



USE OF EXTERNAL EXAMINATIONS IN NURSING EDUCATION PROGRAMS GUIDANCE STATEMENT Prelicensure Nursing Education Programs

A Position Statement does not carry the force and effect of law and rules but is adopted by the Board as a means of providing direction to prelicensure nursing education programs. Board Position Statements address issues of concern to the Board relevant to protection of the public and are reviewed regularly for relevance and accuracy to current practice, the North Carolina Board of Nursing Practice Act, and Administrative Code (Rule).

ISSUE:

There have been instances where external standardized examinations designed to predict student success on the National Council Licensing Examinations (NCLEX), were instituted as a requirement for completing or passing nursing courses, meeting graduation requirements, and verification of program completion by program director. The Board does not support this practice.

DEFINITION:

External standardized examination is a commercially available standardized predictive test that provides individual student scores that are linked to a probability of passing the NCLEX™ examination.

GUIDANCE:

- The nursing program, as a best practice, publish policies, procedures, and guidelines (points awarded, weight to be calculated in final grade, placement of standardized exam in the curriculum) regarding the use of external standardized examinations in a nursing education program preparing students for initial nurse licensure.
- If the score on an external standardized examination prevents students from graduation, it is a “high stakes” test.
- Performance on an external standardized examination should not prevent students from progressing or graduating in a nursing education program preparing students for initial licensure.
- External standardized examinations may not be used as a single criterion to determine a student's progression or graduation in a nursing education program preparing students for initial nurse licensure.

References:

21 NCAC 36.0321(p)

Approved: 1/2011

Revised: 1/2023