3 – III. Accrediting Action and Monitoring Processes

The NLN CNEA Board of Commissioners makes accreditation decisions based upon the extent to which a program demonstrates compliance with the NLN CNEA Standards of Accreditation. The NLN CNEA Board of Commissioners may grant, continue, deny or terminate program accreditation using the following accreditation decision categories.

Pre-Accreditation

Nursing programs desiring to seek initial accreditation from NLN CNEA must first be considered eligible and ready to pursue NLN CNEA accreditation. Assessing program readiness through the pre-accreditation candidacy process provides program faculty the opportunity to discern the ability of the program(s) to meet the NLN CNEA Standards of Accreditation. If pre-accreditation candidacy is approved for the program(s) put forth, the nursing academic unit will have a maximum of three years within which to complete the accreditation process and achieve initial accreditation with the NLN CNEA. The NLN CNEA Board of Commissioners may make the following pre-accreditation decisions:

1. Grant pre-accreditation for a maximum period of three years
2. Deny pre-accreditation
3. Terminate pre-accreditation status
4. Grant program request for voluntary withdrawal from pre-accreditation
5. Extend term of pre-accreditation for good cause

Initial Accreditation

Nursing programs holding the NLN CNEA pre-accreditation candidacy status are eligible to apply for initial program accreditation with the NLN CNEA. Initial accreditation may be pursued at any time within the three year pre-accreditation candidacy window of opportunity, but must be timed so that all steps of the accreditation process, including the NLN CNEA Board of Commissioners action, are completed within the three year timeline. The NLN CNEA Board of Commissioners may make the following initial accreditation decisions:

1. Grant initial accreditation for a maximum term of six years
2. Grant initial accreditation with quality improvement conditions (not to exceed 18 months)
3. Defer initial accreditation
4. Deny initial accreditation
5. Grant program request for voluntary withdrawal from initial accreditation

Continuing Accreditation (Reaffirmation of accreditation)

Programs holding the NLN CNEA initial accreditation status are eligible to apply for reaffirmation and continuation of their accreditation status prior to the expiration of their initial accreditation terms. Continuing accreditation may be pursued at any time prior to the last year of the initial accreditation term and should be timed for the process, including the Board of Commissioners’ action, to be completed prior to the expiration of the term. The NLN CNEA Board of Commissioners may make the following continuing accreditation decisions:
1. Reaffirm continuing accreditation for a maximum of ten years
2. Reaffirm continuing accreditation with quality improvement conditions (not to exceed 18 months)
3. Defer continuing accreditation
4. Deny continuing accreditation

**Probationary Accreditation**

*In the event that* the NLN CNEA Board of Commissioners *determines* may change a program’s accreditation status to probationary accreditation when there are: 1) substantial noncompliance concerns with the NLN CNEA Standards of Accreditation, the Board may immediately change a program’s accreditation status to probationary accreditation. ; and 2) failure by the program to make substantive progress to correct deficiencies by the time frame that has been established by the Board.

While on probation, the program will be required to submit substantive monitoring reports at designated intervals, and an on-site focused visit may be required.

The Board will specify the time frame within which the program must resolve the identified deficiencies. The time period available for fully meeting the criteria starts on the day that the Board of Commissioners formally takes action to place the program on probation for not fully meeting one or more accreditation standards criteria. If the length of the full time program is less than one year, the program may have no more than 12 months to fully meet the criteria. If the full time program is more than one year but less than two years in length, the program may have no more than 18 months to fully meet the criteria. If the full time program is at least two years in length, the program may have no more than 24 months to fully meet the criteria, not to exceed 18 months. The probationary accreditation designation may be extended up to an additional 18 months for good cause.

The Board may act to grant a good cause extension to the probationary period if the program has demonstrated substantial progress in addressing the identified deficiencies and requires only a limited period of time to finish resolving the deficiency. The board will consider a good cause extension if the program has provided documented evidence of substantial progress toward resolution of the deficiency, definitive plans to achieve resolution within a specified timeline subject to approval by the Board, and the program demonstrates that student outcomes are not compromised.

If the program is not able to resolve the identified deficiencies and demonstrate compliance with the accreditation standards within the allotted time frame, the Board will act to withdraw accreditation from the program at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. If the Board issues a show cause directive to the program during the probationary period, the show cause directive will not extend the probationary time frame nor exceed the maximum length of time allowed for each program type. issue a show cause directive to the program. The accreditation status of the program continues during the probationary period. Probationary accreditation is not appealable and is a matter of public record.

**Show Cause**

The NLN CNEA Board of Commissioners may issue a show cause directive when a program has demonstrated continued and unresolved noncompliance concerns with the NLN CNEA Standards of Accreditation; failure to maintain institutional and program eligibility criteria; or failure to comply with the NLN CNEA policies and procedures related to maintaining accreditation. A show cause directive
indicates that the program’s accreditation status is in jeopardy of being revoked and requires the program to demonstrate why its accreditation should not be removed. A show cause directive may be issued with or without a period of probationary accreditation.

A show cause notification will specify the reasons for the directive, the information the program is required to provide, and the response deadline, not to exceed 12 months. The show cause time frame will begin immediately upon action by the Board. The Board of Commissioners may shorten the time frame for the show cause period to less than twelve months if findings of non-compliance pose a serious and immediate risk of harm or danger to students or the program has been on probation for a period of time immediately prior to the show cause directive.

The required information may be obtained by means of a substantive written report or a focused on-site program evaluation visit. The Board of Commissioners will not consider or approve any critical or notable substantive changes during a show cause directive unless the program can demonstrate that the changes are necessary to demonstrate compliance with the NLN CNEA Standards of Accreditation or maintain program financial viability.

Failure to address the identified concerns within the specified show cause timeframe may result in adverse action being taken. The Board of Commissioners may vacate the show-cause directive if the program complies and demonstrates with good cause substantial progress in resolving the identified concerns. A show cause directive is not appealable and is a matter of public record.