Standard IV: Culture of Learning and Diversity – Curriculum and Teaching/Learning/Evaluation Processes

The curriculum is designed by faculty to create a culture of learning that fosters the professional and personal growth of diverse learners and supports the achievement of expected student learning outcomes in alignment with the program’s mission, goals, values and expected program outcomes, inclusive of distance learning methodologies. Professional nursing standards and criteria are foundational elements and are clearly integrated throughout the curriculum. Teaching, learning and evaluation processes take into consideration the diverse learning needs of students and are designed to support achievement of student learning outcomes. The program’s culture of learning and diversity is evident through a positive learning environment and achievement of the associated quality indicators.

Quality Indicators

IV-A. Expected student learning outcomes are clearly articulated within the curriculum design and congruent with the program’s stated mission, goals, values and expected program outcomes.

Interpretive Guidelines: Student learning outcomes are clearly delineated for each program and are appropriate for the expected practice role students will assume upon graduation. Competencies, course objectives, unit/module objectives, learning activities, and evaluation strategies are student-centered, support progression toward achievement of student learning outcomes, and are clearly integrated throughout the curriculum.

IV-B. The curriculum incorporates professional nursing standards, guidelines, and role-specific competencies congruent with expected student learning outcomes and practice roles.

Interpretive Guidelines: Faculty determine the appropriate professional nursing standards, guidelines, and role-specific competencies in accordance with expected program and student learning outcomes. Graduate programs preparing advanced practice nurses incorporate established APRN professional standards into the curriculum. Evidence exists that these standards and competencies have been systematically integrated throughout the curriculum and the curriculum has been designed to meet licensure and certification criteria. Students and faculty can articulate which professional standards and criteria have been chosen to serve as foundational elements within the curriculum and cite examples of meeting those standards and criteria.

IV-C. The curriculum is logically and progressively designed and implemented to support student achievement of learning outcomes and appropriate preparation for role-specific competencies.

Interpretive Guidelines: The pre-licensure and undergraduate curriculum is built upon and incorporates a foundation of arts and sciences. Faculty and students articulate how any courses taken to fulfill general education, science, arts, social science, and/or humanities
curricular requirements of the program support the professional development of nurses. The curriculum is designed to promote student progression through the program without unnecessary duplication of learning experiences. Rationale is provided to support faculty decisions related to credit hour requirements, curriculum sequencing and progression design.

Graduate nursing programs at the master’s level clearly build upon the foundation of a baccalaureate nursing degree as evidenced by program-specific outcomes and student learning activities that demonstrate student progression from undergraduate level competencies to graduate level competencies.

Academic progression programs that bridge students from LPN/LVN to RN programs and pre-licensure programs to graduate programs (e.g., ASN-MSN, BSN-DNP, etc.), demonstrate how learners acquire the requisite knowledge, skills, and professional behaviors of the bridged program. Evidence exists that students successfully transition the bridged curriculum and achieve the expected learning outcomes of the subsequent program.

IV-D. The curriculum is up to date, dynamic, evidence-based, and reflects current societal and health care trends and issues, research findings, and contemporary educational practices.

*Interpretive Guidelines:* There is evidence that faculty design, review, and revise curricula based on consideration of current evidence-based findings, societal needs, health care issues and trends, and feedback from communities of interest. Contemporary practices in nursing education and curriculum design are considered by faculty and integrated as appropriate. Relevant local, regional, national, and international social and health care trends, and issues, and workforce needs are addressed as appropriate within the curriculum and in congruence with the program’s mission, goals, values, and expected program outcomes.

IV-E. The curriculum provides students with experiential learning that supports evidence-based practice, intra- and interprofessional collaborative practice, student achievement of clinical competence, and as appropriate to the program’s mission and expected outcomes, expertise in a specific role or specialty.

*Interpretive Guidelines:* Faculty design and incorporate a variety of experiential learning experiences into the curriculum, including distance education programs, as appropriate for the expected practice role of the program’s graduates. Partnerships and agency contracts with health care and community facilities and other organizations are comprehensive and diverse in scope and designed to foster student acquisition of evidence-based practice competencies relevant to the workforce practice role for which the learner is being prepared. Intra- and interprofessional collaborative student learning opportunities are provided to facilitate professional role development.

IV-F. The curriculum provides experiential learning that enhances student ability to demonstrate leadership, clinically reason, reflect thoughtfully, provide culturally sensitive care to diverse populations, and integrate concepts, including, but not limited to context and environment of care delivery, knowledge and science, personal and professional
development, quality and safety, patient-centered care, and teamwork into their practice.

*Interpretive Guidelines:* The faculty design and implement experiential learning experiences throughout the curriculum, including distance education programs, that foster the acquisition of professional nursing values, encompassing, but not limited to, leadership skills, clinical reasoning, reflective thought, and culturally sensitive care to diverse populations. Additionally, the curriculum integrates the concepts, including, but not limited to, context and environment of care delivery, knowledge and science applied to implementation and evaluation of evidenced-based care, personal and professional development, quality and safety, patient-centered care, and teamwork to enable students to develop role-specific competencies.

**IV-G.** The teaching, learning, and evaluation strategies used by faculty within the curriculum, including distance education programs, are evidence-based, student-centered, and designed to create a culture of learning demonstrated through student achievement of expected course and program outcomes.

*Interpretive Guidelines:* Teaching, learning, and evaluation strategies in all settings, including distance education programs, are selected and planned by faculty based upon evidence related to best practices in education and designed to facilitate student achievement of expected learning outcomes. An environment exists within the program that facilitates student-centered teaching/learning practices and supports faculty in adopting and integrating new teaching/learning strategies as appropriate. Evaluation strategies are appropriate for measuring the student achievement of expected course and program outcomes. The learning environment is inclusive of classroom, clinical, simulation, laboratory, and community settings.

**IV-H.** Evaluation strategies designed to measure individual student achievement of expected course and program outcomes are clearly stated and consistently applied.

*Interpretive Guidelines:* Evaluation strategies in all programs, including distance education programs, are appropriate to the learning activities being evaluated, and are focused on student achievement of course and program outcomes. Faculty retain the responsibility for evaluation of all individual student performance, including precepted practice experiences. Grading policies, scales, and criteria are clearly defined at the course level and communicated to all students at the beginning of each course. There is evidence that grading policies are consistently applied by faculty, including distance education programs.

**IV-I.** Technology, including the use of distance education technology as applicable, is used effectively to support the teaching/learning/evaluation process.

*Interpretive Guidelines:* Faculty and students receive adequate support and development in the use of technology to support the teaching, learning, and evaluation process. Technology-supported learning materials are accessible to all students enrolled in the nursing program. Students are oriented to any technology required to participate in the teaching/learning process. Faculty are oriented to and receive development and support in the use of instructional technology.
IV-J. There is regular and ongoing review and revision of the curriculum and teaching/learning/evaluation strategies by faculty within a culture of continuous quality improvement to foster achievement of the program’s mission, goals, core values, and expected student outcomes.

*Interpretive Guidelines:* The curriculum and the teaching/learning/evaluation process undergo scheduled, periodic review. Data are regularly obtained from faculty and students to determine satisfaction with curriculum and teaching/learning/evaluation strategies. Data are analyzed and shared with communities of interest. Resulting data feedback is used by faculty to inform continuous quality improvement efforts and decisions about curricular revisions.
Standard IV – Supporting Evidence Exemplars

- Copies of program outcomes, competencies, course outcomes/objectives
- Examples of teaching/learning/evaluation processes that demonstrate the incorporation of professional nursing standards and role-specific competencies into the curriculum
- Copies of course syllabi
- Examples of student learning activities in classroom, clinical, laboratory and simulated environments and accompanying examples of student’s achievement of learning outcomes
- Documentation of data-driven curriculum review and revisions in minutes, reports, etc. and resulting actions
- Evidence of means by which student feedback on curriculum and teaching/learning/evaluation processes is solicited and how feedback is used to inform program decision-making
- Examples of grading policies, scales, rubrics
- Copies of agency contracts
- Copies of student/faculty evaluation of agencies used to support experiential learning activities
- Documentation of preceptor roles and responsibilities in student evaluation process
- Copies of course evaluations
- Program designs depicting curriculum for each program offered