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**GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND
SUBMISSION OF FEASIBILITY AND CURRICULUM PROPOSALS**
(Reference PA Code §21.51- RN & §21.172 - PN)

The Pennsylvania State Board of Nursing is the administrative agency authorized to approve all new prelicensure nursing education programs within the Commonwealth. Representatives of controlling institutions proposing development of a new nursing education program are required to submit a feasibility study addressing their intent. The feasibility may be submitted in one or two phases.

§21.51(a) A (*professional*) nursing program shall be developed under authority of a regionally accredited university or college, or a hospital approved by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals, and under the leadership of a registered nurse.

§21.172(a) A controlling agency may be a hospital, educational institution or combination thereof. The controlling agency desiring to establish or conduct an approved program in practical nursing shall submit a written proposal to the Board. If the practical nursing program is in the public school system, the proposal shall be submitted to the Board through the Department of Education, Bureau of Vocational Education.

NOTE: A check in the amount of \$935, made payable to the "Commonwealth of Pennsylvania," must be submitted with the first draft of the Phase I proposal/feasibility study. *This application fee is non-refundable and is subject to change.* **Payment of the fee does not guarantee Board approval.** The fee covers the cost of critiquing the application for compliance with the regulations regarding nursing education, for preparation of reports for Board meetings, and for review by the Board. **NOTE: If the institution does not submit revisions in response to the critique by a nursing education advisor within one year of receiving the advisor's comments the proposal will be deemed as withdrawn and a new fee will be required when the proposal is resubmitted.**

Proprietary schools seeking Board of Nursing approval to operate a practical nursing program in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania must first be licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Division of Private Licensed Schools. Call (717) 783-8228 for licensure requirements. All academic degree granting institutions and vocational technical programs must first be licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Overview of the process for obtaining Board of Nursing approval of a new nursing education program:

1. The program provider gathers data and prepares Phase I of the proposal/feasibility study. The provider needs to comply with the controlling institution's policies and procedures for the development of a new program. The provider determines if any other regulatory and/or accrediting bodies have standards with which the program must comply (*Ex.* Department of Education, financial aid providers, institutional and programmatic accrediting bodies).
2. A nursing education advisor reviews the first draft of Phase I of the proposal for compliance with Board of Nursing regulations and provides feedback to the program provider. Please refer to the "*Policy for Proposal Revisions*" enclosed with attachments.
3. The provider responds to the feedback and submits the revised proposal. If the proposal is in final form for consideration by the Board, verify with the nursing education advisor the number of copies to be submitted to the Board of Nursing. The copies are **due no later than (6) weeks** before the date of the Board meeting at which the proposal will be considered. **The Board will not take action on an incomplete proposal.**
4. The program provider may request a conference with the Board at the time the Phase I proposal is considered. If a conference is scheduled, the provider may be able to provide clarification and respond to any questions posed by the Board.
5. The nursing education advisor provides written notification of the Board's action to the provider.
6. The program provider prepares Phase II of the proposal.
7. A nursing education advisor reviews the first draft of Phase II of the proposal and offers feedback to the program provider.
8. The program responds to feedback and submits revisions if indicated. If the proposal is in final form for consideration by the Board, **two** copies should be submitted to the Board of Nursing. The copies are due no later than one month before the date of the Board meeting at which the proposal will be considered. The Board will not take action on an incomplete proposal.
9. The program provider again may request a conference with the Board at the time the Phase II proposal is considered.
10. If Phase II is approved; a nursing education advisor must conduct an initial facility survey before final Board action is taken to grant permission to recruit students. At the time of the visit, there must be committed space for the program and evidence that the facility and resources are adequate to support the needs of the program. Purchase orders should be available for review if all resources are not in place.
11. If the outcome of the site visit is satisfactory, the nursing education advisor will provide written notification that the program has been granted *initial* approval status and the program may begin to recruit and admit students.

12. After the first class graduates and NCLEX® results are available for the majority of graduates the nursing education advisor will conduct a compliance review. If there is evidence of conformity with the regulations, the program approval status will be changed from *initial* to *full* approval status.

Formatting of proposal:

1. The proposal shall contain a **Table of Contents** with the following **required** sections addressed in detail: a) Introduction & Background, b) Structure & Governance, c) Faculty & Staff, d) Curriculum (philosophy, mission, course description, general plan of study, e) Resources & Facilities, f) Cost-Revenue Projections with detailed 5-year budget, g) Organization & Administration, h) Administrative & Instructional Personnel, i) Curriculum (detailed course descriptions), j) Students & Student Services, k) Record Keeping.
2. Pages must be numbered consecutively to facilitate review by the advisors and Board.
3. Appendices must be tabbed and contain the detail of documents referred to in the respective section.

Guideline for Organization of Phase I Proposal:

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

1. A letter of intent, from the administrator of the controlling institution, should be submitted with Phase I of the feasibility study.
2. Begin proposal with the rationale for development of this new program, including sufficient statistical data and other relevant information that addresses [§21.51(b)(1)(i) - **or** - §21.172(b)(4)(1)]:
 - a. regional labor statistics regarding projected need for this type of licensee
 - provide summary comments and tables as necessary and cite original source of information (in body of proposal)
 - b. potential local/regional employment opportunities for graduates regarding current open positions & projected needs
 - summary of findings (in body of proposal)
 - copy of any tools used (in appendices)
 - tabulated results (in the appendices)
 - letters of support from potential employers in the region (in body of proposal)
 - c. potential impact on all nursing education programs within a 50 miles radius of proposed program by contacting them in regard to:
 - locale, region, or state(s) from which they draw students
 - whether there is a "waiting list" or more applicants than they can admit annually
 - whether they utilize the clinical sites you propose to use and possible effects on clinical experiences for their students
(summary of responses in body of proposal and copies of relevant correspondence in appendices)
 - d. characteristics of the proposed student population
 - e. projected student enrollment for the first class and anticipated future enrollment, e.g., full-time and/or part-time classes, and the number of classes admitted annually

- f. projected time frame/schedule for planning and initiating program, e.g., submission of Phase II, hiring of nurse administrator and faculty, etc.

STRUCTURE & GOVERNANCE

1. Note the controlling institution's accreditation status, e.g., Middle States, JCAHO, or another U.S. Department of Education recognized accrediting body, and the date of next scheduled review.
2. Provide an overview of the controlling institution's mission, the types of programs offered, the levels of degrees offered, and the average enrollment at the institution. [§21.51(a) - **or** - §21.172(a)].
3. Include an organizational chart that demonstrates the relationship of the proposed nursing program to the controlling institution, including lines of responsibility and authority as well as channels of communication [§21.51(d)(2) -**or**- §21.172(c)(1)]

FACULTY & STAFF

1. State the required qualifications and include a job description for the program administrator (in body of proposal) - **OR, if already hired** - the name and credentials of proposed administrator of the nursing education program (submit a curriculum vita and official transcripts to the Board office for evaluation and approval).

Professional programs -- *employ a qualified nurse administrator for a professional nursing education program at least 12 months prior to the intended admission of students [§21.51(b)(4)].*

Practical programs -- *employ a qualified nurse administrator for a practical nursing education program at least 6 months prior to the intended admission of students [§21.172(b)(1)].*

NOTE: The Program Administrator of a Professional or Practical prelicensure nursing education program must hold a current license as a professional nurse in this Commonwealth.

BSN programs: *Administrator shall hold at least one graduate degree in nursing and hold an earned doctoral degree or plans for completing doctoral preparation within 5 years of appointment; must have experience in nursing practice, nursing education, and administration.*

ADN & Diploma programs: *Administrator must have at least one graduate degree in nursing; and shall have experience in nursing practice, nursing education, and administration.*

PN programs: *Nurse Director or Coordinator must have a baccalaureate degree, preferably in nursing and shall have a specific plan for completing work towards a master's degree with evidence of consistent effort toward completion of the plan; must have experience in nursing, nursing education, and educational administration*

2. State the required qualifications and include a job description for faculty (in body of proposal):
 - a. *faculty in a professional nursing education program must be employed at least one semester/term prior to the initiation of their teaching responsibilities [§21.51(b)(6)]*
 - b. *faculty in a practical nursing education program must be employed at least one*

month prior to the initiation of their teaching responsibilities [§21.172(b)(2)].

3. Describe projected faculty and staff complement for the proposed nursing education program (in body of proposal) [§21.71(a)(2) & (3), §21.74 (a)(2) & (3), **-or-** §21.192(b)(2)]

CURRICULUM

1. Indicate that the nursing education program's philosophy or mission statement is congruent with that of the parent institution [§21.51(d)(4) **-or-** §21.172(c)(3)]
 - a. include program philosophy (in body of proposal)
 - b. include program objectives (in body of proposal)
2. Include plan of study, with overview/descriptions of courses to be taught by semester or level, e.g., general education or support courses and nursing courses [§21.51(d)(5) **-or-** §21.172(c)(4)].
3. Indicate length of program

NOTE: *practical nursing programs must be minimally 1500 hours in length*

RESOURCES & FACILITIES

1. Identify physical location of proposed program.
 - a. describe space committed to program, e.g. faculty and staff offices, classrooms, campus laboratory, library, storage areas, etc. (in body of proposal)
 - b. the floor plan (in appendices)
2. Identify clinical resources for program implementation based on the projected enrollment, [§21.51(b)(1)(ii) **-or-** §21.172(b)(4)(ii) including:
 - a. rationale for selecting each facility, i.e.
 - geographic accessibility and appropriateness in meeting program objectives
 - type of experiences students would be expected to obtain at each site, e.g., medical, surgical, maternal-child, long term care, community, psych-mental health, etc. letters of intent from all proposed cooperating agencies that indicate a positive commitment to the nursing education program [§21.51(b)(1)(iii) **-or-** §21.172(b)(4)(iii)] (in body of proposal)
 - b. a completed Agency Data Form for **ALL** clinical sites to be used [§21.51(b)(1)(ii) **-and-** §21.172(b)(4)(ii)] (in appendices on form provided & use sample as a guide in preparation). **In addition**, a letter is required from the individual at the agency with authority to grant permission for the program to access the site.
 - c. statement from each clinical site to be used indicating how use of the facility by the proposed program will affect programs currently utilizing them, e.g., need to change schedule for rotations, etc.

COST-REVENUE PROJECTIONS

1. Include a 5-year capital and operational line item budget [§21.51(b)(1)(iv) **-or-** §21.172(c)(9)] that includes cost for:
 - a. administrative overhead, common cost allocations maintenance, etc.
 - b. salaries and benefits for projected faculty and staff

- c. memberships, professional development and travel, consultation, accreditation, and related expenses
 - d. campus laboratory furnishings, equipment and supplies to be purchased prior to implementation of the program as well projected on-going expenses
 - e. hardware and software appropriate to meet program objectives
 - f. reference texts (e.g. faculty copies and library copies) to be purchased prior to implementation of the program and on-going expenses in this area as well as audio-visual resources appropriate to meeting program objectives
 - g. rent, utilities, and contracted services
 - h. telephone, printing, postage, office supplies, and related services
 - i. capital equipment and maintenance (general discussion in body of proposal with line item budget in appendices)
2. Include per credit or per student cost of tuition based on projected enrollment as well as any other sources of revenue

NOTE: Whether the Feasibility Study is approved as one document or as Phase I and Phase II; the sponsoring institution must submit the planned educational program at least 12 months prior to the intended admission date of students.

Guidelines for Organization of Phase II Proposal if submitted in two Phases or include if submitting Phase I and II together:

ORGANIZATION & ADMINISTRATION

1. Submit an organizational chart for proposed nursing education program that demonstrates lines of authority, channels of communication and the relationship between the program and cooperating agencies. (in body of proposal).
2. Include sample contract with a cooperating clinical agency. [§21.51(d)(9) **-or-** §21.172(c)(8)]
(NOTE: The institution may wish to begin this process early since agreements are generally reviewed by facility's attorney and program may not send students to clinical an agency until a contract has been signed).
3. Include updated and Agency Data Forms for **ALL** cooperating agencies that reflect placement for all rotations/courses. [§21.51((b)(91)(ii) **-or-** §21.172((b)(4)(ii) (general discussion in body of proposal with completed forms in appendices). **ALL AGENCY DATA FORMS MUST BE COMPLETE.**
4. Submit updated budget as necessary or indicate that budget submitted with Phase I proposal has not changed. (general discussion in body of proposal with line item budget in appendices).
5. Include systematic program evaluation plan. (in appendices).

ADMINISTRATIVE & INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL

1. Discuss nursing faculty organization structure and bylaws. (in body of proposal).
2. Discuss personnel and academic policies for faculty. [§21.72, §21.75 **-or-** §21.193} (reference in body of proposal & and any proposed policies in appendices).

3. Update faculty and staff complement information based on projected enrollment (in the body of the proposal)
 - a. professional nursing education programs must employ full-time qualified faculty in areas of practice encompassed within the curriculum
 - *faculty members must have a master's degree in nursing with graduate preparation relevant to their clinical, or clinical and functional, areas of responsibility*
 - *faculty members must be currently licensed as RNs in this Commonwealth, or be eligible for licensure*
 - b. practical nursing education programs must employ full-time faculty to provide a maximum student: teacher ratio of 15:1 in the clinical area
 - *faculty members must have a baccalaureate degree, preferably in nursing, with additional preparation for teaching appropriate to the teaching of practical nursing*
 - *faculty members must be currently licensed as RNs in this Commonwealth, or be eligible for licensure*

CURRICULUM

1. Submit master plan of curriculum, including: (general discussion in body of proposal with specifics in appendices)
 - a. scope and sequence for both nursing and non-nursing courses, as well as prerequisites and co-requisites
 - b. detailed course descriptions and identification of related clinical practice for all courses [§21.51((d)(5) -or- §21.172(c)(4)] (*sample format attached*)
 - c. sample of student clinical evaluation tool
 - d. evidence that there are an adequate number of suitably scheduled core courses

FACILITIES & RESOURCES

1. Give status report on construction or renovation of physical facilities, i.e., faculty offices and classrooms/laboratory space, library, storage areas, etc.
2. List educational resources/equipment/supplies purchased or to be purchased for the program. [§21.51(d)(7) -or- §21.172(c)(9)] (general discussion in body of proposal with specifics in appendices)

STUDENTS & STUDENT SERVICES

1. Submit admission and progression standards. [§21.51(d)(6)&(7) -or- §21.172(c)(5)&(6)]
 - a. admission criteria (general discussion in body of proposal with specifics in appendices)
 - controlling institution's policies
 - nursing department's selection policies
 - b. progression and graduation criteria (general discussion in body of proposal with specifics in appendices)
 - controlling institution's standards for progression and graduation
 - nursing department's standards for progression and graduation, including grading policies
 - policies for advanced placement within the nursing education program

2. Discuss student policies. (reference in body of proposal & general overview in appendix) [§21.111, §21.112, §21.113, §21.114, §21.115 & §21.116] **-or-** [§21.222 & §21.223]:
 - a. educational policies specific to nursing students
 - b. provisions for student health and housing
 - c. provisions for counseling and guidance
 - d. financial aid policies

RECORD KEEPING

1. Discuss record keeping policies that assure compliance with Board of Nursing rules and regulations
(In body of proposal)

SITE SURVEY

Following approval of Phase II of the Feasibility Study by the Board of Nursing, and before final Board action is taken to grant permission to recruit and admit students; a member of the Board's professional staff will make a facility survey. The facility survey is to verify that program resources are in compliance with rules and regulations.

Developed: 11/92

Revised: 5/95, 12/98, 5/99, 6/00, 4/02, 1/03, 5/04, 4/05, 6/06, 7/08, 10/09, 8/2011