

ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF NURSING



INITIAL APPROVAL SURVEY GUIDELINES FOR NURSING EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Updated 2025

ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF NURSING
Title 17. Professions, Occupations, and Businesses
Chapter XXII. Arkansas State Board of Nursing, Department of Health
Part 125. Standards for Nursing Education Programs
Conducting an Approval Survey and Site Visit

GUIDELINES

ASBN RULES

17 CAR § 125-102. New Program Leading to Licensure.

(a) Institution Requirement

1. A nursing education program whose parent institution is located in an Arkansas jurisdiction seeking to establish a new baccalaureate, diploma, associate degree or practical nursing program shall meet the following requirements.
 - (A) Educational institutions or consortiums shall be:
 - i. Approved by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education; and
 - ii. Be accredited by an accrediting body recognized by the United States Secretary of Education.
 - (B) Hospitals or hospital consortiums shall be:
 - i. Approved by the Arkansas Department of Health; and
 - ii. Accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations or equivalent accrediting organization.
 - (C) Each skilled nursing facility in a consortium to provide a practical nursing program shall be approved by:
 - i. The Arkansas Department of Human Services; or
 - ii. An equivalent accrediting organization;
 - (D) Institutions offering a Licensed Practical Nurse Pathway Pilot Program shall be approved by the Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education in consultation with the Arkansas Division of Higher Education; and
 - (E) The parent institution shall meet the transfer or articulation requirement for courses in Arkansas education institutions.
2. A nursing education program whose parent institution is located outside of Arkansas's jurisdiction seeking to establish a new master's, baccalaureate, diploma, associate degree, or practical nursing program shall meet the following requirements:
 - (A) Education institutions shall be:
 - i. Approved by the Arkansas Division of Higher Education; and
 - ii. Accredited by an accrediting body recognized by the United States Secretary of Education;
 - (B) Be approved/accredited by the board of nursing or equivalent agency in the state where the parent institution originates;
 - (C) The parent institution shall meet the transfer or articulation requirements for courses in Arkansas education institutions; and
 - (D) Maintain the education standards required of Arkansas-based nursing education programs

b) **Prerequisite Approval**

1. An institution, seeking to establish a new nursing program leading to licensure, shall submit a letter of intent to the Board at least one (1) year prior to submission of a feasibility study.
2. The institution must submit a current feasibility study, that is signed by the appropriate administrative officers, and includes the following:
 - (A) Purpose for establishing the program;
 - (B) Type of educational program to be established;
 - (C) Relationship to the parent institution, including an organizational chart;
 - (D) Mission, philosophy, purposes, and accreditation status of the parent institution;
 - (E) Financial statement of the parent institution for the past two (2) fiscal years;
 - (F) A proposed budget for each year of the program's implementation;
 - (G) Documented need and readiness of the community to support the program, including:
 - i. surveys of potential students;
 - ii. employment availability; and
 - iii. potential employers;
 - (H) Source and numbers of potential students and faculty;
 - (I) Proposed employee positions, including support staff;
 - (J) Proposed clinical facilities for student experiences, including:
 - i. Letters of support from all major facilities expected to be used for full program implementation; and
 - ii. Evidence of clinical space for additional students;
 - (K) Letters of support from approved nursing and health-related programs using the proposed clinical facilities;
 - (L) Proposed physical facilities including:
 - i. Offices;
 - ii. Classrooms;
 - iii. Technology;
 - iv. Library; and
 - v. Laboratories;
 - (M) Availability of the general education component of the curriculum or letter of agreement, if planned, from another institution;
 - (N) A timetable for initiating the program, including required resources and plans for attaining initial approval;
 - (O) Other information as requested by the Board.
3. The Board shall review all prerequisite documents and may determine the need for an on-site survey during a regularly scheduled ASBN meeting.
4. The ASBN may grant, defer, or deny prerequisite approval.
5. If the ASBN denies prerequisite approval the program must wait two (2) years before submitting another proposal.
6. After receiving Prerequisite Approval status, the institution may:
 - (A) Advertise for students; and
 - (B) Proceed toward compliance by following the Education Standards for Initial

Approval.

(c) Initial approval.

- (1) The institution shall secure a nurse administrator of the program.
- (2) The nurse administrator shall:
 - (A) Plan the program;
 - (B) Ensure compliance with Arkansas State Board of Nursing standards and recommendations;
 - (C) Address prerequisite recommendations;
 - (D) Prepare a detailed budget;
 - (E) Employ qualified faculty and support staff;
 - (F) Prepare a program organizational chart showing lines of authority;
 - (G) Design the program's sequential curriculum plan;
 - (H) Develop student, faculty, and support staff policies and procedures;
 - (I) Attain agency affiliation agreements;
 - (J) Verify that proposed physical facilities are in place; and
 - (K) Submit documentation to the Arkansas State Board of Nursing that initial approval standards are met.
- (3) An Arkansas State Board of Nursing representative shall:
 - (A) Validate readiness of the program to admit students; and
 - (B) Prepare a report.
- (4) The Arkansas State Board of Nursing shall review all documents for initial approval during a regularly scheduled Arkansas State Board of Nursing meeting.
- (5) The Arkansas State Board of Nursing may grant, defer, or deny initial approval.
- (6) After receiving initial approval, the program:
 - (A) May admit students;
 - (B) Shall proceed toward compliance by following the education standards for full approval; and
 - (C) Shall follow the same standards as those of established programs in terms of annual:
 - (i) Activities;
 - (ii) Projects; and
 - (iii) Reports.

(d) Full approval.

- (1) Before graduation of the first class, an Arkansas State Board of Nursing representative shall:
 - (A) Validate compliance with the standards; and
 - (B) Prepare a report.
- (2) The report and documentation shall be reviewed during a regularly scheduled Arkansas State Board of Nursing meeting.
- (3) The Arkansas State Board of Nursing may grant, defer, or deny full approval.

17 CAR § 125-209. Educational program.

- (a) (1) The education program shall include curriculum and learning experiences essential for the expected entry level and scope of practice.
- (2) Curriculum development shall be the responsibility of the nursing faculty.

- (3) Curriculum plan shall be organized to reflect the philosophy and graduate competencies.
 - (4) Courses shall be placed in a logical and sequential manner showing progression of knowledge and learning experiences.
 - (5) Courses shall have written syllabi indicating learning experiences and requirements.
 - (6) Theory content shall be taught concurrently or prior to related clinical experience.
 - (7) Clinical experiences shall include expectations of professional conduct by students.
 - (8) Curriculum plans for all programs shall include appropriate content in:
 - (A) Introduction to current federal and state patient care guidelines;
 - (B) Current and emerging infectious diseases;
 - (C) Emergency preparedness for natural and manmade disasters;
 - (D) Impact of genetic research;
 - (E) End-of-life care; and
 - (F) Legal and ethical aspects of nursing, including the Arkansas Nurse Practice Act.
- (b) The curriculum plan for practical nurse programs shall include:
- (1) Theoretical content and clinical experiences that focus on:
 - (A) Care for persons throughout the lifespan, including cultural sensitivity;
 - (B) Restoration, promotion, and maintenance of physical and mental health; and
 - (C) Prevention of illness for individuals and groups;
 - (2) The length of the practical nurse curriculum shall be no less than ten (10) calendar months, which includes a minimum of thirty-five (35) credit hours in nursing content;
 - (3) Theory content may be in separate courses or integrated and shall include at least the following:
 - (A) Anatomy and physiology;
 - (B) Nutrition;
 - (C) Pharmacology and intravenous therapy;
 - (D) Growth and development throughout the lifespan;
 - (E) Fundamentals of nursing;
 - (F) Gerontological nursing;
 - (G) Nursing of adults;
 - (H) Pediatric nursing;
 - (I) Maternal/infant nursing;
 - (J) Mental health nursing; and
 - (K) Principles of management in long-term care, including delegation; and
 - (4) Clinical experiences shall be in the areas of:
 - (A) Fundamentals of nursing;
 - (B) Nursing of adults;
 - (C) Pediatric nursing;
 - (D) Gerontological nursing;
 - (E) Maternal/infant nursing;
 - (F) Mental health;
 - (G) Administration of medications, including intravenous therapy; and
 - (H) Management in long term care, including delegation.
- (c) The curriculum plan for registered nurse programs, master's, baccalaureate, diploma, or associate degree shall include:

- (1) Theoretical content and clinical experiences that focus upon:
 - (A) The prevention of illness and the restoration, promotion, and maintenance of physical and mental health;
 - (B) Nursing care based upon:
 - (i) Assessment;
 - (ii) Analysis;
 - (iii) Planning;
 - (iv) Implementing; and
 - (v) Evaluating; and
 - (C) Care for persons throughout the life span, including cultural sensitivity; and
- (2) Course content may be in separate courses or integrated and shall include at least the following:
 - (A) Biological and physical sciences content:
 - (i) Chemistry;
 - (ii) Anatomy and physiology;
 - (iii) Microbiology;
 - (iv) Pharmacology;
 - (v) Nutrition; and
 - (vi) Mathematics;
 - (B) Behavioral science and humanities content:
 - (i) Psychology;
 - (ii) Sociology;
 - (iii) Growth and development;
 - (iv) Interpersonal relationships;
 - (v) Communication; and
 - (vi) English composition;
 - (C) Nursing science content:
 - (i) Medical surgical adult;
 - (ii) Pediatrics;
 - (iii) Maternal/infant;
 - (iv) Gerontology;
 - (v) Mental health;
 - (vi) Leadership, including nursing management and delegation; and
 - (vii) Master's and baccalaureate programs shall include community health;
and
 - (D) Clinical experiences shall be in the areas of:
 - (i) Medical/surgical;
 - (ii) Pediatrics;
 - (iii) Maternal/infant;
 - (iv) Mental health;
 - (v) Gerontology;
 - (vi) Leadership and management, including delegation;
 - (vii) Rehabilitation; and
 - (viii) Master's and baccalaureate programs shall include clinical experiences in community health.

- (d) (1) The curriculum plan for registered nursing and practical nursing education programs may include the use of simulation as a substitute for traditional clinical experiences, not to exceed fifty percent (50%) of its clinical hours in each course.
- (2) A program that uses simulation shall demonstrate the use of current standards of best practice for simulation and provide evidence of compliance that shall include:
- (A) An organizing framework that provides adequate fiscal, human, and material resources to support the simulation activities;
 - (B) (i) Management by an individual who is academically and experientially qualified.
(ii) The individual shall demonstrate continued expertise and competence in the use of simulation while managing the program;
 - (C) A budget that will sustain the simulation activities and training of the faculty;
 - (D) (i) Appropriate facilities for conducting simulation.
(ii) This shall include educational and technological resources and equipment to meet the intended objectives of the simulation;
 - (E) Training for faculty involved in the use of simulation, both didactic and clinical;
 - (F) Ongoing professional development in the use of simulation for faculty involved in simulations, both didactic and clinical;
 - (G) Programmatic outcomes that are linked to simulation activities;
 - (H) Written policies and procedures on the following:
 - (i) Short-term and long-term plans for integrating simulation into the curriculum;
 - (ii) Method of debriefing each simulated activity; and
 - (iii) Plan for orienting faculty to simulation;
 - (I) Criteria to evaluate the simulation activities;
 - (J) Student evaluations of simulation experiences on an ongoing basis; and
 - (K) Information about the use of simulation, as requested by the Arkansas State Board of Nursing, on the annual report.

Approval Survey Process:

After Board grants approval for Prerequisites to develop a NEW pre-licensure program, the nursing program director/designee should submit documentation addressing all above *ASBN Standards for Nursing Education Rules* to the ASBN Program Coordinator-Education, who will then review all evidence and present an overall survey report to the ASBN Education Board who will make a recommendation to the ASBN Board for a decision.

- I. Nursing Program Director/Designee Responsibilities: Submit the *Letter of Intent* to the ASBN Program Coordinator-Education and met the deadline for submission of the Prerequisite Approval Report to the ASBN Program Coordinator-Education. The Approval Survey Report should address the above noted standards and follow the guidelines presented below.
- A. The Prerequisite Approval Survey Report should be prepared using narrative, appendices, web links, and charts. Information that is repetitive may be addressed by referring to specific pages of other portions of the report or documents. Hyperlinks within the report are allowed in lieu of appendices.
 - B. The report should be electronically formatted, single spaced, include headings and/or subheadings that match the above standards, and include page numbers in

the upper right corner, including any appendices linked electronically. Aptos font size 11 or 12 should be used for all written text.

- C. A title page followed by a Table of Contents is required. Page numbers should be correct.
 - D. Information in the report referring to other documents should specify the correct page and/or be linked electronically. Include an appendices title page for each included appendix or electronically linked appendix.
 - F. Copies of documents that are referenced in the report should accompany the report and be placed in the appendices. Submit electronic/online links, instead of submitting catalogs and other large documents.
 - G. If the program chooses, the report narrative and documents may be placed on an electronic learning management system/platform (Blackboard, etc.) for access by the ASBN Program Coordinator-Education. In such cases, the program should provide guest log in and password to access the site and materials by the deadline given.
 - H. The narrative should include use of the Faculty Summary Table and the Curriculum Map Table. Do not change the formatting of either table. Both tables should be included as appendices.
- II. ASBN Board responsibilities: The ASBN Program Coordinator -Education will:
- A. Review all documents submitted by the program seeking approval.
 - B. Discuss with the program director/designee asking for any clarification regarding standards that were met and/or not met. This discussion may be verbal or electronic. The program director/designee must respond to all questions within the timeframe given by the ASBN Program Coordinator-Education.
 - C. Prepare a written report of the documents and any clarifications received and include deviations or recommendations to present to the ASBN Education Committee and ASBN Board at the next regular business meeting, for decision-making regarding approval.
 - D. Prepare a letter with the decision of the Board to be mailed to the program director/designee within 30 days following the regular business meeting.

ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF NURSING POLICY FOR SURVEYING OF NURSING EDUCATION PROGRAMS

POLICY: According to ASBN Policy Number: VIII-2 - All Nursing education programs leading to licensure will be surveyed by a member of the Arkansas State Board of Nursing staff according to the following schedule:

- New Program: prior to admitting the first class, again prior to graduation of the first class, and three (3) years after full approval status granted.
- Registered Nurse Program: every five (5) years after continued full approval is granted.
- Practical Nurse Program: every five (5) years after continued full approval is granted.
- Advanced Practice Nurse Program: every five (5) years or until requirements for exemption are met. Exemption: Master's program in advanced practice nursing, which submit

evidence of having current accreditation by a Board recognized national educational accrediting agency for the discipline of nursing, shall be accepted by the Board as having met the regulations for Board approval. The standards for accreditation shall be maintained during the accrediting period.

- Other visits may be made to any program if deemed necessary by the Board.

PROCEDURE:

1. The Board staff will contact the nursing program and set a date for the survey materials to be electronically submitted.
2. The nursing program Dean/Director/Chair will prepare an approval survey report based on the Standards for Nursing Education Programs in the Title 17, Chapter XXII, Part 125 ASBN Rules.
3. The nursing program Dean/Director/Chair will complete the Pre-Survey Data form and submit with all approval materials.
4. All approval materials should be organized according to the Guidelines (attached). Each area should have a substantial narrative, descriptive data, electronic links, and/or examples that show evidence of compliance with each standard.
5. The nursing program will submit the approval survey report as well as the following documents and/or electronic links to show evidence of compliance with the ASBN Standards of Nursing Education.
 - a. A copy of the most current nursing program self-study and accreditation report from ACEN, CNEA or CCNE, if nationally accredited.
 - b. Current College Catalog link
 - c. Student Handbook and Nursing Student Handbook link
 - d. Faculty Handbook and Nursing Faculty Handbook link
 - e. Any other documents the program chooses to submit, in providing evidence of meeting Standards.
6. The program is sent a draft analysis of the report for review and response before a final report is submitted to the Board for approval.
7. The Board will act on the approval survey report at the next scheduled Business meeting (January, May, or September).
8. The Dean/Director/Chair and an administrative representative from the school are requested to attend the Business meeting to answer questions regarding the report.
9. A formal notification of approval status will be mailed to the nursing program administrator within 30 days of the Business meeting.