

## National League for Nursing Commission for Nursing Education Accreditation (NLN CNEA)

### Accreditation Handbook Changes 2025

General editing updates were made regarding grammar, dates, websites, content re-ordering and combining for ease of reading, and duplications were removed. Additionally, the following table provides information about substantive changes made to the policies and procedures contained in the Accreditation Handbook. For questions regarding these changes, reach out to the NLN CNEA staff for assistance. [CNEAaccreditation@nlm.org](mailto:CNEAaccreditation@nlm.org)

Page Number(s)	Section(s)	Summary of Substantive Changes
7	United States Department of Education Recognition Status	Edited the NLN CNEA's description to better describe the organization.
7	Board of Commissioners	Changed the Board composition to reflect changes in NLN CNEA Bylaws: 1) Commissioners representing nursing education was changed from 10 to eight. All eight Commissioners must now be members of NLN CNEA accredited schools and 2) two Commissioners were added representing professional consumers who do not represent NLN CNEA accredited schools.
16, 24	Pre-Accreditation Candidacy and Initial/Continuing Accreditation	International programs requesting accreditation must provide evidence of institutional approval appropriate for the country.
18, 27, 44	Third-Party Comments	Programs need to identify when the public posting was made and must meet deadlines.
19	Extension of Pre-Accreditation Status	Clarification of the time for the extension of pre-accreditation status.
21	Initial and Continuing Accreditation	Initial and continuing accreditation policies have been combined to avoid duplication.
21, 22, 24	Initial and Continuing Accreditation	The request to pursue initial NLN CNEA accreditation has been changed from six to 12 months to ensure sufficient planning time for the program and NLN CNEA.
22, 27	Initial and Continuing Accreditation	Clarification that mid cycle reports are due at the mid-point of the accreditation period.

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23	Requesting Extension of Accreditation	Clarification of the request process has been added and duplication eliminated.
25	Self-Study Report Submission	Added a sentence to emphasize the need for the self-study report to not only demonstrate compliance with accreditation standards but also identify areas for improvement and include a plan for addressing them.
26	On-site Program Evaluation Visit	Removed the requirement of on-site program evaluation visits being conducted within a defined biannual time frame.
26	On-site Program Evaluation Visit	Added sentence to highlight the qualifications and expertise of the on-site evaluation team, noting their up-to-date knowledge in key areas relevant to higher education and nursing practice.
28	Defer Initial Accreditation	A new section was added explaining that the NLN CNEA Board of Commissioners may defer an initial accreditation decision if additional information is needed or if issues arise between the site visit and the Board's deliberation. The program will be notified of the information required and must submit it within 60 days. During the deferral period, the program's current accreditation status remains unchanged. The Board will make a final decision at its next scheduled meeting.
28	Defer Initial Accreditation	An explanation was added to specify the consequences if a program fails to provide the requested documentation or if it does not meet accreditation standards. In response, the program's NLN CNEA accreditation status will be terminated, the decision is appealable. Additionally, if the program wishes to re-enter the accreditation process, it must wait one year before reapplying for pre-accreditation status.
28, 31, 46	Deny Initial Accreditation, Deny Continuing Accreditation, and Voluntary Withdrawal of Program from Pre-accreditation and Accreditation	Clarified that programs are eligible to reapply for pre-accreditation candidacy after one year.

Page Number(s)	Section(s)	Summary of Substantive Changes
29	Continuing Accreditation Decisions	This section outlines the processes and conditions for continuing accreditation decisions by the NLN CNEA Board of Commissioners.
31	Continuing Accreditation Decisions	An additional paragraph was added to clarify the procedures and consequences when a program's accreditation is denied after an appeal. Specifically, it establishes the official date of denial, removal of accreditation information, public response, and reapplication eligibility.
31	Voluntary Withdrawal from Seeking Accreditation	The word "initial" was removed from subtitle to encompass multiple accreditation terms. Additionally, if a program chooses to pursue accreditation beyond the accreditation timeframe and has not been granted an extension by the NLN CNEA Board, it must reapply for pre-accreditation candidacy.
31	Voluntary Withdrawal from Seeking Accreditation	Site visit fees are non-transferrable.
32, 47, 61	Public Notice of Accreditation	Clarified that programs that are denied accreditation or withdraw from accreditation must remove all statements and identifying emblems related to NLN CNEA from any documents.
33	Procedures for Reviewing Adverse Actions	Addition that programs can only request review of financial information once in accordance with US Department of Education 602.25 (h).
35	Procedure for Appealing Other Adverse Actions	Clarifies rationale for the decision will be explicitly provided.
44	Third-Party Comments	Added that failure to follow the required third-party comment posting may result in a cancellation of the program's accreditation site visit.
55	NLN CNEA Annual Report	After review by the Evaluation Committee, the report will be sent to the NLN CNEA Board of Commissioners' Executive Committee.
64	Other Notifications	A new sub-section was added. NLN CNEA will notify the US Department of Education about changes to accreditation policies, program status, and major activities. It also states that NLN CNEA will share program status and adverse actions with other accrediting and state agencies upon request. Required by 602.207(a) (1-4) and 602.28 (e).

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65	Complaint Policy	Clarification that individuals are encouraged to use their institutional and program policies regarding grievances and due process for complaints. Added detail that NLN CNEA must respond to complaints applying unbiased judgment. A second submission method, regular mail, has been added for complaint submission. Added that the complaint form is available on the NLN CNEA website.
66, 67, 68, 69	Complaint Policy	The NLN CNEA response time for complaints has been extended to 15 days. If complaint is incomplete there is an opportunity to remedy the error.
67	Complaint Policy	Completed complaint forms can be submitted electronically or by regular mail.
66, 67	Complaint Policy	A revision was made to include procedures for handling incomplete or improperly filed complaints, providing the complainant with an opportunity to correct any errors. Additionally, it is the policy of NLN CNEA to respond to all complaints in a timely manner using unbiased judgment.
66, 67, 68, 69	Complaint Policy	Updated to require submission of supporting evidence with the complaint.
66	Complaint Policy	Language was added to specify that complaints must relate to NLN CNEA accreditation standards or policies to proceed. Clear pathways were outlined for how complaints are addressed depending on whether they involve Commissioners, volunteers, staff, or the executive director, with added requirements for written notifications at each step.
71	Site Visitor Policy	The policy was added to reflect that site visit duration may vary based on program factors. A new provision allows NLN CNEA to cancel visits due to extenuating circumstances. The agenda development language now specified a broader range of stakeholders to be included in meetings. It clarifies that no recordings are permitted, and only listed participants may join interviews. Portions of the visit may be conducted virtually, per NLN CNEA policy. Programs must now ensure site visitors have access to electronic evidence in advance, and a verbal team report is now provided at the exit interview.
73	Conducting the Virtual Site Visit	Revised and updated to include circumstances in which virtual site visits will be conducted and how visits will be conducted.