

**Arizona State Board of Nursing
Substantive Policy Statement**

Nursing Program Expansion When Under Provisional Approval

May 25, 2011

This Substantive Policy Statement is advisory only. A Substantive Policy Statement does not include internal procedural documents that only affect the internal procedures of the agency and does not impose additional requirements or penalties on the regulated parties or include confidential information or rules made in accordance with the Arizona Administrative Procedures Act. If you believe that this Substantive Policy Statement does impose additional requirements or penalties on regulated parties you may petition the agency under Arizona Revised Statutes Section 41-1033 for a review of the statement. (ARS § 41-1091)

Purpose: To inform programs under provisional approval of the conditions for program expansion.

Policy: Under R4-19-209 all nursing programs must receive Board approval to expand student enrollment capacity by more than 20%. Programs granted provisional approval must also obtain Board approval when expanding, even though the expansion plans were detailed in an application for proposal or provisional approval. Expansion requests should be limited to a one year period (e.g. a program may apply to admit additional students in both fall and spring of the school year).

Only under all of the following circumstances will the provisionally-approved program be allowed to expand beyond the original plan in the application for proposal or provisional approval.

- There have been no substantiated complaints regarding the program in the previous 18 months,
- The program is not under a notice of deficiency,
- The program has been in operation for at least one year, and
- Board findings following a 1 year comprehensive site visit (approx. 1 year after admitting students to nursing clinical courses) contain no potential or actual deficiencies.

Rationale:

Programs that have provisional approval have not yet established a record of success in delivering nursing education and preparing new graduates. If, on an interim site visit, Board staff confirms that there is sufficient infrastructure/evidence to support expansion then the public has some assurance that the program delivers adequate education for newly licensed nurses. It is recognized that a gradual increase in admissions to a program may be beneficial to the successful delivery of nursing education. It is also recognized that addressing the shortage of nurses in AZ requires increasing numbers of graduates.

It is not in the best interest of the public to approve expansion plans before a program provides evidence that it operates within the regulatory structure prescribed by the Board, nor to expect programs to open at full capacity.