

# Mississippi Nursing Degree Programs

## Accreditation Standards



Effective March 19, 2020

Office of Academic and Student Affairs  
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## **I. AUTHORITY**

The revised "Accreditation Standards and Rules and Regulations for Mississippi Nursing Degree Programs" are promulgated in accordance with (a) and (b), Miss. Code (2008 Supp.) '37-129-1, et seq., which empowers and requires the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning (the Board) to:

- (a) Establish by rules and regulations and promulgate uniform standards for accreditation of schools of nursing in the state of Mississippi (1) in so far as concerns the eligibility of graduates of such schools to take the examination prescribed by law to become registered nurses authorized to practice the profession of nursing as registered nurses in Mississippi, and (2) in so far as concerns student nurses attending such schools being eligible to participate in any student nurse scholarship program or other program of assistance now existing or hereafter established by legislative enactment;
- (b) Issue to such schools of nursing upon an annual basis certificates of accreditation as may be proper under such standards.

The Board, in recognizing that each unit in nursing offering nursing degree programs has individual characteristics and goals, maintains that each shall implement its own philosophy, purposes, and objectives. All programs in nursing shall be based on sound educational principles under the guidance of a competent faculty. The total program of nursing education shall meet the required standards of accreditation as prescribed by the Board. Mississippi nursing schools (units in nursing) should prepare students for nursing careers according to the type of program that they offer. Rigid conformity to a specific and fixed curriculum is not expected. Rather, the Board approves programs which are of superior caliber and encourages creative and intelligent experimentation based on sound principles.

## **II. PURPOSES FOR ACCREDITATION**

The purposes for accreditation of nursing education programs are:

1. To set minimum standards for educational programs preparing nurses for practice at all levels.
2. To grant official recognition to new and established nursing education programs that meet established standards.
3. To ensure that graduates are prepared for safe, current, and appropriate scope of practice relative to type of nursing education program and state laws governing nursing.
4. To encourage continuing program improvement through assessment, evaluation and consultation.

## **III. STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION**

All Nursing Education Programs must be located in or otherwise accredited as a post-secondary educational institution with appropriate local and state governing boards' approval to grant the appropriate degree or certificate. The educational institution must be regionally accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

All Nursing Education Programs must be accredited by a national nursing education accrediting body approved by the United States Department of Education. National accreditation ensures the quality and integrity of associate, baccalaureate, graduate and doctoral degree nursing programs and holds nursing programs accountable to the educational community, the nursing profession and the public. The accrediting bodies for professional nursing education are Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN), Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) and the Commission for Nursing Education Accreditation (C-NEA). The accrediting body for nurse anesthesia programs is the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs (COA).

## **STANDARD I: MISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION**

**Mission and program outcomes are congruent with the institution, reflect professional standards and guidelines for quality nursing education, demonstrate effective administration to achieve program outcomes and consider the needs of the community of interest.**

### 1. National Standards

#### a. ACEN

##### Standard 1: Mission and Administrative Capacity

The mission of the nursing education unit reflects the governing organization's core values and is congruent with its mission/goals. The governing organization and program have administrative capacity resulting in effective delivery of the nursing program and achievement of identified program outcomes.

##### Standard 3: Students

Student policies and service supports the achievement of the end-of-program student learning outcomes and program outcomes of the nursing program.

##### Standard 4: Curriculum

The curriculum supports the achievement of the end-of-program student learning outcomes and program outcomes and is consistent with safe practice in contemporary healthcare environments.

#### b. CCNE

##### Standard I: Program Quality: Mission and Governance

The mission, goals, and expected program outcomes are congruent with those of the parent institution, reflect professional nursing standards and guidelines, and consider the needs and expectations of the community of interest. Policies of the parent institution and nursing program clearly support the program's mission, goals, and expected outcomes. The faculty and students of the program are involved in the governance of the program and in the ongoing efforts to improve program quality.

##### Standard II: Program Quality: Institutional Commitment and Resources

The parent institution demonstrates ongoing commitment to and support for the nursing program. The institution makes resources available to enable the program to achieve its mission, goals, and expected outcomes. The faculty and

staff, as resources of the program, enable the achievement of the mission, goals, and expected program outcomes.

2. State Specific Requirements
  - a. Minimum education requirements for administrators are:
    - Associate degree programs – Graduate degree in nursing from a regionally accredited institution.
    - Baccalaureate and higher degree programs – Doctoral degree in nursing; or graduate degree in nursing and a doctoral degree from a regionally accredited institution.
  - b. All – unencumbered current license to practice in Mississippi.
  - c. All – satisfy a criminal history background check.
  - d. All – minimum of five (5) years of experience in a registered nursing education program to include teaching, curriculum development and program evaluation.
  - e. All – leadership, management, and/or administrative experience in the discipline of nursing.
  - f. All – a minimum of two years of clinical experience.

## **STANDARD II: FACULTY AND STAFF**

**Sufficient number of qualified faculty and staff are involved in the governance and administration of the program and serve as resources for the achievement of the program mission, goals, and outcomes.**

1. National Standards
  - a. ACEN
    - Standard 1: Mission and Administrative Capacity  
The mission of the nursing education unit reflects the governing organization's core values and is congruent with its mission/goals. The governing organization and program have administrative capacity resulting in effective delivery of the nursing program and achievement of identified program outcomes.
    - Standard 2: Faculty and Staff  
Qualified and credentialed faculty are sufficient in number to ensure the achievement of the end-of-program student learning outcomes and programs outcomes. Sufficient and qualified staff are available to support the nursing education unit.
  - b. CCNE
    - Standard I: Program Quality: Mission and Governance  
The mission, goals, and expected program outcomes are congruent with those of the parent institution, reflect professional nursing standards and guidelines, and consider the needs and expectations of the community of interest. Policies of the parent institution and nursing program clearly support the program's mission, goals, and expected outcomes. The faculty and students of the

program are involved in the governance of the program and in the ongoing efforts to improve program quality.

Standard II: Program Quality: Institutional Commitment and Resources

The parent institution demonstrates ongoing commitment to and support for the nursing program. The institution makes resources available to enable the program to achieve its mission, goals, and expected outcomes. The faculty and staff as resources of the program, enables the achievement of the mission, goals, and expected program outcomes.

Standard IV: Program Effectiveness: Assessment and Achievement of Program Outcomes

The program is effective in fulfilling its mission and goals as evidenced by achieving expected program outcomes. Program outcomes include student outcomes, faculty outcomes, and other outcomes identified by the program. Data on program effectiveness are used to foster ongoing program improvement.

2. State Specific Requirements
  - a. All nursing faculty (full-time, part-time, and adjunct) in nursing programs must have a minimum of a graduate degree in nursing from a regionally accredited institution.
  - b. The majority of nursing faculty in graduate nursing programs must also have doctoral degrees from regionally accredited institutions.
  - c. All nursing faculty (full-time, part-time, and adjunct) must have a minimum of one year of clinical experiences as a registered nursing.
  - d. All nursing faculty (full-time, part-time, and adjunct) must hold an unencumbered license to practice in Mississippi.
  - e. All nursing faculty (full-time, part-time and adjunct) must satisfy a criminal history background check.
  - f. All full-time nursing faculty must implement an annual professional development plan, which includes ten (10) contact hours of continuing education each academic year. Part-time and adjunct faculty must satisfy the professional development requirement in accordance with their designated FTE.
  - g. Preceptors (e.g. mentors, guides, coaches) shall be academically/experientially prepared at or beyond the level for which the preceptor service is rendered and shall have a minimum of one year of experience.
  - h. All non-nurse faculty (interdisciplinary) must be academically/experientially prepared at or beyond the level for which teaching/clinical service is rendered, shall have a minimum of one year experience in the related field and satisfy a criminal history background check.

**STANDARD III: STUDENTS**

**Policies for student admission, progression and graduation are consistent with those of the parent institution, nondiscriminatory, publicly accessible, and support student learning and program outcomes.**

1. National Standards
  - a. ACEN  
Standard 3: Students  
 Student policies and services support the achievement of the end-of-program student learning outcomes and program outcomes of the nursing program.
  - b. CCNE  
Standard I: Program Quality: Mission and Governance  
 The mission, goals, and expected program outcomes are congruent with those of the parent institution, reflect professional nursing standards and guidelines, and consider the needs and expectations of the community of interest. Policies of the parent institution and nursing program clearly support the program's mission, goals, and expected outcomes. The faculty and students of the program are involved in the governance of the program and in the ongoing efforts to improve program quality.
2. State Specific Requirements
  - a. Associate Degree Nursing Programs.  
 Minimum admission criteria for associate degree nursing programs are as follows:
    - 1) An ACT composite score of 18 and a 2.0 GPA.
    - 2) Students without the required ACT composite score must have completed a minimum of 12 semester hours in the nursing major, including Anatomy and Physiology, with at least a grade of "C" and have a minimum 2.5 GPA before being admitted.
    - 3) All students must satisfy a criminal history background check with fingerprinting.
    - 4) Each school is permitted an allowance of 10 percent of the previous fall's nursing program admissions for high risk students who do not meet the criteria.
  - b. Bachelor Degree Nursing Programs.  
 Minimum admission criteria for bachelor degree nursing programs are as follows:
    - 1) An ACT composite score of 21. Students with the required ACT composite score must also have at least a grade of "C" in each course prerequisite to the nursing major and a 2.0 GPA.
    - 2) Students without the required ACT composite score must complete all the course prerequisites to the nursing major with at least a grade of "C" and have a GPA of 2.5.
    - 3) Students with a registered nurse (R.N.) license may enter without an ACT by completing all the course prerequisites to the nursing major with at least a grade of "C" and have a GPA of 2.0.
    - 4) Baccalaureate nursing programs in private educational institutions may establish admission criteria which support the goals and aims of their institution.

- 5) All students must satisfy a criminal history background check with fingerprinting.
  - 6) Each school is permitted an allowance of 10 percent of the previous fall's nursing program admission for high risk students who do not meet the criteria.
- c. Graduate Degree Nursing Programs.  
Minimum admission criteria for graduate degree nursing programs (MSN & DNP) are as follows:
- 1) Minimum 3.0 GPA for the most recent nursing degree.
  - 2) Private educational institutions may establish admission criteria which support the goals and aims of their institution.
  - 3) All students must hold an unencumbered registered nurse (R.N.) license to practice in the state in which the student will perform clinical.
  - 4) All students must satisfy a criminal history background check with fingerprinting.

#### **STANDARD IV: CURRICULUM**

**The curriculum prepares students to achieve the expected outcomes of the nursing program, facilitates nursing practice that reflects the needs of the community of interest and is consistent with safe practice and contemporary healthcare environments.**

1. National Standards
  - a. ACEN
    - Standard 1: Mission and Administrative Capacity  
The mission of the nursing education unit reflects the governing organization's core values and is congruent with its mission/goals. The governing organization and program have administrative capacity resulting in effective delivery of the nursing program and achievement of identified program outcomes.
    - Standard 2: Faculty and Staff  
Qualified and credentialed faculty are sufficient in number to ensure the achievement of the end-of-program student learning outcomes and programs outcomes. Sufficient and qualified staff are available to support the nursing education unit.
    - Standard 3: Students  
Student policies and service supports the achievement of the end-of-program student learning outcomes and program outcomes of the nursing program.
    - Standard 4: Curriculum  
The curriculum supports the achievement of the end-of-program student learning outcomes and program outcomes and is consistent with safe practice in contemporary health care environments.



Standard 5. Resources

Fiscal, physical, and learning resources are sustainable and sufficient to ensure the achievement of the end-of-program student learning outcomes and program outcomes of the nursing program.

b. CCNE

Standard I: Program Quality: Mission and Governance

The mission, goals, and expected program outcomes are congruent with those of the parent institution, reflect professional nursing standards and guidelines, and consider the needs and expectations of the community of interest.

Policies of the parent institution and nursing program clearly support the program's mission, goals, and expected outcomes. The faculty and students of the program are involved in the governance of the program and in the ongoing efforts to improve program quality.

Standard II: Program Quality: Institutional Commitment and Resources

The parent institution demonstrates ongoing commitment to and support for the nursing program. The institution makes resources available to enable the program to achieve its mission, goals, and expected outcomes. The faculty and staff as resources of the program, enables the achievement of the mission, goals, and expected program outcomes.

Standard III: Program Quality: Curriculum and Teaching-Learning Practices

The curriculum is developed in accordance with the program's mission, goals, and expected student outcome. The curriculum reflects professional nursing standards and guidelines and the needs and expectations of the community of interest. Teaching-learning practices are congruent with expected student outcomes. The environment for teaching-learning fosters achievement of expected student outcomes.

2. State Specific Requirements

a. Undergraduate student-to-faculty ratios must be:

1. No more than 15 to 1 for total enrollment.
2. No more than 10 to 1 for clinical laboratory courses that require direct supervision.
3. No more than 15 to 1 for those courses that do not require direct supervision (i.e. precepted experiences).

b. Graduate student-to-faculty ratios must be:

1. No more than 15 to 1 for total enrollment.
2. No more than 15 to 1 in graduate clinical courses (non-APRN courses).
3. No more than 2 to 1 for advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) clinical courses that require direct supervision.
4. No more than 6 to 1 for advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) clinical courses that do not require direct supervision (i.e. precepted experiences).

- c. Undergraduate Simulation Clinical Hours:
  - 1. 25% or less of traditional clinical hours substituted with simulation clinical hours in each individual clinical course does not require approval.
  - 2. 26% up to 50% of traditional clinical hours substituted with simulation clinical hours in each individual clinical course requires approval.
  - 3. No more than 50% of traditional clinical hours can be substituted with simulation clinical hours in each individual clinical course.

## **STANDARD V: RESOURCES**

**The parent institution provides fiscal, physical, learning resources and support services sufficient and sustainable to ensure quality and promote the achievement of the mission, goals and outcomes of the programs.**

- 1. National Standards
  - a. ACEN
    - Standard 2: Faculty and Staff  
Qualified and credentialed faculty are sufficient in number to ensure the achievement of the end-of-program student learning outcomes and programs outcomes. Sufficient and qualified staff are available to support the nursing education unit.
    - Standard 3: Students  
Student policies and service supports the achievement of the end-of-program student learning outcomes and program outcomes of the nursing program.
    - Standard 5: Resources  
Fiscal, physical, and learning resources are sustainable and sufficient to ensure the achievement of the end-of-program student learning outcomes and program outcomes of the nursing program.
  - b. CCNE
    - Standard II: Program Quality: Institutional Commitment and Resources  
The parent institution demonstrates ongoing commitment to and support for the nursing program. The institution makes resources available to enable the program to achieve its mission, goals, and expected outcomes. The faculty and staff as resources of the program, enable the achievement of the mission, goals, and expected program outcomes.
- 2. State Specific Requirements  
None

## **STANDARD VI: OUTCOMES**

**Systematic evaluation of outcomes is achieved through analysis of aggregate data for program development, maintenance and revision.**

1. National Standards
  - a. ACEN  
Standard 6: Outcomes  
 Program evaluation demonstrates that students have achieved each end-of-program student learning outcome role-specific professional competency and each program outcome.
  - b. CCNE  
Standard IV: Program Effectiveness: Assessment and Achievement of Program Outcomes  
 The program is effective in fulfilling its mission and goals as evidenced by achieving expected program outcomes. Program outcomes include student outcomes, faculty outcomes, and other outcomes identified by the program. Data on program effectiveness are used to foster ongoing program improvement.
2. State Specific Requirements
  - a. NCLEX Pass Rates: Annual NCLEX pass rates for all test takers (1<sup>st</sup> and repeat) will be at 80% or above over a three year period.
  - b. Degree Completion Rates: Expected levels of achievement for program completion are determined by the faculty, reflect program demographics, academic progression, program history, best practices, and will be within 150 percent of the stated program length over a three-year period.
  - c. Certification Pass Rates:
    - 1) Annual nurse practitioner certification exam pass rates for all test takers (1<sup>st</sup> and repeat) will be at 80% or above over a three year period.
    - 2) Annual nurse anesthesia certification exam pass rates for all test takers (1<sup>st</sup> and repeat) will be at 80% or above over a three-year period.

#### IV. TYPES OF ACCREDITATION

The Board shall grant to a state nursing degree program one of the following types of accreditation, based on evaluation of annual reports documenting compliance with the state nursing accreditation standards.

1. **Initial Accreditation**
  - a. Granted when the program is in compliance with all standards for a new program. Permission is granted to admit students and the next review is in the final semester of the first class in conjunction with the initial national visit.
  - b. Denied when the program does not meet all standards for a new program. The program may reapply at any time.
2. **Continuing Accreditation**
  - a. Full Accreditation. National accreditation and state specific requirements have been met.

- b. **Accreditation with Conditions.** National standards and/or state specific requirements have not been fully met.
3. **Accreditation with Statement of Warning.** The performance improvement plan has not resulted in program compliance with standard(s). A follow-up focused visit, by members selected by the IHL Office of Academic and Student Affairs' Nursing Education Unit, is schedule within three months of statement of warning. A final performance improvement plan is due within 12 months of the issue of warning that addresses the recommendations made by the state site visit team.
4. **Accreditation Denied/Withdrawn.** If a program is not in compliance with national standards and/or state specific requirements as specified in the time frame identified under Accreditation with Statement of Warning, the recommendation for withdrawal of accreditation will be made by the IHL Director of Nursing Education, Office of Academic and Student Affairs, to the Board of Trustees.

## V. CHANGES IN EXISTING NURSING PROGRAMS/REPORTS

Schools of Nursing must submit to the IHL Director of Nursing Education a copy of any report (substantive, etc.) sent and received from the national nursing accrediting body (ACEN, CCNE or COA). Substantive change requests must include correspondences from ACEN, CCNE, COA and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools - Commission on Colleges (SACS-COC).

## VI. CRITERIA FOR ESTABLISHING A PROGRAM OF PROFESSIONAL NURSING IN THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

The three stages to be completed in the development of a new professional nursing program in Mississippi are as follows:

STAGE I - DECLARATION OF INTENT/NEED  
 STATE II - QUALIFY FOR INITIAL ACCREDITATION  
 STAGE III - QUALIFY FOR FULL ACCREDITATION

## VII. REVISION DATES

**July 1, 1992**

**July 1, 1993**

**April 1995-amended`**

**June 1998-amended**

**July 1999-amended**

**November 2002**

**September 2004**

**November 2007**

**November 2009**

**August 2013-Edited only for official name change from NLNAC to ACEN**

**June 2015**

**July 2017**

**October 2019-Edited only for educational requirements of administrators and faculty**

***March 2020-Edited for deletion of the GRE for graduate degree nursing programs, added C-NEA national nursing accrediting body, clarification regarding fingerprinting and graduate student-to-faculty ratios and expanded definition of preceptors.***

**APPENDIX A**

**ACEN 2017 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA**  
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**APPENDIX B**

**CCNE STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION OF BACCALAUREATE  
AND GRADUATE DEGREE NURSING PROGRAMS**

[\(Amended 2018\)](#)

**APPENDIX C**

**COA STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION OF NURSE ANESTHESIA  
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

[\(Revised October 11, 2019\)](#)