
NLN CNEA Substantive Change Policy

Programs that have been pre-accredited or accredited by NLN CNEA are responsible for notifying **CNEA** when substantive changes are implemented within the parent institution, nursing academic unit, or nursing program that have the potential to have an organizational, fiscal, curricular, or human resource impact on nursing program outcomes and quality. Upon notification of a substantive change, **CNEA** reserves the right to request additional information regarding the reported change and/or conduct a focused on-site program evaluation visit to gather additional data regarding the impact of the substantive change on program outcomes. The NLN CNEA has defined two levels of substantive change affecting nursing programs: 1) critical and 2) notable.

CRITICAL SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES

Drawing in part upon the U.S. Department of Education definition of a substantive change (34 CFR 602.22) the NLN CNEA defines a **critical** substantive change as follows:

1. Any operational change regarding the institution or program's established mission or objectives;
2. Any change in the legal status or regulatory approval/recognition status of the institution or program;
3. Any change in the accreditation status of the institution, or the accreditation status awarded by any specialized nursing accreditor;
4. Any change in the form of control or ownership of the institution or program;
5. The establishment of any branch campuses or off-campus instructional sites by which 50% or more of the program is delivered;
6. The addition of distance education program(s) (as defined by the USDE 34 CFR 602.3) granting a degree or certificate; or conversion of an existing degree or certificate granting program to distance education;
7. The addition, suspension, or closure of a program;
8. Any change in the organizational structure of the institution or program that affects the authority of the chief academic nurse administrator or any change in the chief academic nurse administrator of the program; OR
9. Any establishment or change in contractual arrangements to develop and/or deliver curricula.

The chief academic nurse administrator and the institution's chief executive officer are responsible for notifying **CNEA** of any critical substantive changes using the ***Critical Substantive Change Form*** which includes a description of the change and the development of an outcome evaluation plan by which impact of the change on the program will be measured. The form must be filed with **CNEA** staff ***no later than 60 days after the change is***

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scheduled to take effect. Filing of a critical substantive change report may generate a request for additional data and/or a focused on-site program evaluation visit.

NLN CNEA Board of Commissioner Responses to Critical Substantive Change

Following **CNEA** receipt of the critical substantive change report, the **CNEA** Board of Commissioner's Executive Committee reviews and recommends one of the following actions to the Board of Commissioners to be considered at the next Board of Commissioners meeting:

1. Accepting the substantive change report;
2. Requesting additional data and/or a focused on-site program evaluation visit;
3. Stipulating additional program reporting requirements to address continued compliance with **CNEA** standards of accreditation; OR
4. Issuing a show cause directive which could result in an adverse action. An adverse action is appealable.

If a critical substantive change is accepted, the effective date by which the change is included in the program's current accreditation status will be specified in the approval letter and will not be retroactive. The NLN CNEA Board of Commissioners has the final decision-making authority regarding the outcomes of all substantive change reviews. NLN CNEA will retain records of decisions related to substantive changes, including all correspondence significantly related to those decisions, in its files for as long as the program is pre-accredited or accredited with NLN CNEA.

NOTABLE SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES

Drawing in part upon the U.S. Department of Education definition of a substantive change (34 CFR 602.22) the NLN CNEA defines a **notable** substantive change as follows:

1. The addition of a new program track (option) to an already NLN CNEA accredited program;
2. The addition, revision, or deletion of academic courses resulting in significant curricular revision as depicted by a change in program curricular outcomes; OR
3. Substantial increase or decrease in credit or clock hours within a program which increases or decreases the length of time to program completion.

The chief academic nurse administrator is responsible for notifying **CNEA** of any notable substantive changes using the ***Notable Substantive Change Form*** which includes a description of the change and the development of an outcome evaluation plan by which impact of the change on the program will be measured. The form must be filed with the ***Annual Program Report*** that is due to **CNEA** no later than January 15th of each calendar year. Filing of

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a notable substantive change report may generate a request for additional data and/or a focused on-site evaluation visit.

NLN CNEA Board of Commissioner Responses to Notable Substantive Change

Following **CNEA** receipt of the notable substantive change report, the **CNEA** Board of Commissioner's Executive Committee reviews and recommends one of the following actions to the Board of Commissioners to be considered at the next Board of Commissioners meeting:

1. Accepting the notable substantive change report;
2. Requesting additional data and/or a focused on-site program evaluation visit;
3. Stipulating additional program reporting requirements to address continued compliance with **CNEA** standards of accreditation; OR
4. Issuing a show cause directive which could result in an adverse action. An adverse action is appealable.

If a notable substantive change is accepted, the effective date by which the change is included in the program's current accreditation status will be specified in the approval letter and will not be retroactive. The NLN CNEA Board of Commissioners has the final decision-making authority regarding the outcomes of all substantive change reviews. NLN CNEA will retain records of decisions related to substantive changes, including all correspondence significantly related to those decisions, in its files for as long as the program is pre-accredited or accredited with NLN CNEA.