

**POLICY #225**  
**CANDIDACY FOR A SPONSORING ORGANIZATION/TRANSITION-TO-PRACTICE PROGRAM SEEKING INITIAL ACCREDITATION**

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A sponsoring organization/transition-to-practice program seeking initial accreditation with the ACEN must apply for Candidacy. The sponsoring organization/transition-to-practice program seeking initial accreditation must:

1. Demonstrate that the sponsoring organization and transition-to-practice program are eligible for ACEN accreditation; See ACEN Policy #203 Eligibility for Accreditation.
2. After the eligibility of the sponsoring organization and transition-to-practice program have been established by ACEN staff, pay the required Candidacy fee(s).
3. Demonstrate that the transition-to-practice program has the potential to achieve initial accreditation based on requirements for the Candidacy Presentation and within the timeframe established by the ACEN.
4. **A sponsoring organization/transition-to-practice program in the appeals process or binding arbitration process with the ACEN is not eligible for consideration of Candidacy.**

Approval, Deferral, or Disapproval of Candidacy

Based on the requirements established by the ACEN, the Chief Executive Officer may (a) approve a transition-to-practice program for Candidacy, (b) defer a transition-to-practice program for Candidacy, or (c) disapprove a transition-to-practice program for Candidacy.

A program may be approved for Candidacy to pursue initial accreditation for a maximum of two calendar years. Once approved for Candidacy, a transition-to-practice program must host an initial accreditation site visit prior to the expiration of Candidacy.

Approval of Candidacy

Approval of Candidacy is granted when, in the professional judgment of the ACEN Chief Executive Officer, informed by the professional judgement of the ACEN staff, the transition-to-practice program either:

- a. Makes a Candidacy Presentation that demonstrates the transition-to-practice program is currently compliant with the requirements for the Candidacy Presentation and based upon the Candidacy Presentation, has the potential to achieve initial accreditation; or
- b. Makes a Candidacy Presentation that demonstrates the transition-to-practice program has the potential to be compliant with the requirements for the Candidacy Presentation within two calendar years of the date of notification, and based upon the Candidacy Presentation, has the potential to achieve initial accreditation.

Being approved for Candidacy informs the sponsoring organization/transition-to-practice program and the public that the transition-to-practice program demonstrated the potential to achieve initial accreditation based upon the ACEN staff's professional judgement regarding requirements for the Candidacy Presentation at the time the transition-to-practice program was approved for Candidacy. Being approved for Candidacy does not guarantee that the ACEN Board of Commissioners will determine that the transition-to-practice program is in compliance with all the Transition-to-Practice Standards and Criteria at the time the ACEN Board of Commissioners reviews the transition-to-practice program for initial accreditation. See ACEN Policy #204 Types of Commission Actions for Initial and Continuing Accreditation

Transition-to-practice programs approved for Candidacy must publicly disclose the following information exactly as illustrated below:

**Effective [insert date of ACEN notification letter], this transition-to-practice program is a candidate for initial accreditation by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing. This candidacy status expires on [insert expiration date in ACEN notification letter].**

**Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN)  
3343 Peachtree Road NE, Suite 850  
Atlanta, GA 30326 404-975-5000  
[WEB ADDRESS](#)**

Note: Upon granting of initial accreditation by the ACEN Board of Commissioners, the effective date of initial accreditation is the date the transition-to-practice program was approved as a Candidate program by the ACEN that resulted in the ACEN Board of Commissioners granting initial accreditation.

#### Deferral of Candidacy

Deferral of Candidacy is granted when, in the professional judgment of the ACEN Chief Executive Officer, informed by the professional judgement of the ACEN staff, the transition-to-practice program:

- a. Makes an inconsistent Candidacy Presentation that does not demonstrate that the transition-to-practice program is currently compliant with the requirements of for the Candidacy Presentation. Deferral indicates the transition-to-practice program may have the potential to demonstrate compliance with the Candidacy Presentation with the opportunity to resubmit the Candidacy Presentation.

Being deferred for Candidacy informs the sponsoring organization/transition-to-practice program that the transition-to-practice program demonstrated that it may have the potential to achieve Candidacy based upon the ACEN staff's professional judgement regarding requirements for the Candidacy Presentation at the time the transition-to-practice program was deferred for Candidacy. Being deferred for Candidacy does not guarantee that the transition-to-practice

program will be approved for Candidacy if the transition-to-practice program resubmits the Candidacy Presentation.

Deferral of Candidacy is not an appealable action.

If deferred, the transition-to-practice program has up to one calendar year of the date of notification to resubmit the Candidacy Presentation for reconsideration without restarting the entire Candidacy Process and paying related fee(s) again. Upon resubmission of the Candidacy Presentation, the transition-to-practice program must be (a) approved for Candidacy or (b) disapproved for Candidacy.

#### Disapproval of Candidacy

Disapproval of Candidacy is made when, in the professional judgment of the ACEN Chief Executive Officer, informed by the professional judgement of the ACEN staff, the transition-to-practice program either:

- a. Does not make a Candidacy Presentation that demonstrates that the transition-to-practice program is currently compliant with the requirements for the Candidacy Presentation and based upon the Candidacy Presentation, does not have the potential to achieve initial accreditation; or
- b. Does not make a Candidacy Presentation that demonstrates that the transition-to-practice program has the potential to be compliant with the requirements for the Candidacy Presentation within two calendar years of the date of notification, and based upon the Candidacy Presentation, does not have the potential to achieve initial accreditation.

Disapproval of Candidacy is not an appealable action.

If disapproved, in order to seek initial accreditation with ACEN, the transition-to-practice program is required to restart the Candidacy Process and pay related fee(s) again. The transition-to-practice program may restart the entire Candidacy process at any time after being disapproved for Candidacy.

#### Failure to Meet any Timeline

During the Candidacy process, failure to meet any timeline established by the ACEN will result in a transition-to-practice program losing its approval for Candidacy status. If a transition-to-practice program fails to meet any required timeline prior to hosting an initial accreditation site visit, then the transition-to-practice program must restart the entire Candidacy process, pay related fee(s), and submit a new Candidacy presentation, which may result in approval, deferral, or disapproval. Submission of a new Candidacy Eligibility Application and Candidacy Presentation reinitiates the Candidacy process for the transition-to-practice program, and the effective date of initial accreditation will be based on the new date that the transition-to-practice program is approved to pursue initial accreditation.

The Candidacy process can be restarted at any time after a transition-to-practice program loses its approval for Candidacy status or voluntarily withdraws from the Candidacy process.

### Obligations of Sponsoring Organization and Transition-to-Practice Program Approved for Candidacy

Each sponsoring organization/transition-to-practice program making a Candidacy Presentation or approved for Candidacy agrees to certain requirements concerning financial obligation, choice of law, jurisdiction, and venue; **and disclosure of information**. As a condition of reviewing any Candidacy Presentation or of being approved for Candidacy, each sponsoring organization/transition-to-practice program agrees to the following:

- a. The sponsoring organization/transition-to-practice program agrees to abide by ACEN Policy #221 Litigation **for Transition-to-Practice Programs**.
- b. The sponsoring organization/transition-to-practice program agrees to abide by ACEN Policy #224 Integrity **for Transition-to-Practice Programs**.
- c. The sponsoring organization/transition-to-practice program agrees to abide by ACEN Policy #228 Third-Party Discovery Request **for Transition-to-Practice Programs**.
- d. The sponsoring organization/transition-to-practice program agrees to abide by ACEN Policy #229 Binding Arbitration **for Transition-to-Practice Programs**.
- e. It is the obligation of every sponsoring organization/transition-to-practice program seeking Candidacy to pay all fees and expenses when due. Failure to pay all fees and expenses when due shall be deemed a voluntary withdrawal from the Candidacy process. A schedule of current fees and expenses is available at (<http://acenursing-ttp.org/for-programs/>).

The sponsoring organization/transition-to-practice program must notify the ACEN, in writing, of **(a)** all unexpected changes that occur within 30 calendar days of the change or **(b)** all expected changes that are planned to occur no less than 120 calendar days prior to the change occurring. Failure to report an unexpected or expected change may delay or jeopardize a transition-to-practice program from being approved for Candidacy; hosting an initial accreditation site visit; or being granted initial accreditation by the ACEN Board of Commissioners.

Changes requiring notification include but are not limited to:

- a. change in the nurse administrator
- b. the transition-to-practice program relocates to a new location
- c. change in the sponsoring organization's and/or transition-to-practice program's status with a state regulatory agency or for international programs a change in the approval status with any regulatory agency that oversees nursing in the country
- d. change in the status with the sponsoring organization's accrediting agency
- e. change in the sponsoring organization's accrediting agency

- f. change in the transition-to-practice program's curriculum
- g. addition and/or deletion of a new location where **any portion of** the transition-to-practice program is offered

The written notification must address the requirements for the Candidacy Presentation related to the change (e.g., for a change in the curriculum and/or new program option, all of the required Criteria in the Candidacy Presentation for Standard 4 Curriculum).

If the ACEN Board of Commissioners grants initial accreditation but determines there is an unreported change, the ACEN Board of Commissioners may decide to exclude the unreported change in its initial accreditation decision of the transition-to-practice program. If the ACEN Board of Commissioners excludes the unreported change in its initial accreditation decision, then the transition-to-practice program is required to submit the unreported change through the ACEN substantive change policy, undergo the subsequent review process, and is obligated for any related expense(s) that results from the substantive change process. See ACEN Policy #213 Reporting Substantive Changes.

**When a sponsoring organization and/or transition-to-practice program makes a disclosure regarding the ACEN Candidacy status of a transition-to-practice program approved for Candidacy, it must accurately:**

- 1. list each program type\*; and
- 2. identify each transition-to-practice program's Candidacy status with ACEN.

**The sponsoring organization/transition-to-practice program must disclose the following information as a single disclosure to all current and prospective students within seven business days of receipt of the Candidacy approval letter from the ACEN. The single disclosure must be exactly as illustrated below:**

**Effective [insert date of ACEN notification letter] the [insert type of transition-to-practice program\*] transition-to-practice program at [insert name of the sponsoring organization in accordance with ACEN records] [at the insert name of location in accordance with ACEN records, if applicable] located in [insert city and state in accordance with ACEN records] is a Candidate for initial accreditation by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing. This Candidacy status expires on [insert expiration date in ACEN notification letter].**

**Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN)  
3343 Peachtree Road NE, Suite 850  
Atlanta, GA 30326  
404-975-5000  
<http://acenursing-ttp.org/for-programs/>**

**View the public information disclosed by the ACEN regarding the Candidate program at <http://acenursing-ttp.org/for-programs/>**

\*Type of transition-to-practice program: the purpose of the transition-to-practice program, including but not limited to the newly licensed nurse typically within 12-months of licensure (i.e., new initial licensure or new level of licensure), the nurse who is transitioning practice role/responsibilities at the same level of licensure (i.e., role transition), or the nurse who is re-entering the profession after extended time away from practice (i.e., re-entry).

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

If a Candidate transition-to-practice program voluntarily withdraws from Candidacy, the disclosure of Candidate status information must be deleted within one calendar day of notifying the ACEN of the withdrawal.

1. If the transition-to-practice program is granted initial accreditation, the sponsoring organization/transition-to-practice program must follow ACEN Policy #208 Disclosure of Information about an Accredited Transition-to-Practice Program.
2. If the transition-to-practice program is denied initial accreditation, the sponsoring organization/transition-to-practice program must disclose to all current and prospective nurse residents within seven business days of receipt of the decision letter from the ACEN that the Board of Commissioners denied the transition-to-practice program initial accreditation.
3. If the sponsoring organization and/or transition-to-practice program publishes incorrect or misleading information about the Candidacy status of a transition-to-practice program or any action by the ACEN relative to initial accreditation of a transition-to-practice program, the sponsoring organization and/or transition-to-practice program must immediately provide public correction via a news release or through other media.
4. If a sponsoring organization and/or transition-to-practice program makes public the contents from a Candidacy Review, Site Visit Report, or Board of Commissioners decision letter, it must provide full sentences and context. Characterizing, quoting, and/or providing excerpts from a Candidacy Review, Site Visit Report, or Board of Commissioners decision letter must also be accompanied by a note stating that a copy of the complete document(s) can be obtained from the transition-to-practice program. Should the statements be misinterpreted, the program must correct this misinterpretation through a clarifying release to the same audience that received the information.

If it is determined that a sponsoring organization and/or transition-to-practice program is in violation of this policy, the ACEN Chief Executive Officer will inform the sponsoring organization and/or transition-to-practice program through a formal letter. If the violation is not corrected immediately, the Chief Executive Officer shall report the matter to the ACEN Board of Commissioners for appropriate action.

Policy #225 History  
Initial Approval: July 24, 2019  
Revised:      2020

PROPOSED - JUNE 2020