

Overview of the CCNE Accreditation Process

- The program begins engaging in the self-study process approximately 12-18 months in advance of the on-site evaluation.
- Approximately 12 months prior to a scheduled on-site evaluation, CCNE notifies the program that it is scheduled to host an evaluation. This notification advises the program to log in to the CCNE Online Community (www.ccnecommunity.org), using the provided log in credentials (User Name and Password), to choose and confirm the dates of the on-site evaluation. The availability of dates is “first come, first served” so it is advantageous for a program to choose its dates as soon as possible upon receiving the notice. All programs (those seeking initial or continuing accreditation) are required to schedule the on-site evaluation at least 12 months in advance. For example, if a program is scheduled to host an on-site evaluation in Spring 2018, the evaluation must be scheduled no later than Spring 2017. There are no exceptions to scheduling 12 months in advance of the accreditation cycle.

Note: To schedule an on-site evaluation an institution must already have a) a CCNE-accredited program or b) a program that holds new applicant status with CCNE. If an institution already has a CCNE-accredited program but wishes to seek accreditation of a new degree program or post-graduate APRN certificate program, the institution must notify CCNE of its intent to seek accreditation of that program. This notification must be in writing and should include the type of program, the date the program became operational (students enrolled), and when the institution is planning to host the on-site evaluation. In addition to submitting this letter of intent, the existing accredited program(s) must also submit a substantive change notification in accordance with the CCNE substantive change notification policy.

- Approximately 6 months prior to the start of the accreditation cycle, CCNE notifies the institution’s chief executive officer (e.g., president) of the upcoming on-site evaluation. CCNE provides the chief executive officer with information about CCNE, the accreditation process, and the dates of the on-site evaluation.
- Two months prior to the date of the on-site evaluation, the program must inform its communities of interest of the opportunity to provide written third-party comments directly to CCNE. Third-party comments are accepted by CCNE up to 21 days prior to the start of the on-site evaluation. All third-party comments received by CCNE are considered confidential and are only shared with the evaluation team.
- Programs hosting an on-site evaluation in the fall are invoiced for the evaluation fee in July of the same year; programs hosting an on-site evaluation in the spring are invoiced for the evaluation fee in November of the previous year. This fee must be paid prior to hosting the scheduled on-site evaluation.
- Approximately 3 months prior to the start of an accreditation cycle, CCNE publishes a list of all programs under review for the upcoming accreditation cycle. Additionally, CCNE communicates directly with its communities of interest (e.g., state boards of nursing, certification bodies, other accrediting bodies, etc.), and informs them of the opportunity to provide third-party comments up to 21 days prior to the start of the on-site evaluation. These third-party comments are considered to be confidential and are only shared with the evaluation team.

- Approximately 3 months prior to the scheduled on-site evaluation, CCNE tentatively appoints an evaluation team. Once the team has been appointed, the chief nurse administrator is invited to log in to the CCNE Online Community to review the team for any potential conflicts of interest. The chief nurse administrator then either accepts the team as presented or notifies CCNE of concerns related to conflict of interest. Information regarding each member of the team is available via the CCNE Online Community so that the institution can easily contact the members of the team throughout the accreditation process.
- CCNE requests that a program notify CCNE at least 6 weeks in advance of the on-site evaluation if the institution will be hosting a joint evaluation by CCNE and another regulatory or approval entity. The institution should work closely with the team leader from each review entity in the development of the agenda.
- Once the team has been accepted, the chief nurse administrator (or designee) should consult with the team leader in the development of the agenda, as well as before finalizing the agenda.
- In advance of the on-site evaluation, the program must make a hotel reservation for each member of the evaluation team. Each team member should be sent a hotel confirmation number as well as pertinent information about the hotel (name, address, phone). Although the hotel rooms are paid for by each team member, a program official should guarantee the reservations with a credit card. Each team member then provides the hotel with his/her credit card information upon check-in. Team members are responsible for making their own travel arrangements after coordinating with the team leader regarding the agenda.
- At least 6 weeks prior to the on-site evaluation, the program is required to log in to the CCNE Online Community to upload the completed self-study document (including appendices and any supplemental materials), the Program Information Form (PIF), the agenda, and verification that the program has afforded its communities of interest the opportunity to provide third party comments. While it is not required that hard copies be automatically sent to the team, the program should reach out to each team member individually to determine if a hard copy of the documents is desired. If it is, the program needs to provide the hard copy documents as requested. CCNE and the evaluators who have been assigned to the team have access to the electronic version of the documents via the CCNE Online Community as soon as the documents have been uploaded by the institution. Please do not send hard copies of these documents to the CCNE office unless specifically requested to do so.
- At the time the program submits the self-study document, PIF, and agenda via the CCNE Online Community, the program must also provide evidence that constituents were afforded the opportunity to submit third-party comments to CCNE, in accordance with CCNE policy. This evidence must also be uploaded to the CCNE Online Community. Twenty-one days prior to the on-site evaluation, CCNE provides each team member copies of any third-party comments received by CCNE.
- The evaluation team conducts the review, and the team leader verbally summarizes the major findings to the chief nurse administrator (and any other individuals invited by that person to attend) during the exit interview. The team does not formulate a recommendation about accreditation or leave a copy of its report with the program.
- The team completes its written report and the team leader submits it electronically to CCNE via the CCNE Online Community. CCNE staff review and edit the team report as appropriate.
- After CCNE staff complete their review of the team report, staff upload the final team report into the CCNE Online Community. The chief nurse administrator receives notification of the availability of the report via the CCNE Online Community. CCNE requires that the chief nurse administrator provide a written response to the team report. Additionally, the program is afforded no less than 15 calendar days to submit the written response. Once uploaded, CCNE and the evaluation team have access to the program response via the CCNE Online Community.
- The self-study document, the team report, and the program's response to the team report are forwarded to the CCNE Accreditation Review Committee (ARC). The ARC formulates a confidential recommendation to

the CCNE Board of Commissioners based on its review of the aforementioned documents. A program that hosts an on-site evaluation in the fall is reviewed by the ARC in late winter, and is then reviewed by the CCNE Board of Commissioners in the spring; a program that hosts an on-site evaluation in the spring is reviewed by the ARC in the summer, and is then reviewed by the CCNE Board of Commissioners in the fall.

Note: CCNE policy allows for program officials to participate in the ARC meeting, but this is not required. The ARC deliberates and forms its recommendations in executive session; therefore, program officials are not present during this portion of the meeting.

- Within 30 days of the CCNE Board of Commissioners meeting, CCNE notifies institutional and program officials, the U.S. Department of Education, as well as appropriate state agencies and accrediting agencies, of all final actions. The report of the evaluation team and the program's response to the team report are available to the institution in the CCNE Online Community. In addition, CCNE notifies the ARC and members of the evaluation team of the accreditation decision. CCNE makes all final actions available to the public by posting them on the CCNE website.
- CCNE invites and encourages the chief nurse administrator (or designee) to evaluate the CCNE accreditation review process by completing the survey that is available on the CCNE Online Community. The survey will become available after the program has received notification of the accreditation decision by the CCNE Board of Commissioners.

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