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Introduction

ACEN Mission

The Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) supports the interests of nursing education, nursing practice, and the public by the functions of accreditation. Accreditation is a voluntary, peer-review, self-regulatory process by which non-governmental associations recognize educational institutions or transition-to-practice programs that have been found to meet or exceed standards and criteria for educational quality. Accreditation also assists in the further improvement of the institutions or transition-to-practice programs as related to resources invested, processes followed, and results achieved. The monitoring of certificate, diploma, and degree offerings is tied closely to state examination and licensing rules and to the oversight of preparation for work in the profession.

ACEN Purpose

The purpose of the ACEN is to provide specialized accreditation for all levels of nursing education and transition-to-practice programs.

Nursing Education Accreditation:

The ACEN is recognized by the United States Department of Education (USDE) as a specialized accrediting agency for nursing education programs located in the United States and its territories.

The ACEN is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) for nursing education programs in the United States and its territories as well as for international nursing education transition-to-practice programs.

The ACEN accredits all types of nursing programs, including clinical doctorate/DNP specialist certificate, master’s/post-master’s certificate, baccalaureate, associate, diploma, and practical nursing programs.

The ACEN accredits nursing programs in secondary, postsecondary, and hospital-based sponsoring organizations that offer certificates, diplomas, or degrees.
The ACEN serves as a Title IV-HEA Gatekeeper for some practical nursing programs and hospital-based nursing programs eligible to participate in financial aid transition-to-practice programs administered by the United States Department of Education or other federal agencies.

**Transition-to-Practice Accreditation:**

The ACEN accredits non-credit transition-to-practice programs at all levels of nursing licensure.

The ACEN accredits transition-to-practice programs offered by academic institutions (e.g., university, college, career center) and/or healthcare agencies (e.g., hospitals, clinics, and long-term care facilities).

**ACEN Goals**

As the leading authority in nursing accreditation, the goal of the ACEN is to be a supportive partner in strengthening the quality of nursing education and transition-to-practice programs through:

- Supporting nursing education and transition-to-practice programs in obtaining and maintaining accreditation
- Promoting peer review
- Advocating for self-regulation
- Fostering quality, equity, access, opportunity, mobility, and preparation for practice or transition-to-practice at all levels of nursing preparation
- Developing standards and criteria for accreditation

**ACEN Recognition**

The ACEN is recognized as the accrediting body for all types of nursing education by:

- United States Department of Education (USDE)
Benefits of Accreditation for Transition-to-Practice Programs

ACEN accreditation is a voluntary peer-review process intended to enhance quality improvement in transition-to-practice programs. Accreditation:

- Demonstrates organizational commitment to best practices and improving patient outcomes.
- Aids in recruitment of nursing staff.
- Aids in retention of nursing staff.
- Demonstrates organizational commitment to nursing staff.
- Fosters ongoing, self-examination, re-evaluation, and focus on the future.
- Provides recognition that the transition-to-practice program has been evaluated, and periodically re-evaluated, by a qualified independent group of peers and demonstrates the extent to which the transition-to-practice program meets Standards and Criteria specific to transition-to-practice programs.
- Heightens program educators’ and administrators’ awareness and responsiveness to areas needing improvement in the transition-to-practice program.
- Engages program educators in best practices related to peer evaluation.
- Provides opportunities for networking among transition-to-practice programs.

Philosophy of Accreditation for Transition-to-Practice Programs

The ACEN accreditation of transition-to-practice programs is founded on the belief that accreditation contributes to the centrality of nursing for the public good and provides for the maintenance and enhancement of transitions that occur throughout the professional life of a nurse. Accreditation, with an emphasis on continuous self-assessment, planning, and improvement, indicates to the general public and to the healthcare community that a transition-to-practice program has clear and appropriate objectives and is working to achieve these objectives. Emphasis is placed upon the total transition-to-practice program and its compliance with established standards and criteria in the context of its mission/philosophy as well as current and future nursing practice.
Accrediting agencies share responsibility with transition-to-practice program educators and clinicians for the development of Transition-to-Practice Standards and Criteria, and accreditation policies and procedures. The ACEN supports voluntary accreditation by peers as a principal means of public accountability and ongoing improvement. The use of established standards for transition-to-practice programs ensures, through the self-study and accreditation review processes, the promotion of effective transition-to-practice programs and ongoing improvement.

Standards and criteria for accreditation, materials that document compliance, policies, and procedures are based on principles widely accepted and tested in general and professional education and the emerging literature about transition-to-practice in nursing. All those participating in accreditation must be aware of current developments in transition-to-practice in nursing. The systematic ongoing review of all components of the accreditation process is essential to ensure an up-to-date, reliable, and valid accreditation processes.

ACEN and the History of Nursing Accreditation

Click here to see ACEN’s place in the timeline of nursing accreditation

Products and Services for Transition-to-Practice Programs

- ACEN Directory of Accredited Transition-to-Practice Programs (electronic database)
- Mentoring by Professional Staff
- ACEN Transition-to-Practice Accreditation Manual
- General Information
- Policies
- Standards and Criteria
- Glossary
- Report to Constituents for Transition-to-Practice Programs
- Analysis of ACEN Annual Reports
- ACEN Transition-to-Practice website: http://www.acenursing-ttp.org
ACEN Organizational Structure

ACEN Board of Commissioners

ACEN Chief Executive Officer

Professional Staff

Peer Evaluators

Administrative Staff

Support Staff

http://acenursing-ttp.org/
The ACEN Board of Commissioners

Overall Structure of the Commission

The ACEN is governed by a 15-member Board of Commissioners (17 members effective October 1, 2019). The Commissioners are elected by the representatives of ACEN-accredited nursing programs. The legal basis for the foundation and structure of the Commission is outlined in the Bylaws and the Articles of Incorporation. The ACEN is incorporated under the laws of the state of New York.

Board of Commissioners

- Nine Commissioners (11 effective October 1, 2019) are nurse educators representing ACEN-accredited programs, three Commissioners represent the public, and three Commissioners represent nursing service.
- Commissioners are diversified and ensure balanced representation from across identified constituencies insofar as possible.
- The Board of Commissioners sets accreditation policy and makes accreditation, administrative, budget, and policy decisions.
- Decision of accreditation status is made by the Commissioners based on the materials available for the transition-to-practice program under review.
- No governor, officer, or employee of the NLN or its subsidiaries, or employee of the ACEN, may serve as a Commissioner.

Names, credentials, and affiliations of Commissioners are available online at http://www.acenursing.org/?s=Commissioners.

ACEN Staff

The ACEN staff maintain operational functions of the office and support the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Board of Commissioners, and transition-to-practice programs. Names and credentials of staff are available online at www.acenursing.org/acen-staff-3.
Standards and Criteria for Quality of Transition-to-Practice Programs in Nursing

ACEN Transition-to-Practice Accreditation Standards

STANDARD 1
Mission, Governance, and Resources
The mission of the nursing transition-to-practice program is congruent with the core values and goals of the sponsoring organization. The sponsoring organization supports the nursing transition-to-practice program by providing administrative and resource capacity to achieve end-of-transition-to-practice program learning outcomes and transition-to-practice program outcomes.

STANDARD 2
Program Educators and Staff
Qualified transition-to-practice program educators are sufficient in number to ensure the achievement of the end-of-transition-to-practice program learning outcomes and transition-to-practice program outcomes. Sufficient and qualified staff are available to support the nursing transition-to-practice program.

STANDARD 3
Nurse Residents
Policies and services of the nursing transition-to-practice program support the achievement of the end-of-transition-to-practice program learning outcomes and transition-to-practice program outcomes.

STANDARD 4
Curriculum
The curriculum of the transition-to-practice program supports the achievement of the established end-of-transition-to-practice program learning outcomes and enables the nurse resident to independently assume the responsibilities of stated roles in leadership, professional development, and safe clinical practice in contemporary healthcare environments.

STANDARD 5
Outcomes
The nursing transition-to-practice program demonstrates evidence of transition-to-practice program effectiveness.
ACEN Definition of Quality for Transition-to-Practice Programs

The core values of accreditation emphasize learning, community, responsibility, integrity, value, quality, and continuous improvement through self-evaluation, analysis, and reflection.

Peer review is a long-established and effective process that promotes effective transition-to-practice by embracing quality assurance, quality improvement, and establishment of quality standards to assist transition-to-practice programs to become stronger, better, and more effective. As implemented by the ACEN, the accreditation processes for transition-to-practice programs help determine which programs meet established standards and criteria for quality in transition-to-practice programs. The ACEN peer evaluators are familiar with contemporary practices in various transition-to-practice program types and receive training from the ACEN to make informed recommendations about a transition-to-practice program’s compliance with the ACEN Transition-to-Practice Standards and Criteria.

Quality in transition-to-practice programs facilitates professional development and successful transitions in the profession of nursing, and it supports positive outcomes for the people that healthcare agencies serve. Accreditation is an affirmation of values central to professional development, including being mission-driven, effective and efficient organizational structures, curriculum development, peer evaluation, and continuous improvement.

The ACEN accredits all types of transition-to-practice programs offered in a variety of clinical practice and academic settings. Transition-to-practice program types include but are not limited to those for the newly licensed nurse (initial or at a new level of licensure), the nurse who is re-entering the profession, and the nurse who is transitioning to a new nursing role/responsibilities at the same level of licensure within an organization. Transition-to-practice program options include all levels of nursing licensure, including advanced practice, registered nursing, and practical nursing.

Understanding Standards and Criteria in the Evaluation of Transition-to-Practice programs

Transition-to-practice programs are designed to facilitate nurse residents’ development of the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors necessary for professional nursing practice and successful transitions in nursing practice within the level of licensure, including new licensure, re-entry to nursing practice, or new practice roles. Transition-to-practice programs are developed
in order to meet the needs of the sponsoring organization, healthcare in the local community, and the nurse during a time of transition. The Standards and Criteria provide a framework for the transition-to-practice program to ensure that the program is well-organized, current, and effective.

**Standard** – Agreed-upon expectations to measure quantity, extent, value, and educational quality.

**Criteria** – Statements that identify the elements that need to be examined in evaluation of a Standard.

**Accreditation Processes and Procedures for Transition-to-Practice Programs**

**Planning for Transition-to-Practice Accreditation**

Transition-to-practice programs considering accreditation should contact the ACEN to begin the Candidacy process. As part of this process, nursing transition-to-practice programs will be assigned a mentor. The mentoring service is provided to facilitate self-review and planning. The nurse administrator, transition-to-practice program educators, and administrative officers (e.g., chief nursing officer, chief executive officer) of the sponsoring organization determine when the transition-to-practice program is ready to apply for Candidacy and the initial accreditation peer review process. The decision should be based on an in-depth self-study of the transition-to-practice program in relation to the ACEN Transition-to-Practice Standards and Criteria. When the ACEN Board of Commissioners grants accreditation to a transition-to-practice program, all students who completed the transition-to-practice program after the date the transition-to-practice program was granted Candidacy will have completed an accredited transition-to-practice program.
Overview of the Initial or Continuing Accreditation Process for Transition-to-Practice Programs

The ACEN accreditation process includes the following primary steps:

1. **Candidacy**: Applies to initial accreditation only for transition-to-practice programs, the program submits a TTP Candidacy Eligibility Application and Candidacy Presentation.


3. **Board of Commissioners Committee**: The ACEN Board of Commissioners’ Transition-to-Practice Committee reviews available transition-to-practice program materials and makes a recommendation for accreditation.

4. **Commissioner Decision**: The ACEN Board of Commissioners makes the accreditation decision.

5. **Site Visit**: Program-specific peer evaluators visit the transition-to-practice program and complete a TTP Site Visit Report.

6. **Continuing Accreditation**: Transition-to-practice programs seeking initial accreditation with the ACEN must start with the Candidacy process. The ACEN process for transition-to-practice programs seeking initial accreditation after achieving Candidate status or continuing accreditation is a comprehensive four-step process starting with the transition-to-practice program’s self-reflection regarding its compliance with the Transition-to-Practice Standards and Criteria and as presented in its Self-Study Report. The second step is the transition-to-practice program-specific peer evaluators

*An Appeal Panel may be convened only when initial or continuing accreditation is denied by the Board of Commissioners*

http://acenursing-ttp.org/
visiting the transition-to-practice program resulting in the peers documenting their assessment and recommendations regarding the transition-to-practice program’s compliance with the Transition-to-Practice Standards and Criteria in the Site Visit Report. In the third step, a designated committee from the Board of Commissioners examines the available transition-to-practice program materials and makes a recommendation about accreditation. The final step is a review of the process and all available documentation by the ACEN Board of Commissioners and consideration of the findings and accreditation recommendations from the previous steps. The Commissioners reach their own independent professional judgement regarding the transition-to-practice program’s compliance with the Transition-to-Practice Standards and Criteria to make the accreditation decision.

Candidacy Process for Transition-to-Practice Programs

A transition-to-practice program seeking initial accreditation must apply for Candidacy. Candidate status is granted after an ACEN review of the transition-to-practice program’s potential to achieve ACEN accreditation. A transition-to-practice program seeking initial accreditation must:

1. Complete the TTP Candidacy Eligibility Application.
2. Provide evidence of current approval from the state regulatory agency for nursing and the sponsoring organization’s accreditation/approval status (where appropriate). See the following list of accrediting agencies that are ACEN-approved: http://acenursing-ttp.org/about/acen-recognized-institutional-accrediting-agencies/
3. After eligibility has been confirmed, submit payment for the required fee. See Schedule of Accreditation Fees available on the ACEN website (http://acenursing-ttp.org/).
4. Submit a Candidacy Presentation based upon the Guidelines for the Preparation of Witten Reports and the Candidacy Presentation Instructions.

Upon granting of initial accreditation by the ACEN Board of Commissioners, the effective date of initial accreditation is the date on which the nursing transition-to-practice program was approved by the ACEN as a Candidate for accreditation that concluded in the Board of Commissioners granting initial accreditation.

If a transition-to-practice program’s Candidacy expires prior to scheduling an initial accreditation site visit, then the transition-to-practice program must restart the Candidacy process to renew its Candidacy status. The Candidacy process can be restarted at any time after either being disapproved or when the transition-to-practice program’s Candidacy has expired.
Each sponsoring organization/transition-to-practice program making a Candidacy Presentation to ACEN or granted Candidacy agrees to certain requirements concerning financial obligation, choice of law, jurisdiction, and venue. As a condition of reviewing the Candidacy document or of ACEN granting Candidacy, each sponsoring organization/nursing transition-to-practice program agrees to abide by ACEN Policy 221 Litigation.

**Initial Accreditation for Transition-to-Practice Programs**

A sponsoring organization that offers a transition-to-practice program not accredited by the ACEN initiates the Candidacy process through its chief nursing officer and transition-to-practice program nurse administrator. The chief nursing officer of the sponsoring organization as well as the nurse administrator for the transition-to-practice program must authorize the ACEN to conduct the accreditation process by submitting the Candidacy Eligibility Application. Once Candidacy status has been achieved, the chief nurse executive of the sponsoring organization and the nurse administrator must authorize the scheduling/hosting of the initial accreditation visit using the Accreditation Site Visit Information Form. A transition-to-practice program seeking initial accreditation must achieve Candidacy prior to scheduling the initial accreditation visit.

**Continuing Accreditation for Transition-to-Practice Programs**

Planning for continuing accreditation is an ongoing process. A transition-to-practice program must be visited and re-evaluated at specified intervals to ensure continuing compliance with the Transition-to-Practice Standards and Criteria. The ACEN staff notify the transition-to-practice program of a pending visit approximately two years in advance. Dates for the site visit are scheduled in consultation with the nurse administrator, as the transition-to-practice program must be in full operation during the visit.

Official authorization to conduct the ACEN accreditation process is secured from the chief nurse executive of the sponsoring organization and the nurse administrator for the transition-to-practice program.

If an ACEN-accredited transition-to-practice program seeks to delay or reschedule a visit, refer to Policy 206 Delay/Advancement of Continuing Accreditation Visit. If an ACEN-accredited
transition-to-practice program seeks to voluntarily withdraw from ACEN accreditation, refer to Policy 207 Voluntary Withdrawal from ACEN Accreditation. See ACEN Policy 206 and 207 in the ACEN Transition-to-Practice Accreditation Manual, Section II - Policies.

**Assistance for Transition-to-Practice Programs**

The ACEN professional staff are available to assist transition-to-practice programs with transition-to-practice policies and the Transition-to-Practice Standards and Criteria. The ACEN website also provides online resources for transition-to-practice programs, including, but not limited to, the ACEN Transition-to-Practice Accreditation Manual, including the ACEN Transition-to-Practice Glossary, the forms to use for scheduling an accreditation visit, and various resources related to preparation of the written reports for the ACEN.

**Self-Review and Self-Study Report for Transition-to-Practice Programs**

Any transition-to-practice program preparing for initial or continuing accreditation must submit a Self-Study Report to demonstrate the extent to which the transition-to-practice program meets the Transition-to-Practice Standards and Criteria. The Self-Study Report is submitted a minimum of six weeks prior to the scheduled site visit.

The process of self-study represents the combined efforts of the sponsoring organization administrators, transition-to-practice program administrators, transition-to-practice program educators, staff, nurse residents, and other individuals concerned with the transition-to-practice program. All those associated with the transition-to-practice program should participate in the self-study process. Broad participation in the self-study process leads to an understanding of the total transition-to-practice program.

The Self-Study Report is a primary document used by the peer evaluators visiting the transition-to-practice program, the Board of Commissioners Transition-to-Practice Committee, and the Board of Commissioners to understand the transition-to-practice program.

- The report must be based on the Transition-to-Practice Standards and Criteria in effect at the time of review and the most recent edition of the ACEN Transition-to-Practice Accreditation Manual. Transition-to-Practice Standards and Criteria become effective on the Commission’s approval date. Programs scheduled for review within 12 months of the
Transition-to-Practice Accreditation by the ACEN™

GENERAL INFORMATION

Transition-to-Practice Standards and Criteria effective date may elect to use the current or former version of the Transition-to-Practice Standards and Criteria.

- Faculty and administrators are responsible for presenting narrative and evidence that clearly demonstrate the extent to which the transition-to-practice program meets the Transition-to-Practice Standards and Criteria. Peer evaluators visiting the transition-to-practice program will use the Self-Study Report in preparation for their visit to the transition-to-practice program.

Guidelines for the Preparation of Written Reports and the TTP Self-Study Report Instructions are available online at http://www.acenursing-ttp.org

The Site Visit for Transition-to-Practice Programs

The purpose of the site visit is to determine the extent to which the transition-to-practice program meets the Transition-to-Practice Standards and Criteria by clarifying, verifying, and amplifying the information presented in the Self-Study Report. An ACEN site visit may be completed remotely or in person. Based on findings, the peer evaluators visiting the transition-to-practice program will make a recommendation regarding the accreditation status of the nursing transition-to-practice program.

Onsite review of the transition-to-practice program by peer evaluators is an essential part of the accreditation process. It provides the transition-to-practice program an opportunity to demonstrate and highlight information presented in its Self-Study Report and provides for interaction among stakeholders including but not limited to nurse residents, program administrators, program educators, staff, and peer evaluators. In addition, the site visit provides peer evaluators an opportunity to see the transition-to-practice program firsthand. The peer evaluators conduct an independent analysis and make professional judgments on the extent to which the transition-to-practice program meets the Transition-to-Practice Standards and Criteria; their findings and recommendation are documented in the Site Visit Report. These peer evaluators verify congruence between the Self-Study Report and the actual practices of the transition-to-practice program so that the members of the Board of Commissioners have a clear and complete understanding of the transition-to-practice program.

Length of Visit

The ACEN site visit is typically scheduled for two to three days. However, the length depends on several factors, including size and complexity of the transition-to-practice program, geographical
locations of the various resources used for nurse residents, the number of nurse residents, and coordination of the visit with other agencies. Correspondence from the ACEN will indicate the dates of the visit.

Assignment of Peer Evaluators on a Site Visit Team

Each site visit is conducted by a team of transition-to-practice program and/or nurse educator peers with transition-to-practice-program-specific and/or academic expertise and, when appropriate, a clinician. Typically, a team of three peer evaluators is assigned to a site visit team.

The ACEN staff will appoint the team of peer evaluators and notify the nurse administrator in advance of the visit. The nurse administrator should contact the ACEN staff in writing if a possible conflict of interest is identified among peer evaluators. If a peer evaluator becomes ineligible or unable to serve, another peer evaluator with comparable qualifications will be appointed, if possible.

- The ACEN staff will assign peer evaluators considering their expertise with multiple factors, including, but not limited to:
  - Nurse resident type(s)
  - Size of the transition-to-practice program and sponsoring organization
  - Type of sponsoring organization
  - Method(s) of transition-to-practice program delivery
  - Setting (urban, suburban, or rural)
  - State

Responsibilities of the Team Chairperson

The team chairperson assumes the following responsibilities:

- Acts as official spokesperson for the team of peer evaluators
- Reviews all content of the ACEN accreditation information packet upon receipt
- Coordinates planning with the team members
- Conducts the team orientation and subsequent team meetings and conferences
- Receives and reviews the electronic files from the nurse administrator listing information on all individuals and groups interviewed by the team members and all documents reviewed in the evidence room
- Allocates responsibilities for various activities to ensure optimum utilization of team members and adequate coverage of all areas during the visit, including interviews and conferences with key personnel on and off campus
Transition-to-Practice Accreditation by the ACEN™

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Requests additional information as necessary
- Notifies the nurse administrator of the arrival of the team members and plans the time for the first meeting
- Conducts periodic conferences with the nurse administrator
- Arranges for the exit meeting with the nurse administrator and any persons the nurse administrator invites to be present
- Collates and edits the Site Visit Report to ensure completeness and clarity
- Submits the completed Site Visit Report to the ACEN within one week following the site visit
- Assumes the additional responsibilities stated under “Responsibilities of the Team Members”

Responsibilities of the Team Members

The team member assumes the following responsibilities.

When the ACEN accreditation information packet is received:

- Reviews all content of the packet

When the materials from the transition-to-practice program are received:

- Reviews all materials
- Prepares a draft copy of the Site Visit Report findings and submits draft to the team chair for areas as assigned
- Makes a list of findings from the Self-Study Report that require additional verification, amplification, or verification at the time of the site visit

During the visit:

- Assumes responsibility to collect data cooperatively and make observations
- Further develops Site Visit Report based on findings of the onsite visit
- Participates in the exit meeting with the nurse administrator and any persons invited to be present

After the visit:

- Retains a copy of the written reports and any other resource materials used/developed during the site visit until the Board of Commissioners’ decision is finalized
Responsibilities of the Transition-to-Practice Program

- Provides the team chair with an electronic file that lists the names, credentials, and titles of individuals and group members interviewed by the peer evaluators during the site visit.
- Provides the team chair with an electronic file listing all supporting evidence, by defined category, that was made available to the peer evaluators.
- Provides computers and printer(s) for the team members to use throughout the site visit, if needed.
- Establishes a room in which materials for the peer evaluators are assembled, where the team members can read and work during the period of the site visit.
- Obtains any necessary written permissions required prior to the site visit (e.g., review of records).
- Assembles the materials for review - These materials will be reviewed during the site visit and left with the nursing transition-to-practice program upon completion of the site visit.

Programs for which all or part of the curriculum is delivered in a language other than English should make provisions for an interpreter to be present throughout the site visit and to make certain that all transition-to-practice program documents are available in English for review by the peer evaluators.
### Visit Arrangements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lodging</strong></td>
<td>– Nurse administrator will make and pay for hotel reservations for the peer evaluators and notify the team chair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Each peer evaluator is to have a separate hotel room in close proximity to each other; availability of restaurant facilities within a reasonable walking distance of the hotel is essential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Travel</strong></td>
<td>– The transition-to-practice program is responsible for arranging and providing all ground transportation such as transportation to and from the airport/hotel. Peer evaluators may not provide any ground transportation, even if a peer evaluator drove to the site visit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Any intra-visit travel expenses and arrangements are also the responsibility of the transition-to-practice program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fees</strong></td>
<td>– The ACEN will invoice the transition-to-practice program according to the current fee schedule prior to the site visit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Payment in full is required prior to the site visit, or the site visit will be canceled.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Agenda for the Visit

At least six weeks prior to the scheduled site visit, a tentative agenda for the site visit is prepared by the nurse administrator and sent to the team chairperson along with a copy of the transition-to-practice program schedule during the time of the visit. See the Transition-to-Practice website for a sample agenda for an accreditation visit. The visit agenda should include visits to all locations and allow for review of all methods of delivery.

- Visits to:
  - appropriate facilities and resources
  - selected clinical units to observe and meet with nurse residents
- Review of:
  - curricular and other materials
  - appropriate records of transition-to-practice program educators, nurse residents, and recent transition-to-practice program completers
  - additional information to clarify, verify, and amplify the Self-Study Report
- Classroom and/or clinical observations representative of all locations and methods of transition-to-practice program delivery.

Visiting Locations

Prior to the site visit, transition-to-practice programs with multiple locations must discuss with the team chairperson alternative methods (e.g., virtual) for the peer evaluators to evaluate additional locations on which the transition-to-practice program is offered. If locations are more than one hour apart in driving distance, the nurse administrator should communicate with the ACEN professional staff regarding visits to the additional locations.

Access to Hybrid/Online Courses

Prior to the visit, transition-to-practice programs with hybrid or online courses must provide all peer evaluators access to the courses. The access to the courses should be provided with the Self-Study Report at least six weeks prior to the onsite visit and continue throughout the visit.

Internet Access

The transition-to-practice program is also responsible for making sure that the peer evaluators have access to the Internet during the site visit, including at the hotel. The transition-to-practice program may be requested to have a computer onsite for each peer evaluator or may be requested to provide Internet access via the peer evaluators’ personal computers. Information technology (IT) support should be available to the peer evaluators during the site visit if needed.
The Site Visit Report for Transition-to-Practice Programs

The team chairperson is responsible for presenting an accurate, complete, and well-organized Site Visit Report to the ACEN within one week after the conclusion of the site visit. Team members review the final report prior to submission to the ACEN.

Additional information related to the preparation of the Site Visit Report is available online for peer evaluators as well as the nursing transition-to-practice program/nursing education unit at www.acenursing.org.

ACEN Staff Review

All Site Visit Reports are reviewed by ACEN staff. If questions arise, the team chairperson is contacted for clarification.

A draft copy of the Site Visit Report is provided to the nurse administrator of the transition-to-practice program for review and correction of errors of fact within eight weeks after the conclusion of the site visit. The completed Nurse Administrator Response Form must be received by the ACEN within one week after the nurse administrator receives the draft report. Substantive comments are shared with the team chairperson, who then decides whether the report is to be changed. After this decision and any necessary changes are made, the report becomes final. The final Site Visit Report and the Nurse Administrator Response Form will become part of the permanent materials relating to the accreditation visit.

The final Site Visit Report will be provided to the nurse administrator. The peer evaluators that visited the transition-to-practice program will also receive a copy of the final report.

Board of Commissioners Transition-to-Practice Committee

The Board of Commissioners Transition-to-Practice Committee, composed of appointed representatives from the Board of Commissioners, bases its accreditation recommendation on its own independent analysis of the Self-Study Report, Site Visit Report Nurse Administrator Response Form, and any additional information and applies its professional judgment. The aim of this review is to provide consistency in the recommendations for transition-to-practice programs under review. The role of the professional staff is to facilitate the work of the committee.
ACEN Board of Commissioners

The Board of Commissioners has the sole authority to determine the accreditation status of transition-to-practice programs. Composed of nurse educators, nursing clinicians/practitioners, and public members, the Board of Commissioners bases its decisions on its own independent analysis the program's Written Report (e.g., Self-Study Report, Site Visit Report, the Nurse Administrator Response Form, and any additional information and applies and professional judgment on extent to which the transition-to-practice program meets the Transition-to-Practice Standards and Criteria, while considering the previous peer evaluators' judgement, as well as the consistent application of the Transition-to-Practice Standards and Criteria across all transition-to-practice programs. The Board of Commissioners makes the accreditation decision as scheduled. To assist the transition-to-practice program in future planning, a copy of the Summary of Deliberations of the Board of Commissioners Transition-to-Practice Committee and the Commissioner's decision letter will be provided to the transition-to-practice program. In cases where accreditation is denied, transition-to-practice programs have the opportunity to present their case in an impartial hearing before an independent Appeal Panel per Policy 209 Appeal Process.

Peer Evaluators for Transition-to-Practice Programs

Peer evaluators make recommendations to the Board of Commissioners. Peer evaluators are knowledgeable about common, contemporary, and best practices, as well as current trends in healthcare, nursing education, and/or nursing practice.

Eligibility for Selection as a Peer Evaluator

Eligibility to serve as an ACEN peer evaluator is dependent on the following requirements:

Selection, Appointment, and Maintaining Eligibility as a Peer Evaluator for Transition-to-Practice Programs

Selection

All peer evaluators are selected through mechanisms and criteria established by the ACEN.
Individuals must submit a letter of interest, current curriculum vitae/resume, and a letter of recommendation. After ACEN staff review of submitted materials, selected individuals will be invited to become peer evaluators and must participate in the ACEN required peer evaluator training.

Appointment
Peer evaluators are eligible to serve if they receive ongoing positive site visit performance evaluations, remain current with the accreditation process, and continue to meet eligibility requirements. A list of the current transition-to-practice program evaluators is accessible on the ACEN website.

Evaluation
Peer evaluators are evaluated by the members of the site visit team and the nurse administrator following each site visit.

Preparation
Required training is initially completed online and required brief updates are provided for all peer evaluators prior to the assigned visit.

Honorarium
An honorarium will be provided to the peer evaluator after a visit is completed.

We encourage you to self-nominate or nominate your colleagues to serve as a peer evaluator. Please send your nomination to peer_evaluator@acenursing.org

For additional information please refer to the following ACEN policies:
- Policy 201 Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest
- Policy 202 Representation on the Site Visit Teams, Evaluation Review Panels, and Board of Commissioners
Appeal Panel Members for Transition-to-Practice Programs

Selection

Members of the Appeal Panel must have knowledge of and experience with the peer-review process. The program educator or nurse educator and nursing clinician/practitioner members must be currently eligible peer evaluators. Commissioners cannot serve on the Appeal Panel.

Appointment

The Appeal Panel consists of individuals selected from a Board of Commissioners-approved list of the individuals qualified to serve as members of the Appeal Panel. See ACEN Policy 209 Appeal Process Adverse Action for Transition-to-Practice Programs. A list of the individuals who have been appointed to the Appeal Panel is accessible on the ACEN website (www.acenursing.org).