

**TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING**  
**3.2.4.a. EDUCATION GUIDELINE**  
**Specific Exemptions from Education Rule Requirements**  
**For Nursing Education Programs Accredited by**  
**A Board-Approved National Nursing Accreditation Organization**

**Revised 6/2/2021**

Rule 214.4 sets forth the requirements for approval of a vocational nursing education program. Rule 215.4 sets forth the requirements for approval of a professional nursing education program. Amendments to Rules 214 and 215 were approved on February 19, 2008, based upon House Bill 2426, effective September 1, 2007, enacted by the 80<sup>th</sup> Session of the Texas Legislature that allowed programs holding national nursing accreditation specific exemptions to Board rules. Areas for exemption have been identified through crosswalks between nursing accreditation standards and Board rules. Programs with voluntary national nursing accreditation are **exempt** from the education rules that are comparable to accreditation standards but are **not exempt** from rules related to protecting the public, patient safety, and content related to jurisprudence.

Referenced rules:

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| <p>Rule 214.4(c)(5)-(13) related to <u>Approval</u> requires in part that “(5) The Board will select one (1) or more national nursing accrediting agencies, recognized by the United States Department of Education, and determined by the Board to have standards equivalent to the Board’s ongoing approval standards. Identified areas that are not equivalent to the Board’s ongoing approval standards will be monitored by the Board on an ongoing basis. (6) The Board will periodically review the standards of the national nursing accrediting agencies following revisions of accreditation standards or revisions in Board requirements for validation of continuing equivalency.</p> | <p>Rule 215.4(c)(5)-(13) related to <u>Approval</u> requires in part that “(5) The Board will select one (1) or more national nursing accrediting agencies, recognized by the United States Department of Education, and determined by the Board to have standards equivalent to the Board’s ongoing approval standards. Identified areas that are not equivalent to the Board’s ongoing approval standards will be monitored by the Board on an ongoing basis. (6) The Board will periodically review the standards of the national nursing accrediting agencies following revisions of accreditation standards or revisions in Board requirements for validation of continuing equivalency.</p> |
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**Nursing Education Programs Accredited by a Board-approved national nursing organization are exempt from the following Education Rules:**

| <b>Accredited Programs - Exemptions from Rules 214 and 215</b> | <b>Section Title and Comments</b>  |
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| 214.2 – 215.2  | Definitions  |
| 214.3 – 215.2  | Program Development, Expansion and Closure   |
| 214.4 – 215.4  | Approval<br><i>The BON approves all <u>new</u> programs and places them on initial approval. If a program achieves national nursing accreditation, the Board considers the program’s accreditation status as one criterion, among others, for ongoing program approval.</i>  |
| 214.5 – 215.5  | Philosophy/Mission and Objectives/Outcomes   |
| 214.7 – 215.7  | Faculty<br><i>Board rules do allow faculty waivers for qualified candidates who have 50% of their graduate education completed (this provides an incentive for “grow-your-own faculty”). Board rules also allow professional programs to use Clinical Teaching Assistants as a faculty extension in the clinical area.</i> |
| 214.11 – 215.11  | Facilities, Resources and Services   |
| 214.12 – 215.12  | Records and Reports  |
| 214.13 – 215.13  | Total Program Evaluation<br><i>Evaluation criteria used by the accreditation organizations are similar to Board-identified criteria</i>  |

In addition, Rule 214.4(c)(4) and Rule 215.4.(c)(4) waive+ the requirement for a regular (6-year) Board survey visit for a nursing program that is accredited by a Board-recognized national accrediting agency.

**However, all** nursing programs, whether accredited or not, **must** adhere to the rules in the following table that have identified exceptions to the exemptions:

| <b>Accredited Programs - Sections Not Exempt Rules 214 and 215</b> | <b>Section Title and Specific Exception Area and Explanations</b>   |
|--|---|
| 214.1- 215.1   | General Requirements<br><i>Director and Faculty are accountable for complying with the Board's rules and regulations and the NPA.</i>   |
| 214.6 – 215.6  | Administration and Organization<br><i>Board rules require program directors to have a specified number of years teaching experience with the same level of nursing education. This requirement is based on evidence related to success of programs. Other qualifications have some differences related to educational preparation and practice experience</i>                       |
| 214.8 - 215.8  | Students<br><i>Board rules have specific curriculum requirements related to Texas jurisprudence, eligibility and discipline, and professional comportment.</i>  |
| 214.9 – 215.9  | Program of Study<br><i>Board rules require that the curriculum is based on the DEC's competencies for entry into practice at the appropriate level. A rule amendment in 2016 requires Board approval for enrollment increases above 25% for non-accredited programs only since accredited programs will submit a substantive change proposal to the accreditation organization.</i> |
| 214.10 – 215.10  | Clinical Learning Experiences<br><i>Each state has established faculty-to-student ratios for the clinical experiences and Texas programs must adhere to Texas regulations.</i>  |

It will be the responsibility of programs with voluntary national nursing accreditation to provide the Texas BON with accreditation reports from the accrediting agencies and to continue to provide other information required by the Board as necessary to maintain nursing program information and to evaluate and establish nursing education and workforce policy in this state. One gap in the process of accepting accreditation as meeting rule requirements, there is always uncertainty about whether programs submit substantive change proposals to the accreditation organizations and whether those reports are complete or approved.

For all Board-approved pre-licensure nursing programs, Board Staff shall:

1. verify the program's accreditation status by a Texas BON-recognized national nursing accrediting agency biennially;
2. review the program's pass rates of graduates on the NCLEX licensing examination annually; and
3. review the other information required by the Texas BON as necessary to evaluate and establish nursing education and workforce policy in this state.

The Board has the right to investigate any program for deviations from Board expectations and for issues arising that suggest noncompliance.

In spite of the few discrepancies between ongoing Board approval and continuing accreditation, research indicates that accredited nursing education programs across the country are more likely to maintain full approval from boards of nursing and experience higher NCLEX pass rates. Though the criteria for Board approval and accreditation vary, a joint approval-accreditation approach facilitates excellence in nursing education.

**Important: Please be aware that references to Rules 214 and 215 are not all inclusive.**