

2013

APPROVAL PROCESS FOR BASIC NURSING EDUCATION PROGRAMS



Association of
Registered Nurses
of Newfoundland
and Labrador



This Regulatory Document was approved by ARNNL Council in 2007, revised in 2009 and edited in 2013.

Introduction

One of the professional self-regulating functions of the Association of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador (ARNNL) is the approval of basic nursing education programs offered in this province. The authority for the Association to do this, on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, is derived from the *Registered Nurses Act (2008)*. Approval is a mechanism whereby the ARNNL fulfills its legislative mandate for public protection. An ARNNL approval designation assures the public that program graduates are prepared as safe, competent, and ethical entry-level practitioners who meet the requirements for licensure and professional practice as a registered nurse in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The ARNNL approval process is founded on the premise that nursing education is central to promoting good nursing practice and preventing poor practice in the public interest. The ARNNL values the role of nursing education in developing and upholding the integrity of nursing as a self-regulating profession. The approval process is grounded in the belief that external peer evaluation and systematic self-study provides for the enhancement of education quality, provides a basic assurance of program improvement, and contributes to the improvement of nursing practice.

In Canada, there are two processes for the evaluation of basic nursing education programs: a provincially regulated approval program and a national voluntary accreditation program through the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing (CASN). While the CASN accreditation program is designed to align itself with provincial regulatory approval processes, the two evaluation processes are complementary but not synonymous.

The accreditation program offered by CASN is concerned primarily with seeking excellence in nursing education and is recognized by the public, educators, and the nursing profession as an effective mechanism for strengthening professional education. It offers an objective method of assessment of an educational institution and/or programs to determine strengths, vulnerabilities, and opportunities for further development (CASN, 2012). Most of the quality dimensions and standards specified in the CASN accreditation program are fundamental qualities of the ARNNL approval process.

The ARNNL has agreed to use the CASN Accreditation Program (2012) as the basis for approval of basic nursing education programs offered in this province with the provision to evaluate requirements consistent with the Association's legislated mandate. The ARNNL retains responsibility for developing policy to govern use of the accreditation program as the basis for approval, determining the approval status, and making recommendations about the basic nursing education program to the schools of nursing. This document provides the policies and guidelines for the ARNNL Approval Process.

NOTE: In this document, references to the following documents refer to the latest ARNNL edition of (a) the Registered Nurses' Act, (b) ARNNL By-Laws, (c) ARNNL Standards of Practice for Registered Nurses, (d) Canadian Nurses Association Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses and (e) Competencies in the Context of Entry-Level Registered Nurse Practice 2013-18.



Approval Committee for Basic Nursing Education Programs

Mandate

The Approval Committee is established in accordance with the *Registered Nurses Act* to coordinate the approval process for basic nursing education programs offered by schools of nursing in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Membership

The membership of the Approval Committee consists of individuals representing the following different groups:

- Three nurse educators, one of whom may be a member of the BN (Collaborative) Joint Program Evaluation Committee.
- One nurse nominated by the Department of Health and Community Services.
- One nurse with expertise in program evaluation.
- One nurse, representing practice, who orientates new graduates to health care settings.
- One educator with expertise in program evaluation nominated by the Department of Education.
- One public representative preferably with expertise in program evaluation.
- A recent graduate of the BN (Collaborative) Program.
- A recent RN preceptor in the BN (Collaborative) Program.
- ARNNL Nursing Education Consultant who shall be resource person to the Committee.

The Chair shall be selected by the Committee from its membership.

Terms of Reference

1. To recommend policies and procedures associated with the approval of basic nursing education programs.
2. To review a basic nursing education program approval submission which includes: (a) documents related to the CASN accreditation program and (b) documents to support that additional indicators for approval are met.
3. To recommend an approval rating decision for the basic nursing education program to Council and where indicated, specify any terms and conditions of the approval.
4. To review annual reports submitted by schools of nursing and to make recommendations when appropriate.
5. To review reports related to the modification of a basic nursing education program and where indicated, recommend a process to assess the impact of a substantial change(s) on the program's approval rating.

Voting

All members of the Committee shall have voting power except the Nursing Education Consultant. A majority decision of members shall hold.

Reporting Relationship

Minutes of all meetings shall be recorded.

All recommendations shall be submitted to the Council.

All recommendations approved by Council pertaining to the basic nursing education program shall be communicated to the school of nursing.



Term of Office

Members shall be appointed for a three-year term of office for not more than two successive terms. The Nursing Education Consultant shall be a permanent member of the Committee. To promote continuity the three-year term of office of members will be staggered.

Approval Process Policies

1. Only graduates of a basic nursing education program offered in NL and approved by the ARNNL shall be eligible to write the National Council of State Boards of Nursing NCLEX-RN registration/licensure examination.
2. ARNNL shall use the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing (CASN) Accreditation Program (2012) as the basis for approval of basic nursing education programs offered in Newfoundland and Labrador.
3. If the CASN (2012) Accreditation Program is modified at any future date, ARNNL shall determine if it will continue to accept the Accreditation Program as the basis for ARNNL Approval.
4. The ARNNL must be given two years notice of a school's intent to withdraw from future CASN Accreditation reviews.
5. A basic nursing education program shall receive approval by meeting the ARNNL indicators for approval.
6. A basic nursing education program that has received ARNNL approval shall be reassessed at a maximum of seven year intervals or at other times as ARNNL may require (e.g., CASN denies a request for an extension to an accreditation rating).
7. The ARNNL Approval Committee shall notify the school of nursing of the time line for an approval assessment.
8. The schools of nursing are responsible for ensuring that the accreditation review is scheduled to meet the ARNNL date/interval requirement for approval assessment.
9. A contract shall be prepared and signed by ARNNL, the schools of nursing, and CASN that outlines the role of each party in the blended approval and accreditation process.
10. The schools of nursing shall forward to ARNNL a copy of all correspondence between the Schools and CASN regarding the accreditation of the basic nursing education program.
11. The ARNNL Approval Committee shall appoint observers to participate in the CASN Accreditation Program site visit in accordance with the ARNNL Observer Guidelines.
12. Approval status shall be determined in accordance with the process to determine an approval rating.
13. The ARNNL Approval Committee shall determine an approval rating for the basic nursing education program based on CASN accreditation ratings.
14. A basic nursing education program that is denied approval may appeal the decision in accordance with the appeal process.
15. The schools of nursing shall submit an annual report pertaining to the basic nursing education program to the Approval Committee in accordance with the annual report guidelines.



16. A basic nursing education program that receives ARNNL approval may use the designations “Approved Basic Nursing Education Program” and “Graduate of an Approved Basic Nursing Education Program”.
17. The approval rating for the basic nursing education program shall be treated as public information.
18. All documents submitted to ARNNL by a school, information gained from site visits, and reports of the ARNNL observers, the CASN review team, and the CASN Accreditation Bureau shall be treated in confidence.

Indicators for Approval

The criteria and indicators identified in CASN's (2012) Accreditation Program are to be used as the basis for ARNNL approval of basic nursing education programs offered in this province. Most of the quality dimensions and standards required in CASN Accreditation are fundamental qualities to ARNNL approval. For example, the following CASN accreditation key elements are also key ARNNL approval indicators: resources necessary to deliver a quality program; linkages with key stakeholders to ensure quality clinical experiences for students; faculty qualifications; and the program's ability to prepare graduates to practice in accordance with the province's standards for nursing practice and code of ethics.

Some ARNNL approval requirements are not found or may not be directly linked to specific quality dimensions and standards from the CASN Accreditation Program. For these indicators, the schools of nursing are required to submit to the Approval Committee, an ARNNL Self-Assessment report which includes evidence that these approval indicators are met.¹

Thus, the ARNNL requires, in addition to the CASN Self-Study Report, the submission of an ARNNL Self-Assessment Report for those approval requirements that are not specifically assessed through CASN Accreditation. These requirements ensure that:

1. The program provides learning experiences (theory, clinical, and laboratory) necessary to achieve the ARNNL competencies required for entry-level registered nurse practice.
2. The program provides clinical and theoretical experience in medical, surgical, obstetrical, pediatric, psychiatric, community and primary health care nursing in keeping with the ARNNL By-Laws and current practice settings.
3. The students demonstrate progress toward achieving professional practice requirements as identified in the ARNNL competencies required for entry-level registered nurse practice.
4. The graduates of the program demonstrate the ARNNL competencies required for entry-level registered nurse practice.

Approval Rating Categories

Approval

Approval is the rating granted to a basic nursing education program when it meets the ARNNL indicators for approval.

Approval can be granted for a period up to and including seven years.

Graduates from a basic nursing education program which has received this rating will be considered graduates of an approved basic nursing education program for the purposes of registration with the Association of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador.

¹ The schools may refer the ARNNL Approval Committee to pertinent evidence in the CASN Self-Study Report to avoid duplication of reporting.



Approval with Conditions

Approval with conditions is the rating granted to a basic nursing education program when it does not meet but is progressing toward meeting an indicator or indicators for approval.

Approval is granted conditionally for a designated time period when the school agrees to take action, and/or demonstrates that it is taking action on recommendations to meet an indicator or indicators for approval.

Graduates from a basic nursing education program which has received this rating will be considered graduates of an approved basic nursing education program for the purposes of registration with the Association of Registered of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Approval Denied

The rating granted to a basic nursing education program when students and graduates are judged to be unable to meet the ARNNL Standards of Practice and competencies required for entry-level registered nurse practice and/or the schools of nursing fail to take action on recommendations to meet an indicator or indicators for approval after a designated period of conditional approval.

Graduates from a basic nursing education program that has received this rating will not be eligible to write the nurse registration/licensure examination nor will they be eligible for registration with the Association of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Process to Determine Approval Status

1. One month prior to the CASN Accreditation site visit, the schools of nursing shall submit to the ARNNL Approval Committee three (3) copies¹ of the following documents:
 - CASN Self-Study Report as prepared by the schools of nursing,
 - ARNNL Self-Assessment Report as prepared by the schools of nursing
2. Within 15 working days of receipt of the CASN Accreditation Bureau decision, the schools of nursing shall submit for review by the ARNNL Approval Committee ten (10) copies of the following documents:
 - the CASN review team report,
 - response(s) to the CASN review team report(s),
 - the CASN Accreditation Bureau decision and recommendations,
 - any correspondence from CASN concerning or resulting from conditions imposed upon accreditation, and
 - any other documents that may be requested by ARNNL (e.g., evidence to support that the indicators for approval are met).
3. To reach an approval decision for a basic nursing education program under review, the Approval Committee will review all accreditation documents and results.
4. The Approval Committee shall review its approval findings and recommendations with the schools of nursing prior to submitting its report to ARNNL Council.
5. ARNNL Council shall notify the school of the approval rating within three months of receipt of the CASN Accreditation documents by ARNNL.



6. The schools of nursing shall notify ARNNL immediately of any changes or revocation of the CASN accreditation status for the basic nursing education program. In this event, the Approval Committee shall review the accreditation documentation to determine the reasons for revocation and to determine if the program continues to meet the ARNNL indicators for approval. Where the program does not continue to meet the approval indicators, the Committee will identify conditions for continued approval or will change or revoke the program's approval rating.
7. The policies and procedures that follow describe the processes for approval of (a) a new program, new school, or new partnership and (b) a currently approved ARNNL basic nursing education program.

Process for Approval of a New School of Nursing, Basic Nursing Education Program, or Partnership

The ARNNL Approval Committee shall review all accreditation and approval documents to determine if the program meets the indicators for approval.

1. If the documentation shows evidence that the program meets the indicators for approval, ARNNL shall grant approval until 24 months after the program has graduated its first class. The program shall undergo an accreditation review within 24 months of graduating its first class of students.
2. If the documentation demonstrates that the program does not meet but is progressing toward meeting the indicators for approval, ARNNL shall grant approval with conditions for a designated time period subject to the schools of nursing agreement to: (a) implement ARNNL recommendations to meet a specific indicator or indicators and (b) report annually to the ARNNL Approval Committee on action taken to meet the recommendations.
3. If CASN defers accreditation, the ARNNL Approval Committee shall review the accreditation and approval documents to determine the reasons for deferral and if the school's program meets the indicators for approval.
 - 3.1 If this review shows evidence that the program meets the indicators for approval, ARNNL shall grant approval until 24 months after the program has graduated its first class subject to: (a) receipt of a plan by the school to implement actions to undergo a new accreditation review and (b) the school's agreement to undergo the next stage of accreditation review within 24 months of graduating its first class.
 - 3.2 If this review shows evidence that the program does not meet but is progressing toward meeting the indicators for approval, ARNNL shall grant approval with conditions for a designated period subject to: (a) receipt of a plan by the school to implement actions to undergo a new accreditation review and (b) the school's agreement to undergo the next stage of an accreditation review within 24 months of graduating its first class.
 - 3.3 If this review shows evidence of deficiencies in the program which, in the opinion of the Approval Committee, are such that the program does not or will not meet the indicators for approval and the program's students and graduates are judged to be unable to meet ARNNL Standards of Nursing Practice and the ARNNL competencies required for entry-level registered nurse practice, ARNNL shall deny approval.

¹One copy for each ARNNL Observer appointed to the review team and one copy to be used as a reference for the Approval Committee.

Approval Process for an ARNNL Approved Basic Nursing Education Program

The ARNNL Approval Committee shall review the accreditation and approval documents to determine if the program meets the indicators for approval.

1. If the documentation shows evidence that the program meets the indicators for approval, ARNNL shall grant approval for a seven year period.
2. If the documentation demonstrates that the program does not meet but is progressing toward meeting the indicators for approval, ARNNL shall grant approval with conditions for a designated period of time subject to the school's agreement to: (a) implement ARNNL recommendations to meet a specific indicator or indicators within a designated period of time and (b) report annually to the ARNNL Approval Committee on action taken to meet the recommendations.
 - 2.1 If the annual report demonstrates that the schools have implemented recommendations to meet an unmet indicator or indicators, ARNNL shall grant approval for the remaining accreditation time period.
 - 2.2 If the annual report indicates the schools are not taking action to meet an unmet indicator or indicators, ARNNL shall deny approval.
3. If CASN denies accreditation, the ARNNL Approval Committee shall review the accreditation and approval documents to determine the reasons for denial of accreditation and if the program meets the indicators for approval.
 - 3.1 If the documentation shows evidence that the program meets the indicators for approval, ARNNL shall grant approval for a designated time period subject to agreement by the schools to undergo a new accreditation review within a designated time period.
 - 3.2 If the documentation shows evidence that the program does not meet but is progressing toward meeting the indicators for approval, ARNNL shall grant approval with conditions for a designated time period subject to agreement by the schools to: (a) implement ARNNL recommendations to meet a specific indicator or indicators, (b) report annually to the ARNNL Approval Committee on action taken to meet the recommendations and (c) submit to the ARNNL Approval Committee a plan to implement actions to attain CASN accreditation.
 - 3.3 If the documentation shows evidence of deficiencies such that the program does not meet the Indicators for approval and the program's students and graduates are unable to meet ARNNL Standards of Nursing Practice and the ARNNL competencies required for entry-level registered nurse practice, ARNNL shall deny approval.

ARNNL Observer Guidelines

1. The ARNNL Approval Committee shall appoint at least two observers from its membership to participate in the CASN Accreditation Program site visit.
2. The observers shall meet with the approval of the school of nursing.
3. The primary role of ARNNL observers is to accompany the CASN review team throughout its site visit to observe the data collection process and the validation procedures. The results of these observations will verify to the ARNNL Approval Committee whether the CASN accreditation results can be used as the basis for ARNNL approval.
4. ARNNL observers may assume a participant role in the event it is deemed necessary to validate evidence pertaining to students preparation for professional practice, specifically, in regard to the ARNNL competencies required for entry-level registered nurse practice.



5. At the completion of the site visit the observers shall prepare a report that includes a detailed description of the data collection, the validation process, and a summary conclusion about the integrity of the blended CASN Accreditation and ARNNL Approval Process.
6. The observers report shall be given to the CASN review team and the schools of nursing for examination of its accuracy before it is submitted to the ARNNL Approval Committee.
7. ARNNL shall include the observer report with its report of the approval process and approval rating decision to the schools of nursing.

Annual Report Guidelines

The schools of nursing shall submit, by November 1st, an annual report to the Approval Committee.

The report shall outline the following basic nursing education program activities for the previous academic year (September 1st- August 31st):

- program and school achievements;
- faculty qualifications and achievements³ of all faculty teaching in the BN (Collaborative) Program (included as an Appendix to the Annual Report);
- goals/strategic initiatives for the school's program in the immediate future⁴;
- content and/or delivery changes which, reflect current trends;
- any challenges in meeting program objectives at the school of nursing;
- attrition and graduation statistics including interpretation, analysis, trending, and comparative analysis between program options over time;
- detailed information on the school's national examination results (e.g., statistics related to the examination: failure rates with possible reasons for failures, profile of failing candidates, and actions to be implemented to try and prevent future failures);
- status report on action taken to meet any recommendations made by the ARNNL Council in the previous review for Approval; and
- any other information deemed relevant by the school of nursing.

Approval Process for a Changing Program

The schools of nursing shall advise the ARNNL Approval Committee if a substantial change is being proposed to the basic nursing education program. A substantial change is the modification or revision of an approved basic nursing education program which is likely to affect the program outcomes and the ability of graduates to meet the ARNNL Standards of Practice and ARNNL competencies required for entry-level registered nurse practice. Changes to the program which may be considered substantial include but is not limited to, changes in:

- program philosophy, conceptual framework, goals, or curriculum;
- program implementation;
- program length;
- resources (fiscal, clinical, etc.) that will have a direct impact on a school's ability to implement the approved program.

The Approval Committee will review information provided by the schools on any proposed change and will recommend a process to be followed to assess the changed program for approval. If a change is determined to be substantial but viewed as an enhancement, an assessment may not be required.

Questions arising related to whether a change to a program is substantial shall be referred to ARNNL Council whose decision is final.

³ Faculty achievement: scholarly activity a defined by the Schools of Nursing.

⁴ The Annual Report may include a discussion of national and provincial trends/events relevant to delivery of the BN (Collaborative) Program (e.g., faculty supply, health reform, changing demographics, emerging trends, etc.).



Appeal Process Policies

1. A program/school of nursing may appeal an ARNNL approval rating when:
 - a) The program/school is dissatisfied with an ARNNL Council approval decision for its basic nursing education program, or
 - b) An appeal to the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing (CASN) was successful in changing the accreditation status of a basic nursing education program.
2. The program/school of nursing must file a written notice of appeal including rationale to ARNNL Council within 30 days of receipt of an ARNNL approval decision or a CASN appeal decision.
3. The ARNNL will establish an Appeal Committee within 30 days of receiving the appeal.
4. The Appeal Committee shall be external to ARNNL. Its membership shall not include members of ARNNL Council, the ARNNL Approval Committees for nursing education programs, or faculty, employees or others connected with the school of nursing lodging the appeal.
5. The Appeal Committee membership shall include:
 - One individual selected by the program/school lodging the appeal, who is an educator from outside Newfoundland and Labrador, has expertise in program evaluation, and is familiar with the type of education program undergoing appeal.
 - One individual selected by ARNNL with expertise in program evaluation.
 - One individual with expertise in program evaluation who is acceptable to both the program/school lodging the complaint and the ARNNL. This process to select this individual will be identified through consultation between the program/school and the ARNNL. At least one of the committee members must be a registered nurse.
6. Expenses associated with meetings (e.g., face-to-face and conference call) will be paid by ARNNL in accordance with its expense claim policies. The program/school making the appeal is responsible for travel expenses incurred by their appointed committee member and faculty costs associated with presentation of their case to the Appeal Committee.
7. The Chairperson shall be selected from among the Appeal Committee membership.
8. The Appeal Committee will:
 - Review the notice of appeal.
 - Determine if the approval process was conducted according to the ARNNL policies and standards governing approval of the program undergoing appeal.
 - Review the education program's approval documents submitted to the ARNNL Approval Committee.
 - Hear representation from both the school of nursing making the appeal and the ARNNL Approval Committee.
 - Solicit outside expertise as required.
9. The Appeal Committee will reach a decision within 90 days of the notice of appeal. A written report with rationale will be presented to ARNNL Council with a recommendation to either (a) uphold the original approval decision or (b) request that ARNNL Council reconsider another decision. In the event one member of the Appeal Committee holds a dissenting view, a minority report must be presented to Council.



10. Council shall consider the Appeal Committee's recommendation during a scheduled Council meeting and shall subsequently notify the program/school of nursing of Council's final appeal decision.
11. The appeal decision of Council is final.
12. Upon receipt of a notice of appeal the prior approval rating shall be maintained until the disposition of the appeal.

Conflict of Interest

The ARNNL Council Policy on *Conflict of Interest* directs the conduct of the members of the Approval Committee for Basic Nursing Education Programs, the observers of the accreditation site visit, and members of ARNNL Council throughout the Approval Process.

Individuals having a conflict of interest shall declare the details of that conflict before discussion of questions related to approval and shall absent him/herself from the portion of the meeting during which discussion or voting affected by that conflict takes place.

Any Approval Committee member involved with a basic nursing education program undergoing an approval review shall be required to withdraw from that portion of the Committee and/or Council meetings.

Committee members, the observer/reviewer, and Council members shall not use materials from the educational program undergoing an approval review for their personal or professional use without obtaining permission from the appropriate individuals/agencies.

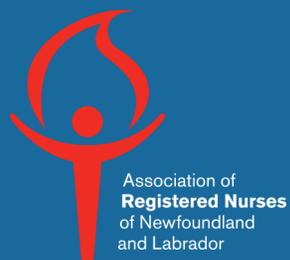
A committee member who abstains from participation due to conflict of interest is still included in determining a quorum.

The minutes must record all declarations of conflict of interest.

Evaluation of the Approval Process

Evaluation of the use of the CASN Accreditation Program as the basis for ARNNL approval will be initiated by the Approval Committee following the completion of the approval process for a basic nursing education program. The Committee will seek evaluative feedback from the administration of the school of nursing undergoing accreditation/approval, the Basic Nursing Education Program Evaluation Committee, the CASN Review Team, the ARNNL observer/reviewer, and the members of the ARNNL Approval Committee. Additional feedback may be requested from others who participated in the accreditation/approval process including students and faculty of the nursing education program, employers of beginning graduate nurses, and ARNNL Council.





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