



New Nursing Program Approval Process

Institutions seeking initial approval to establish a pre-licensure nursing program in South Carolina are encouraged to access the nursing program regulations at <https://llr.sc.gov/nurse/>. When you arrive on the home page, please select Laws/ Rules/ Policies; then Nursing Regulations, Chapter 91. The requirements are addressed in Article 2.

Regulation 91-4. Mandatory approval of nursing programs, requires “*all nursing programs located in South Carolina preparing students for initial practical and registered nursing licensure shall be Board approved.*”

First Steps

Feasibility Study

The process starts with **Regulation 91-5: Procedure for Survey and Initial Approval of Nursing Programs** which requires that a Current Feasibility Study, signed by the responsible administrative officers of the parent institution, be submitted for approval to the Board at least **twelve months in advance of the proposed opening date**. Current letters of support from all major clinical facilities, expected to be used for the full program implementation of student experiences, must be included along with all other required documentation listed in the regulation and polices. **Submission of these materials must be both electronic version (email or jump drive) and one printed copy.**

Regulation 91-11: and 91-12: A. 1. Requires “*the nursing education program is either affiliated with or a part of an institution of higher learning approved by the appropriate state authority.*” We advise that you ensure your educational institution has the documentation proving your program’s **ability to confer educational credentials**. Compliance with Regulation 91-11/12, A.1 **must be achieved before we can continue** to proceed with the Board of Nursing approval process.

Next Steps

When the above-described steps have been completed, **arrangements should be made with the Nurse Consultant**, Peter.Kubas@llr.sc.gov, to submit the Feasibility Study for approval. Once the Study is submitted, it will be reviewed by the Advisory Committee on Nursing Education (ACONE) – Survey Team. The Team shall review the study and make recommendation(s) to the State Board of Nursing for South Carolina. The program will then appear in front of the Board who will consider the

recommendations of the ACONE – Survey Team in its deliberations of the Feasibility Study. Final action will be taken by the Board of Nursing.

If the Board determines that the program is approved for development, the parent institution shall employ a nurse administrator and nurse faculty member(s) who meet the qualifications as established by the Board. The administrator and faculty member(s) will develop and **submit a Self-Evaluation Report** documenting evidence of compliance with the Nursing Education Standards set forth in Regulation 91-11/ 12 and 91-5.3 **at least six months in advance of the proposed opening date.**

When the Self-Evaluation Report is received, it will be forwarded to the ACONE. The Survey Team will conduct a site visit of the proposed program and prepare a written report. The ACONE shall review the report and make recommendation(s) to the Board of Nursing. The Board of Nursing will consider the recommendations of the ACONE in its deliberations of the proposed program. Final action will be taken by the Board of Nursing.

Current Feasibility Study and Self-Evaluation Report Requisite Format

Please refer to SC [Nurse Regulations, Chapter 91](#) for the Current Feasibility Study (R.91-5) and the Self-Evaluation Report Requirements (R.91-11/ 12) regarding the requisite format. The Current Feasibility Study and the Self-Evaluation Report **must include a narrative listing completely addressing each of the sections/ criteria AND subsections/ sub-criteria in the above referenced regulations.** It must also include appendices with documents supporting the narrative. The report narrative must document evidence of the nursing program's compliance with the regulations along with appropriate discussion of school policies/ procedures.

Please be advised that **it is the responsibility of the institution to ensure that materials are ready for presentation.** The documentation must meet full compliance with regulations when submitted. **Submission of these materials must be both electronic version (email or jump drive) and one printed copy.** The nurse education consultant will make no changes or recommendations as the consultant's role is to facilitate the process. Inadequate or incomplete documents may affect/ delay the proposed opening date. The ACONE has the authority to require an additional appearance(s) if the materials are incomplete.

For planning purposes, the Board of Nursing meets bimonthly (starting January of each year). The ACONE meets bimonthly (starting February of each year).

Please be advised to take into consideration the Board's processes (Regulation 91-5 requirements for submitting materials, the ACONE and BON meeting dates; the **deadlines to submit materials** for these meetings is **4 weeks prior to the meeting date**) in your planning so as to coordinate with your proposed opening date plans.

Feasibility Study Requirements

- (a) Purpose for establishing the program.
- (b) Type of educational program to be established.
- (c) Relationship to the parent institution, including an organizational chart.
- (d) Written evidence of support by the governing body of the parent institution for the program.
- (e) Projected number of students for enrollment.
- (f) Proposed timeline for program implementation.
- (g) Information regarding proposed clinical facilities for student experiences, including **letters of support** from all major facilities expected to be used for full program implementation.
- (h) Availability of the general education component of the curriculum or letter of agreement from another institution.
- (i) A plan with a specified time frame for attainment of:
 - (1) qualified faculty as specified in the regulations;
 - (2) adequate financial resources;
 - (3) adequate physical resources to house the program; and
 - (4) support services available from the institution.

Letters of Support Requirements

In consideration of patient safety, welfare, and satisfaction, letters of support from all major facilities expected to be used for full program implementation are required to include the following:

- (a) Sufficient availability of clinical training evidenced by copies of contracts or letters of agreement specifying responsibilities of the respective parties and indicating adequate nursing student clinical experiences.
- (b) The healthcare institution letter must indicate by specialty area (e.g. medical surgical, care of children, labor and delivery and mental health), the number of students they can accommodate for the organization's clinical rotations.
- (c) The Chief Nursing Officer signature for the healthcare institution is required on the letters of support.