

NEW PROPOSAL APPROVAL PROCESS
INCLUDING RESOURCES FOR PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT - 2020

(revised 08/18/2020)



TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING

**Texas Board of Nursing
New Program Approval Process
Resources for Proposal Development
2020**

This packet has been prepared to guide schools in developing proposals to establish a new nursing education program. The school must first provide written notification of the school's intent to develop a proposal for a new nursing program to the Board of Nursing (Board) Education Department. Establishing a nursing program is a serious legal process and requires adequate expertise and resources to be successful. **Note: A school may not begin the nursing program nor enroll students in the nursing program until the Board of Nursing has approved the proposal.**

Resources Include:

- Information available on the BON website (www.bon.texas.gov)
- Steps in New Nursing Education Program Proposal Approval Process
- The Role of Board of Nursing Staff in the Proposal Process
- Tips for Writing Proposals for New Programs
- Frequently Asked Questions

Information on the BON website (www.bon.texas.gov):

Under the *Nursing Law & Rules* link:

- Rule 214 Vocational Nursing (VN) Education
- Rule 215 Professional Nursing, (BSN) Education
- Rule 217.11 Standards of Nursing Practice

Under the *Nursing Education* link:

- Education Guideline 3.1.1.a. Proposal Guideline to Establish a New VN Education Program
- Education Guideline 3.1.1.c. Proposal Guideline to Establish a New ADN, BSN, or MSN Program
- Education Guideline 3.1.1.g. Proposal Guideline to Establish a New Nursing Education Program Associate Degree to Baccalaureate Degree in a Public Junior College
- Education Guideline 3.4.1.a. Approval Process for a New Dean, Director or Coordinator
- Starting a Nursing Program
- Differentiated Essential Competencies for Graduates of Texas Nursing Education Programs (2010)

Under the *Nursing Practice* link:

- Position Statement 15.16 Development of Nursing Education Programs
- Position Statement 15.27 The Licensed Vocational Nurse Scope of Practice
- Position Statement 15.28 The Registered Nurse Scope of Practice

The website also provides many valuable and helpful documents for nurses and nurse educators.

Steps in New Nursing Education Program Proposal Approval Process:

1. Send a letter of intent to the Texas Board of Nursing, 333 Guadalupe Street, Suite 3-460, Austin, Texas 78701-3942, Attention: Education Department, providing the name of the school or program, name of contact person, email address, phone number, physical address of the program, mailing address, and web address.

The timeline for processing a proposal takes up to one year from the date when the initial proposal is received by Board Staff.

2. Review the appropriate documents for the type of program (VN, ADN, or BSN) on the BON web site – see page 2 of this document. The final decision about program approval is made by the Board members at a regularly scheduled Board meeting.
3. Attend the next scheduled Informal Information Session for new program proposal authors – see web site for date and registration.
4. Attend the first day of a regularly scheduled Board meeting to observe the Board in decision-making about education agenda items. Board meetings occur in January, April, July, and October of each year. Dates of Board meetings are posted on the BON web page under ***About the Board***.
5. Following the guideline and resources, develop the proposal for a new education program. The proposed program director who meets all qualifications in Rule 214.6 or Rule 215.6 should be the individual writing the proposal for a new nursing education program. All communication with Board Staff will be directed to the proposed director, not to the institutional administration. At least one potential faculty person should be identified before curriculum development to assist in planning the program of study.
6. Before the proposal is provided to Board Staff, request the program administration to review it and sign agreement.
7. The proposal must be a complete proposal before it is submitted to the Texas Board of Nursing, 333 Guadalupe Street, Ste. 3-460, Austin, Texas 78701, Attention: Education Department. The completed application and application fee must be sent to this address as well.
8. Within two weeks of receipt of the proposal, Board Staff will conduct a preliminary review of the proposal to ensure that the following essential items are present:

- There is strong evidence that the program is needed in the area.
- A qualified director has prepared the proposal.
- Adequate qualified nursing faculty are available.
- The curriculum is built on sound principles and incorporates required content in the rule.
- Adequate clinical practice settings have been obtained as evidenced by signed clinical contracts.
- Clinical Evaluation Tools are included.
- A total program evaluation plan is in place.
- Appropriate resources (budget, physical learning environment) are adequate to begin and sustain the program.
- Student and Faculty Handbooks were provided.

If one or more of the essential components is missing, the proposal will not go forward. The education consultants will advise the program of two options: (1) have the application fee returned and stop the process; or (2) continue the process by submitting the essential items that are missing.

If the application fee is returned, the proposal must be submitted anew with a new fee and must include previously missing items. The one year period will begin anew.

9. If the essential items are present in the proposal, the review will go forward. Two education consultants will conduct independent comprehensive and critical reviews, and provide a written review to the author within two months. Board Staff may verify information in the proposal as needed through outside sources. The education consultants may suggest areas that need revision or clarification.
10. After the program has made revisions to the proposal, they will provide a second submission to Board Staff received no later than six months after the receipt of the first submission to ensure staying within the one-year period. If additional revisions are necessary, the final proposal will be provided as an electronic version in PDF with bookmarks and received in the Board Office two months before the scheduled Board meeting. The proposal will be submitted to Board members about six weeks prior to the Board meeting. Late submissions will be pulled from the Board agenda.
11. During the entire process, the proposed program director should provide the education consultant a monthly update of the progress of the proposal.
12. The education consultants may schedule an in-house or virtual consultation visit with the proposed authors as needed during the process. Depending upon the circumstances, an on-site or virtual survey visit will be conducted prior to the presentation of the proposal to the Board to verify that the physical site is in readiness.

13. Board Staff will prepare the Board Report for the scheduled Board meeting and provide a draft of the Board Report to the program for feedback
14. If the final proposal is **not** complete and **not** ready for a positive recommendation, the program will be offered two options:
 - to withdraw the proposal, or
 - to present the proposal to the Board with Board Staff recommendation to deny the proposal.
15. When the proposal is presented at the Board meeting, the Board may either: (1) approve the proposal and grant initial approval to the new program, (2) may defer action on the proposal, or (3) may deny further consideration of the proposal. To ensure success of newly approved programs, the Board may, in its discretion, impose any restrictions or conditions it deems appropriate and necessary.
16. In addition to imposing restrictions and conditions, the Board may also require specific monitoring of newly approved programs considered high-risk. A program may be considered high-risk when one or more of the following criteria exists: inexperience of the governing entity in nursing education; minimal experience of the potential director in directing a nursing program; potential for director or faculty turnover; potential for a high attrition rate among students; or other significant concerns.
17. The program shall not enroll students until the Board approves the proposal and grants initial approval to the program. **If the program does not enroll students within one year following the date of Board approval**, the program shall provide an addendum describing all changes that have occurred related to program director, administrative control of the program, approval/accreditation status with other regulatory or accreditation agencies, faculty, financial support, clinical contracts, curriculum plan, clinical evaluation tools, and total program evaluation plan. Board Staff may approve the changes unless they are substantial and need Board approval.
18. When a proposal is denied by the Board, the program may not submit a new proposal until at least ONE YEAR has elapsed since the date of withdrawal or denial. A new application and fee must accompany the new proposal.

Note: It is the program's responsibility to ensure that the proposal is developed as a professional document. The proposal must be in compliance with Board rules and follow the guidelines.

The Role of Board of Nursing Staff in the Proposal Process:

The nursing consultants for education are consultants to the Board, not consultants to new programs. They will assist new programs through the approval process, and will prepare a report for the Board members that summarizes the proposal and the program's compliance with the education rules. Board Staff will also include findings from the site visit in the Board report. Board Staff will make a recommendation to the Board about approving the program, but Board members make the final decision about the approval of the program.

Education consultants may:

- provide assistance to programs in interpreting rules and following the proposal guidelines;
- advise programs of major areas where the proposal is deficient;
- offer general suggestions for improving the proposal;
- answer pertinent questions for programs engaged in writing a proposal; and
- monitor the program's progress and evaluate time lines for board review.

Education consultants may **not**:

- edit, write, or assist in writing the proposal;
- coach the program in proposal development;
- help the program make business decisions;
- provide legal advice; nor
- offer recommendations for faculty, staff, or clinical settings.

The timeline may be impacted by the number of proposals being processed in the Board office at the same time. A reasonable number of proposals will be handled at each Board meeting in order that the education consultants and Board members may devote adequate time to study each proposal. The presentations at the Board meeting will be scheduled for a specific time slot.

The education consultant will inform the program of the scheduled time on the Board agenda for presentation to the Board. The education consultant will greet the program representatives when they arrive at the Board meeting. A public hearing is scheduled prior to each new proposal presented to the Board to allow any individual to voice concerns about the new program or support for the new program. When the Board President calls for the public hearing related to their program, the education consultant will join the program representatives at the table and provide a brief overview of the proposal. Note: Program representatives will be sworn in, will be given the opportunity to provide brief testimony about the program, and will answer any questions from the Board. The Board will make the decision about whether to approve the proposal at the meeting.

Tips for Writing Proposals for New Programs:

1. Make sure the proposal is professional in nature with proper grammar and free of errors.

2. The proposal should be written for a wide audience of readers since the Board members include consumer representatives, nurses, and educators. The appearance and writing style of the proposal make an important first impression on the reader.
3. In order to protect your program's property, provide a disclaimer after the cover sheet that the proposal is not for dissemination to the general public.

Example of an Executive Summary:

Perfection University seeks Board approval to establish a new baccalaureate degree nursing education program in Goodie, Texas, to begin enrolling student in January 2021. The program is designed to be delivered through a combination of face-to-face and online courses, and faculty-supervised hands-on clinical experiences in a variety of health care settings. The first cohort of 35 students is expected to graduate in December 2023.

Frequently Asked Questions:

How soon can our proposal go to the Board?

Not until it goes through the entire process of review and approval outlined under *Steps in the New Nursing Program Approval Proposal Process*. If at any point the proposal does not meet the requirements in Rule 214 for vocational nursing program or in Rule 215 for professional nursing programs, the process will stop until the program complies with Board standards or Board Staff may recommend denial. The program may not enroll student until the Board has approved the proposal.

What if the program cannot find clinical sites?

The proposal cannot move forward in the review process until clinical agencies have committed to providing adequate clinical placements to accommodate the students throughout the program. Programs may need to do further research in the area or in adjoining areas to find clinical placements for students. The inability to find adequate clinical sites indicates that the proposed program is not feasible.

What if the proposed director is not qualified? Is an exception possible?

The rule does not allow for the waiver of director qualifications for new programs. A program with a director who has teaching experience as well as administrative experience is more likely to be successful. The director's responsibilities require a background in nursing education as well as nursing practice to provide excellence in leadership and decision-making in today's changing health care environment.

May I send sections of the proposal to Board Staff as they are completed?

No, the proposal will only be accepted when it is complete.

May we move ahead with proposal development while getting Texas Workforce Commission or Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board approval?

Yes, you may proceed with proposal development. The approval letter or certificate must be included in the final proposal. Board Staff are in communication with these other agencies and can determine the status of their approval of the program.

How many students can be admitted to a new program?

The Board usually approves an initial cohort of 20 to 35 students during the first year. Generally, the Board does not consider multiple admission times during the first year, especially for a program or curriculum with no history of success. Board Staff recommend a limited number of students for the first cohort in order for the program to evaluate the effectiveness of courses, faculty, and teaching methods without putting students at risk.

What if the Board members do not receive the proposal four weeks prior to the Board meeting?

The proposal may be pulled from the agenda and held for the next scheduled Board meeting.