



PRESS RELEASE

CONTACT: Benjamin Murray
E-MAIL: bmurray@ccneaccreditation.org
PHONE: 202-887-6791 x275

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 4, 2018 - U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos [announced, on October 1, 2018](#), that she finds the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education's (CCNE) effective date of accreditation policy to be compliant with the Department of Education's requirements for recognized accreditors. Additionally, Secretary DeVos accepted the recommendation of the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI) writing that "After careful review, I find that CCNE is compliant with the Department's recognition criteria. Therefore, I will reverse the [Department's] decision and find CCNE compliant with all recognition criteria."

As background, in 2008 CCNE sought and received approval from the Department of Education to establish a new policy that would set the effective date of CCNE accreditation as the first day of a program's most recent on-site evaluation. The purpose of this policy was to protect students enrolled in new, as well as shorter, academic programs.

CCNE believes that, in order for a program to undergo a comprehensive and meaningful accreditation review, it must have been operational (e.g., with students enrolled) for a period equivalent to one academic year prior to CCNE's conducting its on-site evaluation. By reviewing track record information obtained during this first year of operation, CCNE is able to ascertain whether a program's processes are appropriate and resources are sufficient, and whether a program is adequately prepared to attain programmatic objectives and successful student achievement outcomes. Importantly, CCNE's effective date policy safeguards students both in new programs and shorter programs, protecting students enrolled in a program at the time the CCNE on-site evaluation is conducted but who graduate before the CCNE Board of Commissioners acts to grant accreditation to the program.

In 2016, Department staff questioned CCNE's long-standing effective date policy, even though CCNE had received prior written approval by the Department to enact this policy. The CCNE Board of Commissioners strongly opposed the Department's recent opposition to this policy, directing the Commission to appeal the newly articulated Department position to Secretary DeVos. This appeal resulted in the October 1, 2018 announcement by the Secretary, which is favorable to CCNE.

CCNE is committed to pursuing best practices in accreditation that protect students and promote quality in nursing education and transition-to-practice programs, while serving the public's interest. The Secretary's decision attests to this commitment. As a result, there will be no adverse impact on CCNE-accredited or applicant programs and their students.

During CCNE's review by the Department, numerous leaders representing nursing education and practice and specialized and institutional accrediting agencies voiced

655 K STREET NW
SUITE 750
WASHINGTON DC 20001

202-887-6791

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their support for CCNE’s effective date policy, providing oral and written comments to the Department. These testimonials highlighted the importance of such a policy to meet the needs for a more educated nursing workforce and the commonly held desire to remove barriers to education.

Upon notification of Secretary DeVos’ decision, Dr. Judith H. Lewis, Chair of the CCNE Board of Commissioners, stated, “The decision released by the Department of Education signals to all that CCNE’s policies and practices protect students while ensuring that the federal government’s interests are also safeguarded. Thank you to our colleagues in nursing, academia, and accreditation who stood with us through this process.”

The Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education is an autonomous accrediting agency contributing to the improvement of the public’s health. CCNE ensures the quality and integrity of baccalaureate and graduate nursing education programs and entry-to-practice nurse residency programs. As a voluntary, self-regulatory process, CCNE accreditation supports and encourages continuing self-assessment by nursing programs and supports continuing growth and improvement of collegiate professional education and entry-to-practice nurse residency programs.

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