding professional responsibilities, legal and ethical issues and history and trends in nursing and health care.
 - c. Didactic content and supervised clinical experiences in the prevention of illness and the promotion, restoration and maintenance of health in patients across the lifespan and from diverse cultural, ethnic, social and economic backgrounds.

Clinical Learning Experiences

Patient experiences must occur in a variety of clinical or simulated settings and must include all of the following:

1. Integrating patient safety principles throughout the didactic and clinical coursework.
2. Implementing evidence-based practice to integrate best research with clinical expertise and patient values for optimal care, including skills to identify and apply best practices to nursing care.

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3. Providing patient-centered culturally competent care that recognizes that the patient or designee is the source of control and full partner in providing coordinated care by doing the following:
 - a. Respecting patient differences, values, preferences and expressed needs.
 - b. Involving patients or designees in decision-making and care management.
 - c. Coordinating and managing patient care across settings.
 - d. Explaining appropriate and accessible interventions to patients and populations that may positively affect their ability to achieve healthy lifestyles.
 - e. Collaborating with interprofessional teams to foster open communication, mutual respect and shared decision-making in order to achieve quality patient care.
 - f. Participating in quality improvement processes to monitor patient care outcomes, identify possibility of hazards and errors and collaborate in the development and testing of changes that improve the quality and safety of health care systems.
 - g. Using information technology to communicate, mitigate errors and support decision-making.
4. All cooperating agencies selected for clinical experiences must have standards which demonstrate concern for the patient and evidence the skillful application of all measures of safe nursing practices.
5. All faculty teaching clinical or practicum courses shall be experienced in the clinical area of the course and maintain clinical expertise.
6. Faculty-supervised clinical practice shall include all of the following:
 - a. Development of skills in direct patient care.
 - b. Making clinical judgments.
 - c. Care and management of both individuals and groups of patients across the lifespan.
7. Delegation to and supervision of other health care providers.
8. Clinical experiences shall be supervised by qualified faculty.
9. All student clinical experiences, including those with preceptors, shall be directed by nursing faculty.

Preceptors

Preceptors shall be approved by the faculty of the school of nursing and the school shall provide each preceptor with an orientation concerning the roles and responsibilities of the students, faculty and preceptors. The preceptor shall have clearly documented roles and responsibilities.

Clinical preceptors shall have an unencumbered license or privilege to practice in Wisconsin as a nurse at or about the licensure level for which the student is being prepared. The preceptors shall demonstrate competencies related to the area of assigned clinical teaching responsibilities.

Evaluation

The school of nursing shall implement a comprehensive, systematic plan for ongoing evaluation. Evidence of implementation shall reflect progress toward or achievement of program outcomes.

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VI. NCLEX Pass Rates (Chapter N 1.09, Wis. Admin. Code)

The school of nursing NCLEX pass rate includes all programs or tracks at the school of nursing. The board shall consider both the registered nurse NCLEX and practical nurse NCLEX pass rates when evaluating a school of professional nursing that grants a certificate of completion for practical nursing.

NCLEX Pass Rate Standard

A school of nursing shall meet the NCLEX pass rate standard by meeting one of the following:

- The annual NCLEX pass rate of graduates taking NCLEX for the first time is a minimum of 80%.
- The annual NCLEX pass rate of all graduates taking the NCLEX, including those who repeat the exam, is a minimum of 80%. The school shall submit an explanation or analysis documentation and the school's plan to meet the pass rate of those who take the NCLEX for the first time; the plan does not require Board approval.

NCLEX Pass Rate Standard Not Met

If the NCLEX pass rate standard is not met, the school of nursing shall receive a warning letter. The school shall identify factors that are potentially affecting the low NCLEX pass rate and submit an institutional plan for assessment and improvement of NCLEX results, including outcomes and timeframes which shall be approved by the Board no later than July 1st. The plan shall address administration, faculty, students, curriculum, resources and policies.

The school of nursing shall submit annual progress reports to the board including the outcomes of the institutional approved plan as long as the NCLEX pass rate standard is not met.

VII. Continuation of School of Nursing Approval (Chapter N 1.10, Wis. Admin. Code)

Approved schools of nursing must file with the Board all of the following:

1. An annual self-evaluation report on a form approved by the Board.
 - a. Form #3028, 'In-state Nursing School Self-evaluation Report for Continuation of Approval,' will be sent to each approved in-state nursing school on record each February and must be completed and returned to the Board by March 1st each year.
 - b. Form #3068OEE, 'Out-of-State Nursing School Self-evaluation Report for Continuation of Approval,' will be sent to each approved out-of-state nursing school on record each February and must be completed and returned to the Board by March 1st of each year.
2. All documents submitted to or received from nursing accreditation agencies.
3. Notification of withdrawal or change in school nursing accreditation status.

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The Board of Nursing may review the school of nursing if the school experiences the following circumstances:

1. Change in school nursing accreditation status.
2. Nursing accreditation reports that indicate standards are not being met.
3. Complaints regarding the conduct of the school are received and it is necessary to validate the complaints.
4. Failure to meet NCLEX pass rate standards listed in Chapter N 1.09 for more than two (2) consecutive years.
5. Violation of any of the rules under Chapter N 1.

The Board's review may include the following:

1. Site survey at the school of nursing.
2. Self-study report provided by the school of nursing.
3. Progress report provided by the school of nursing.

If the Board determines that N 1.08 standards are not being met, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The school of nursing shall submit an institutional plan, including timelines, to correct identified deficiencies in the school of nursing.
2. The Board shall review the proposed institutional plan and may make modifications to the plan.
3. The school of nursing shall draft and file progress reports as requested by the Board.
4. The Board may withdraw approval if the school of nursing continues to not meet standards.

VIII. Closure of School of Nursing - Voluntary and Withdrawal of Approval (Chapter N 1.11, Wis. Admin. Code)

Voluntary Closure

When a school of nursing intends to close, the institution shall do all of the following:

1. Submit to the Board a plan of intent to close a school of nursing which must include the following:
 - a. Date of the intended closure.
 - b. Reason for the closure.
 - c. Place for students who have not completed their nursing education.
2. Ensure that the school of nursing is maintained, including retention of adequate number of faculty and approved curriculum, until the last student is transferred or graduates from the school of nursing.
3. Notify the Board of the name and address of the educational institution or other organization that will be responsible for secure storage and access to academic records and transcripts for 50 years.

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Withdrawal of Board of Nursing Approval

If the Board withdraws approval of the school of nursing, the notice of withdrawal of approval shall contain a short statement in plain language indicating the basis for withdrawal of approval. The school of nursing may request a hearing within 30 calendar days after the mailing date of the notice.

The institution shall do all of the following if approval of the school is withdrawn by the Board:

1. Implement the time frame established by the board for transfer to enrolled students to an approved school and report to the board the date of transfer for each student by name
2. Arrange for the secure storage and access to academic records and transcripts for the next 50 years.
3. Provide the Board with the name and address of the educational institution or other organization that will be responsible for secure storage and access to academic records and transcripts for 50 years
4. Close the school when the last student has transferred
5. Submit progress reports during the closure process upon request of the Board

NOTE: The school of nursing may be granted a stay of the school closure during the appeal process.

IX. Nursing Refresher Course Approval (Chapter N 1.12, Wis. Admin. Code)

A nursing refresher course is intended for nurses who have not been practicing for five years or more.

Faculty

The instructor of a nursing refresher course must have all of the following qualifications:

1. Masters degree in nursing.
2. Recent clinical experience or clinical teaching experience.

If a preceptor is used for a nursing refresher course, the preceptor is selected by the instructor using criteria developed for the course and the instructor must provide supervision of the preceptor.

Professional Nurse Content

A nurse refresher course designed for professional nurses must have all of the following professional nurse content:

1. Theory portion including all of the following:
 - a. Nursing process review
 - b. Infection control
 - c. Medication and pharmacology update
 - d. Communication
 - e. Documentation and reporting
 - f. Supervision and delegation
2. Skills lab of at least 25 hours including basic nursing skills and a technology and equipment update.

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3. Direct supervision or precepted clinical experience of 100 hours or more performed in a hospital, clinic, long-term care facility or subacute facility

Practical Nurse Content

A nurse refresher course designed for practical nurses must have all of the following practical nurse content:

1. Theory portion including all of the following:
 - a. Nursing process review
 - b. Infection control
 - c. Medication and pharmacology update
 - d. Recent trends in nursing techniques and responsibilities
 - e. Communication
 - f. Documentation and reporting
 - g. Supervision and delegation
 - h. Aging population
2. Skills lab of at least 15 hours including basic nursing skills review and a technology and equipment update.
3. Directly supervised or precepted clinical experience of 70 hours or more performed in a hospital, clinic, long-term care facility or subacute facility

Nursing Refresher Course Approval Process

The Board will review curriculum of nurse refresher courses that are submitted by course providers who wish to have the course included on the list of approved courses; to facilitate the review, the provider must submit completed form #3066OEE, 'Request for Nursing Refresher Course Approval.' Individual course participants shall be required to submit course curriculum only if the course is not included on the Board's approved list of nursing refresher courses which may be found on the DSPS website at <http://dsps.wi.gov/Licenses-Permits/Credentialing/education-exams>.