

POSITION STATEMENT: NURSE PRACTITIONER EDUCATION

The American Association of Nurse Practitioners® (AANP) holds that the cornerstone of nurse practitioner (NP) practice is robust academic and clinical preparation. To that end, AANP believes and affirms that quality of NP preparation is comprised and grounded by the following requirements:

- Admission criteria for NP graduate education programs must include a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing (BSN) and successful passage of the national certification exam for registered nurses (commonly called the NCLEX). The individual must be licensed as a registered nurse (RN) and hold an unencumbered, active RN license.
- Nationally accredited NP graduate degree programs must include both didactic and clinical rotations with demonstration and documentation of clinical competency that build and expand on basic nursing expertise.
- The [American Association of Colleges of Nursing \(AACN\) Essentials](#) delineate the elements and framework for nursing graduate programs, and the NP core competencies and NP population-specific competencies are further articulated by the [National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties and National Task Force on Quality Nurse Practitioner Education](#).
- Graduate degree programs for nursing must be nationally accredited and held accountable to ensure that core content and national education standards are enforced as defined by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) and National League for Nursing Commission for Nursing Education Accreditation (CNEA). These accreditors must maintain approval by the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity within the U.S. Secretary of Education and are also accountable to the Department of Education for maintaining accreditation standards. Additionally, all NP programs should include NP-specific criteria for the quality of curriculum, faculty and clinical practicums as defined by the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculty and National Task Force of Quality Nurse Practitioner Education.
- NPs must pass standardized national certification exams. These exams are psychometrically-sound, legally defensible, competency-based examinations of knowledge and proficiency in patient care as advanced clinicians. These certification programs must maintain accreditation by the [Accreditation Board of Specialty Nursing Certification \(ABSNC\)](#) and the [National Commission for Certifying Agencies \(NCCA\)](#), and they must be evaluated regularly through practice input and analysis.
- NP education must prepare clinicians for licensure and practice to the full extent of education, clinical training and board certification.

As the leading national professional membership association for NPs, AANP holds that the entities referred to above are accountable for maintaining the highest of standards. AANP affirms the role and responsibility that these educational agencies, institutions, accreditors and certification boards have in ensuring the rigorous scientific review and standards for curriculum, clinical experiences and competency-based evaluation of NP education.