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An advisory opinion adopted by AZBN is an interpretation of what the law requires. While an advisory opinion is not law, it is more than a recommendation. In other words, an advisory opinion is an official opinion of AZBN regarding the practice of nursing as it relates to the functions of nursing. Facility policies may restrict practice further in their setting and/or require additional expectations related to competency, validation, training, and supervision to assure the safety of their patient population and or decrease risk.

**OPINION: DISTANCE EDUCATION**  
**APPROVED: DATE 11/03**  
**REVISED DATE:**  
**ORIGINATING COMMITTEE:**  
**EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

### ADVISORY OPINION DISTANCE EDUCATION

“Distance education means an educational process that is characterized by the separation, in time or place, between the instructor and student.” (NLNAC Accreditation Manual, 2002, p.70)

It is the opinion of the Arizona State Board of Nursing that only nursing didactic instruction may be delivered using distance-learning modalities in approved programs of nursing.

#### GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

If a program utilizes distance modalities for didactic instruction, the program must evaluate and assess the educational effectiveness of its distance education programs to ensure that the distance program is substantially comparable to a campus-based program in the following areas:

1. Student learning outcomes
2. Student retention
3. Student satisfaction
4. Faculty satisfaction

Supervised land-based clinical and laboratory experiences are required to validate didactic learning. Supervised clinical experience means the provision of direct patient care under the guidance of a qualified faculty member or designee.

#### RATIONALE

Distance Learning education can improve student access to nursing education, enhance student-instructor communication and facilitate achievement of course goals. There are numerous case studies indicating comparable student performance in distance education courses. Standards for nursing education programs in A.A.C. R4-19-201-206 remain the same regardless of the mode of delivery.

#### REFERENCES

American Federation of Teachers/Higher Education Program and Policy Council. *Distance Education: Guidelines for good practice*. (2000) Michael Gibbs

Commission on Higher Education. *Best Practices for Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs*. [www.wiche.edu](http://www.wiche.edu) (work in progress)

American Association of Colleges of Nursing. *AACN White Paper: Distance Technology in Nursing Education*. [www.aacn.edu](http://www.aacn.edu). 1999

National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission. *Accreditation Manual: Policy#15 Distance Education*. 2002

American Association of Colleges of Nursing, Alliance for Nursing Accreditation. *Statement on Distance Education Policies*. March, 2002